



10-31-2022

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Library of Congress

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BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Song, Yuwu (2022) "Book Censorship in Post-Tiananmen China (1989-2019)," *Journal of East Asian Libraries*: Vol. 2022: No. 175, Article 4.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal/vol2022/iss175/4>

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Cover Page Footnote

Acknowledgments The author wishes to thank the John W. Kluge Center at the Library of Congress for its support. I want to thank the reviewers for their useful comments and suggestions. I also want to thank Professor Barry M. Stentiford and Mr. Lok Ho for their assistance in this project.

Book Censorship in Post-Tiananmen China (1989-2019)

Yuwu Song

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Introduction

Censorship has been a constant element throughout Chinese history. As part of the paternalistic tradition, banning books could be traced back to 213 B.C., with the burning of texts by Qin Shi Huang, the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty (221–206 B.C.). Since Qin, each dynasty practiced censorship in different ways, with the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) becoming most notorious for book banning and persecution of writers. Republican China (1912-1949) saw a thaw in rigid censorship. After the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) imposed its governing ideology over the whole nation, which required an all-pervasive system of censorship for control and indoctrination.

Censorship, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart once observed, “reflects a society's lack of confidence in itself.” When the CCP took control of China, the regime's lack of confidence was on full display. The censorship system was institutionalized with unparalleled sophistication and thoroughness, expanding to domains varying from news media and TV programs to literature, films, and the arts, while obtaining not only prescriptive control but also restrictive control. Ironically, the very idea of censorship was vehemently criticized by Karl Marx, the Father of Communism, who felt that Prussia's censorship of the press and publications in the 1840s was morally repugnant.

This project examines the different levels of censorship, how they work, and what types of books are censored. It documents how censorship causes books published in mainland China to differ from the same works published in other countries and regions. Based on research on the multiple layers and functions of book banning with political, cultural, social, and religious references, the project assesses Beijing's efforts at censorship as a response to international politics on the one hand, and as a strategy of political and social control at home on the other. More specifically, the research indicates that censorship has helped the Chinese government maintain a degree of stability while eroding freedom of expression. At the same time, censorship has laid the foundation for discontent inside China as well as outside.

Literature review

Censorship in general

Providing a detailed review of censorship of all types of publications in China, Tian (2018) discussed censorship and authoritarianism from Qin Shi Huang of the Qin Dynasty (221–206 B.C.) to the current regime under Xi Jinping. Miller (2016) reviewed and explained how Chinese censorship affected him as he worked as a magazine editor in Shanghai from 2006 to 2011. Through the scope of censorship, he discussed Chinese media, the government's

attitude towards history, the Chinese film industry, and how he became a self-censor in a secret system.

In *Media Transparency in China: Rethinking Rhetoric and Reality*, Xie (2014) argued that censorship in China persists through a confluence of the forces of market and state, with the state setting the terms of market competition. Xie pointed out that it was so profitable in the commercial media that its leaders developed a preference for the status quo. King et al. (2013) studied the Chinese censorship of social media and the internal mechanisms of the Chinese censorship apparatus. Hu (2012) discussed thought control and reform in China, especially for intellectuals.

In his Master of Laws thesis, *Roadblock and Roadmap: Circumventing Press Censorship in China in an Era of the New Media*, Zhu (2009) found that the new information and communication technologies had broken down barriers between journalists and the public and created greater space for independent news and information within a society. However, the Chinese government developed legal and technical measures to control the information flows. Zhu's paper investigated the impact of the new media on press freedom while examining cases of circumventing press censorship in China.

He (2008) conducted a thorough study on how the Chinese government tries to control the media through a system of supervision, publishing permits, and personnel management. He also discussed how new Web technologies strengthened censorship in China. He provided a review of the history of the press and thought control in China, from the making of the "socialist news system" before 1949 to the "thought liberation movement" of the 1980s and the "public opinion guidance" after 1989. The author reviewed different types of laws and regulations on media control. Following a list of notices and statutes, He concluded: "On the surface, the abovementioned laws and regulations might be more concerned with regulation than with political control but combine these with the media control actions of the Communist Party's propaganda authorities, and you understand that their true purpose is control."

In his book 討伐中宣部 [The Crusade against the Central Propaganda Department], Jiao (2005) launched a one-man crusade against the CCP Central Propaganda Department (CPD), the most important institution in China's vast censorship apparatus. Jiao criticized the Chinese system for censoring the news. He called for greater freedom of expression and the abolishment of the CPD.

On the topic of China's global censorship, He (2019) made an original contribution by going beyond the censorship within to outside China. Diamond et al. (2018) focused on global academic censorship carried out by the Chinese government including limiting access to information for foreign scholars, visa control, censorship over translated works, etc. Olesen (2015) found that foreign authors faced increasingly strengthened censorship in China since 2012 when Xi Jinping became the CCP leader.

Book censorship

Censorship of publications since 1949 has been a taboo topic in China. Virtually all of the scholarship on the history of banned books in China has been on the pre-1949 times, as can be seen in Chen (2004), Luo and Wang (1998), Ruan (1995), Hu (1993), and Wang (1992).

Due to academic freedom outside the PRC, scholars have been able to publish their research on book censorship after 1949 in China. In *Drugs for the Mind: Censorship in China*, Sun (2015) studied Chinese censorship in the literary world. She covered censorship in general, forms of censorship, self-censorship, vague laws, and organizations and institutions involved in censorship. The author focused on censorship, and even persecution of authors in three categories, namely, the independent authors: Ye Fu, Ran Yunfei, Mian Mian, and Shi Kang; the exiled authors: Ma Jian, Bei Ling, Liao Yiwu, and Zhou Qing; the state-employed authors: Jia Pingwa, Yan Lianke, and Yu Hua. Voice of America (2014) discussed the system and practice of suppressing freedom of publication in China. The book by Voice of America (2014) also explored the process of writing and publishing books which had become a mystery to many people. It revealed the risks, hardships, pains, and even thrills that lay beneath the black curtain.

In “Censorship in Translation and Translation Studies in Present-day China,” Chang (2008) examined examples from Hillary Clinton’s *Living History*, Mandla Langa’s short story “A Gathering of Bald Men,” Vladimir Nabokov’s *Lolita* and David Lodge’s *Small World*, and described how censorship was carried out in China, where the government censored anti-Communist and anti-China materials as well as sexually explicit materials. Chang also discussed the scale of government censorship and the pressures publishers and translators faced. Red Chan’s paper, “One Nation, Two Translations: China’s Censorship of Hillary’s Memoir” (2007), explored how self-censorship imposed by the publisher, rather than censorship by Chinese government censors, impacted the publication of the Chinese translation of Hillary Clinton’s memoir, *Living History*, in China.

On the topic of control over literary production, Link (2000) found that it was achieved through a system of censorship: Socialist China did not have the kind of formal censorial organs that other autocratic regimes have maintained. Literary control was less mechanical and more psychological than it has been elsewhere. It depended primarily on the private calculation of risks and balances in the minds of writers, editors, and those who supported them.

Talking about thought control and reform through brainwashing in China, Lifton (1989) described the whole atmosphere that discouraged free thinking and the Chinese government’s practice of policing books for inappropriate content and banning books, which limited people’s exposure to great literature.

Methodology

While previous academic works on censorship generated some useful insights on the subject, the literature in this respect is still lacking in the field of book censorship. They simply did not capture the complexity of censorship of books in China because the scholarship was more or less concentrated on the censorship of news media and the Internet.

To answer the given research question on the situation of book censorship during the 30 years after the Tiananmen Square Incident of 1989, qualitative methods would be the most appropriate. In contrast with previous scholarship on this topic, which has focused largely on journalism and digital media, this paper will examine different patterns of book banning

and censored content and adds more nuances to the study of Chinese book censorship from 1989 to 2019 in general.

Background

Since the founding of the PRC in 1949, the political pendulum in China has always swung back and forth. Book censorship experienced a great transformation in China, reflecting extreme control in Mao Zedong's era (1949–1976) and a lessening of control attributed to reforms after Mao's death. The 1980s saw a liberal tide in book publishing when the CCP declared that the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) led by Mao was a catastrophe and called for the “liberation of thoughts” among writers. After 1976, “Scar Literature” which exposed the evils of the Cultural Revolution, and “Misty Poetry”, a rebellious literary movement against restrictions on art, flourished in China. However, the spring of liberalism was short-lived. Deng Xiaoping, the de facto leader of the CCP at that time, put forward in 1979 the “Four Cardinal Principles”: adherence to the socialist road; adherence to the people's democratic dictatorship; adherence to the leadership of the CCP; and adherence to Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought. These principles laid the foundation for Chinese censorship in post-Mao China.

In September 1986, Deng delivered a speech “against bourgeois liberalization” at the 6th Plenum of the 12th CCP Conference aimed at Hu Yaobang, the then CCP General Secretary who sympathized with students, intellectuals, artists, and CCP cadres of liberal views. Shortly afterward, Hu was dismissed in 1987 for tolerating the so-called “bourgeois liberalization”. However, instead of cracking down on those liberals, Hu's successor, Zhao Ziyang, the open-minded CCP Secretary-General, allowed a loosening of control over book publishing. Dozens of politically sensitive books saw the light during this period but were arbitrarily banned after the Tiananmen Square Incident in June 1989.

Since the summer of 1989, Beijing has strengthened its thought control system further. In the past thirty years, hundreds of books, especially books on literature, the humanities, and the social sciences, were censored or banned. The mid-1990s to the mid-2000s witnessed a thaw as the government's propaganda apparatus started to become lax in enforcing the CCP's writ, culminating in the pro-democracy manifesto movement in 2008. Then the oscillation to the left occurred, with the reins tightened again.

Xi Jinping's rise as the leader of the Chinese Communist Party in 2012 ushered in greater control of the media and publications as he sought to cement the CCP's grip on power. Xi had deep-seated doubts about liberal Western values and ideas, as well as political reforms, which he believed would cause the collapse of the Party and state. He openly showed animosity about political reforms attempted by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in the mid-1980s.

Sensing there was a possibility that CCP members might stray from the Party line, on April 22, 2013, the CCP Central Office under Xi issued “关于当前意识形态领域情况的通报 [Briefing on the Current Situation in the Ideological Realm],” also called, “九号文件 [Document Number Nine].” This document warned Party leaders as well as the rank and file about the dangers of “seven subversive currents” coursing through Chinese society, namely, Western constitutional democracy; universal values of human rights; Western-inspired

notions of media independence and civic participation; pro-market neo-liberalism; nihilist criticisms of the Party's traumatic past; challenges to China's reforms; and doubts about the nature of Chinese socialism. The document promoted ways of coping with these problems, which included "Unwavering adherence to the principle of the Party's control of media." The document has never been openly published, but a version was shown to The New York Times and was verified by sources close to senior CCP officials.¹ The issuing of "Document Number Nine" could be viewed as a turning point in the modern history of censorship in China. After the document came out, suppression followed.

In general, the major subjects and topics that have been censored include Chinese history, CCP history, CCP leaders, Chinese politics, human rights, freedom of expression, Tibet, Xinjiang, Taiwan, Hong Kong, etc. Because these subjects have posed direct challenges to the CCP's narrative of history and current politics, which in turn threaten the stability of the nation, the CCP has systematically started the campaign to control the publication of books on these topics. As a result, censorship has tightened in recent years.

Authors and scholars considered "rightists" on China's political spectrum or with an independent spirit who criticized the regime were systematically silenced. In 2016, editors with liberal leanings at 炎黄春秋 [China Through the Ages], a journal that examined Chinese political figures and contemporary histories, were pushed out. Also, in 2016, a famed website for public intellectuals, 共识网 [Consensus], was shut down. In January 2017, the authorities closed the Unirule Institute of Economics, a liberal think-tank headed by the renowned economist Mao Yushi.

Press freedom can sometimes serve as a measure of the freedom of book publishing. In its 2020 "Data of Press Freedom Ranking 2020," the France-based watchdog group Reporters Without Borders ranked China 177 out of 180 nations (China's ranking in 2013 was 173).² That China's ranking in press freedom fell since 2013 indicates that the professions of press and publication began to feel the impact of the crackdown on freedom of speech.

Chinese censorship structures and functions

The Chinese censorship system is intended to block and censor sensitive information from inside as well as from outside of the country. As the censorial system expanded over time, it developed into a three-tiered structure with a preventive function as well as a punitive function. Contents of publications, filtered through the three layers, could become distorted, emasculated, or could simply disappear.

¹ Chris Buckley, "China Takes Aim at Western Ideas," *New York Times*, August 20, 2013, accessed January 29, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/20/world/asia/chinas-new-leadership-takes-hard-line-in-secret-memo.html>.

² Reporters without Borders, "Data of Press Freedom Ranking 2020," *Reporters without Borders*, accessed May 24, 2020, https://rsf.org/en/ranking_table.

The first tier of censorship: Central Propaganda Department and State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film, and Television

At the top of the hierarchy of the censorship system is the Chinese Communist Party Central Propaganda Department (CPD), an internal division of the Party responsible for ideology-related work. It plays an essential part in directing and supervising book publishing and other operations related to media and information production and distribution. Based on the CCP tradition, one of the members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CCP Central Committee, the core of the CCP leadership, exercises direction and oversight over the CPD. The person in charge since 2017 is Wang Huning, considered the “New Ideology Czar” by China watchers.³

According to a report from the Freedom House, the CPD is “the most important institution in China for monitoring press and publication personnel and controlling the content of print and visual media.”⁴ It gets directly involved in overseeing editors and journalists via a national registration system and in providing ideological training to the professionals to make sure that they are loyal to the Party. It also intervenes in practical matters of publishing and has the final say in determining the fate of authors and their works. The CPD issues “directives” that have been rigorously carried out by lower-ranking agencies or publishing houses.

State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film, and Television (SAPPRFT) of the PRC, the successor of the General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP), is the government agency in charge of making policies related to press, publication, and media. One of the guiding documents created by the agency is the “Regulations on Publication Administration.” Article 26 of the document states that no publication shall contain the following contents:

1. Those opposing the basic principles established in the Constitution;
2. Those endangering the unification, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the State;
3. Those divulging secrets of the State, endangering national security, or damaging the honor or benefits of the State;
4. Those inciting national hatred or discrimination, undermining the solidarity of the nations, or infringing upon national customs and habits;
5. Those propagating evil cults or superstition;
6. Those disturbing the public order or destroying the public stability;
7. Those propagating obscenity, gambling, violence, or instigating crimes;
8. Those insulting or slandering others, or infringing upon the lawful rights or interests of others;
9. Those endangering public ethics or the great national cultural traditions;

³ Sarah Cook, “ANALYSIS: China’s Party Congress Hints at Media Strategy for a ‘New Era’,” Freedom House, November 2017, accessed July 1, 2022, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/china-media-bulletin/china-media-bulletin-party-congress-media-vision-surveillance-updates>.

⁴ Ashley Esarey, “Speak No Evil: Mass Media Control in Contemporary China,” Freedom House, February 2006, accessed May 31, 2020, https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/Speak%20No%20Evil-%20Mass%20Media%20Control%20in%20Contemporary%20China.pdf.

10. Other contents prohibited by laws, administrative regulations, or provisions of the State.⁵

Another important document is the “Measures on the Recording of Important Topics of Books, Periodicals, Audio/Visual Productions, and Electronic Publications.” The latest version was issued on October 25, 2019. “Article 3” of this document states that those wishing to publish a book on an “important topic” must submit the manuscript to the SAPPRFT for approval. The important topics include:⁶

1. Topics concerning documents or literature of the Party or the nation;
2. Works and literature concerning any former or current leaders of the Party or the nation, and selections concerning the circumstances of their lives or work;
3. Topics that deal with Party or state secrets;
4. Topics that compile introductions of the structure of government entities or the circumstances of party or state leaders;
5. Topics that deal with nationality or religious problems;
6. Topics that deal with the building of national defense and the battles, combat, work, or lives of important figures of China’s military in any historical period;
7. Topics that deal with the “Cultural Revolution”;
8. Topics that deal with significant historical matters or important historical figures in the history of the Chinese Communist Party;
9. Topics that deal with top-level figures in the Republican Party and any other top-level objectives of the united front;
10. Topics that deal with the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and all other party brothers, and nationally significant matters and primary leaders;
11. Topics that deal with maps of China’s borders;
12. Topics that deal with books on the Hong Kong Special Administration Zone, Macao, and the Taiwan region;
13. Topics of large-scale translations of ancient texts into modern Chinese (equal to or greater than 5,000,000 characters);
14. Topics of imported animated reading material;
15. Topics that involve directories of institutional names or addresses.

Generally speaking, the two documents prescribed the guidelines by which the policies for publication and distribution throughout the country would be administered. The CPD and SAPPRFT also conduct quality control by randomly checking a limited number of publications and taking punitive actions against anyone who violates the rules or regulations. Punitive or repressive censorship usually entails actions from above after the publication of a book. In some cases, the banning of books has little or no legal or moral basis. Therefore, the censors dare not openly announce the banning. Shortly after the Tiananmen Square Incident in June 1989, the General Administration of Press and Publication issued a directive

⁵ State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film, and Television (SAPPRFT) of the PRC, “出版管理条例 [Regulations on Publication Administration],” February 6, 2016, accessed May 25, 2020, http://www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2016/content_5139389.htm.

⁶ State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film, and Television (SAPPRFT) of the PRC, “新闻出版署关于印发《图书、期刊、音像制品、电子出版物重大选题备案办法》的通知 [Measures on the Recording of Important Topics of Books, Periodicals, Audio/Visual Productions, and Electronic Publications],” October 25, 2019, accessed April 30, 2020, http://www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2020/content_5493014.htm.

on September 2, 1989, banning books by fourteen liberal intellectuals including Bao Tong, Dai Qing, and Liu Xiaobo, who were believed to have inspired the student protesters. To avoid criticism, “Item Six” in the directive specifically stressed that the document could not be disclosed or reported in the media. Gradually, it has become a general practice that censors use a clandestine approach, usually ordering publishers to censor books orally or by telephone instead of through written orders.

According to Perry Link, Emeritus Professor of East Asian studies at Princeton University, “In the 2000s, explicit instructions went out to provincial officials that they avoid putting any censorship or blacklisting into writing. To kill an article, officials should get on the telephone and instruct editors orally.”⁷ This resulted in difficulties tracking down the source of the censorship and promoted a culture of secrecy in the Chinese publishing world.

The punishments or disciplinary actions against “violators” include firing the head of the press or the editors; reducing the number of International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs), a prerequisite for all books to be published by a press in China; shutting down the business operations of a press for a period for “rectification.” In November 2015, nearly four years after the death of Gao Hua, the author of the banned book 紅太陽是怎樣升起的一延安整風運動的來龍去脈 [How the Red Sun Rose: The Origin and Development of the Yan’an Rectification Movement],⁸ Guangxi Normal University Press published another book from Gao Hua, 历史的境界 [The Realm of History], a collection of Gao’s articles, speeches, book reviews, and notes on liberal views about Chinese history. According to a Radio Free Asian report, Guangxi Normal University Press was chastised for this by the CPD and SAPPRFT. As part of the punishment, Liu Ruilin, the Editor-in-Chief, was forced to do self-criticism. Later Liu left the press.⁹

For many years, the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film, and Television (SAPPRFT), was under the State Council of the PRC. However, things changed in the spring of 2018. That March, the Central Committee of the CCP issued the “Document for Deepening the Reform of Party and State Institutions,” which clearly stated that “to strengthen the Party’s centralized and unified leadership of press and public opinion work, enhance the management of publishing activities, and develop the socialist publishing industry with Chinese characteristics, the press and publishing management responsibilities of the SAPPRFT were transferred to the Central Propaganda Department (CDP).”¹⁰ On April 16, 2018, National Press and Publication Administration (NPPA) was established and put under the direct control of CDP. This reorganization marked the CCP’s efforts in strengthening control over the censorship of the press and publication.

⁷ Perry Link, “Beijing’s Bold New Censorship,” *ChinaFile*, September 5, 2017, accessed May 31, 2020, <https://www.chinafile.com/library/nyrb-china-archive/beijings-bold-new-censorship>.

⁸ All the books mentioned in the article are listed in the appendix with their original Chinese titles.

⁹ Radio Free Asia, “出版已故‘禁书’作者高华文集 广西出版社遭处分 [Publishing House in Guangxi Punished for Publishing Book by Banned Author Gao Hua],” *Radio Free Asia*, January 21, 2016, accessed January 14, 2020, https://www.rfa.org/mandarin/video?v=1_wp7949fa.

¹⁰ CCP Central Committee, “深化党和国家机构改革方案”, the PRC Government Website, accessed July 10, 2022, http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2018-03/21/content_5276191.htm#1.

In recent years, Chinese customs officials have tightened the control of books brought to China from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other places. The guides leading tour groups outside mainland China simply told the tourists not to purchase any sensitive books in the local bookstores to avoid trouble with customs. Those who challenged the rules did encounter problems. In July 2019, Zhang Yihe, the author of the controversial book 往事并不如烟 [The Past Is Not Like Smoke] attended the Hong Kong Book Fair. As she passed customs in China, she was detained for three hours, and most of the books she brought from Hong Kong, including the Taiwan edition of *The Past Is Not Like Smoke*, were confiscated.¹¹ As a result of Chinese authorities cracking down on efforts to publish, distribute, or bring sensitive books bought in Hong Kong and Taiwan back to the mainland, the market for books about China in both Hong Kong and Taiwan has been shrinking.¹²

As part of repressive censorship, the Chinese law courts exercised judicial punishment. Some of the judiciary's draconian sentences are an appalling travesty of justice. Dai Xuelin, the marketing editor of Guangxi Normal University Press, was convicted of "illegal business" in 2017 for reselling "illegal publications" such as *How the Red Sun Rose*, which was published in Hong Kong. He was sentenced to five years in prison. It is rumored that Dai had close ties with the bookseller of Causeway Bay Books in Hong Kong before his arrest. Another example involves Tianyi, a Chinese writer of erotic novels. The *New York Times* reported on November 19, 2018, that Tianyi was sentenced to ten and a half years in prison for producing and selling "gay pornography," an extremely harsh punishment.¹³

The second tier of censorship: provincial or municipal administration of press and publication

The second tier of censorship is the provincial or municipal administration of press and publication. The censor-official at this level reviews to-be-published books, usually those on "important topics" of history and contemporary politics, which are submitted by publishing houses under their jurisdiction. A book, which goes through this filter, is supposed to be a clean text that conforms entirely to the goals and intentions of the Party. Books deemed politically and culturally unfit for publication are banned.

The third tier of censorship: state-owned publishing houses

The third tier of censorship is editorial censorship exercised by Chinese publishers in China, only state-owned presses are allowed to exist, and all heads and editors-in-chief of the presses are CCP members without exception. The editors played a more instrumental role in

¹¹ Radio France Internationale, "章诒和出席香港书展返京整箱书被没收感到愤懑屈辱," *Radio France Internationale*, July 22, 2019, accessed January 22, 2020, <http://www.rfi.fr/cn/中国/20190722-章诒和出席香港书展返京整箱书被没收感到愤懑屈辱>.

¹² BBC, "2018 香港书展: 寒蝉效应下被萎缩的自由出版市场 [Hong Kong Book Fair 2018: The Shrunk Free Publishing Market under the Chilling Effect]," *BBC*, July 23, 2018, accessed July 8, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/chinese-news-44920323>.

¹³ Javier C. Hernández and Albee Zhang, "Writer of Erotic Novels in China Is Jailed for Producing Gay Pornography," *The New York Times*, November 19, 2018, accessed May 31, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/19/world/asia/tianyi-china-erotic-novels-prison.html>

censoring the content of a book. Knowing that they have to abide by strict rules and procedures, they work hard to have the content combed for political correctness. Under their editorship, texts go through rigid ideological purging, and thanks to their meticulous eyes, almost nothing remains overlooked or neglected. The editors monitor for politically sensitive or offensive content and excise all of the “problematic” words, sentences, paragraphs, and even chapters in a book.

Since all the Chinese presses are under the control of the CCP, there is no need to station a dedicated censor in publishing houses to review each of the publications. Ma Xiaoming, who had worked in a Chinese TV station in Xi’an for many years, revealed that in addition to the written rules, censorship is often conducted verbally. Professionals in media organizations or book industries consciously and voluntarily attempt to defend the CCP’s interests. Very few published books are considered to be politically apostate or harmful to the CCP’s rule. These types of books were killed in the cradle.¹⁴

All three levels of censorship also lead to self-censorship. Writers self-impose restrictions on the creation or dissemination of their works and accommodate themselves to regulations or policies created by the censoring authorities such as the CPD or SAPPRFT. Professor Perry Link once compared Chinese censorial machinery with “a giant anaconda coiled in an overhead chandelier.” He wrote in the *New York Review of Books*, “Normally the great snake doesn’t move. It doesn’t have to. It feels no need to be clear about its prohibitions. Its constant silent message is ‘You decide,’ after which, more often than not, everyone in its shadow makes his or her large and small adjustments—all quite ‘naturally’.”¹⁵

As a defense mechanism, writers adopt a conformist approach to the rules of the game. Many authors including those abroad, make concessions and learn the technique of survival, known as “dancing with shackles on.” A well-known China expert Professor Minxin Pei of Claremont McKenna College openly confessed to *The New Republic* that he would avoid difficulties by using a relatively less sensitive word such as “unraveling” than the provoking term “collapse” in predicting the future of the communist system in China.¹⁶

Books censored or banned in China

In the past three decades, hundreds of books in China were either partially censored or completely banned. Generally speaking, four types of books are censored or banned:

¹⁴ Radio Free Asia, “出版已故‘禁书’作者高华文集 广西出版社遭处分 [Publishing House in Guangxi Punished for Publishing Book by Banned Author Gao Hua],” *Radio Free Asia*, January 21, 2016, accessed January 14, 2020, https://www.rfa.org/mandarin/video?v=1_wp7949fa.

¹⁵ Perry Link, “China: The Anaconda in the Chandelier,” *The New York Review of Books*, April 11, 2002, accessed January 29, 2020, <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2002/04/11/china-the-anaconda-in-the-chandelier>.

¹⁶ Isaac Stone Fish, “The Other Political Correctness: Why are America’s elite universities censoring themselves on China?” *The New Republic*, September 4, 2018, accessed January 31, 2020, <https://newrepublic.com/article/150476/american-elite-universities-selfcensorship-china>.

Books published with contents removed or altered

Many instances occurred when historical research and publications were censored. L.S. Stavrianos's *A Global History: From Prehistory to the 21st Century* is a good example. As a classic college textbook since the 1970s, it had been published seven times in more than 30 years. In 2006, Peking University Press published the 1999 edition of Stavrianos's book. The Chinese edition proved quite popular and was well-received in China. By May 2013, the record for a Western textbook was broken with the 30th printing and over two million copies sold. But a browse shows that the book was heavily censored for the Chinese market. Several important historical events had been omitted, which included the North Korean troops' crossing the 38th parallel to "liberate" South Korea on June 24, 1950; the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968; the Sino-Vietnamese War of 1979; and the Tiananmen Square Incident of 1989.

In 1999, Yuelu Press published the first mainland China edition of 晚清七十年 [The Final Seventy Years of the Qing Dynasty], a collection of historical essays written by Chinese-American scholar Tong Te-kong. Tong's book was published in Taiwan in 1998. Since the book touched on the late Qing Dynasty, which had many striking similarities with China at the turn of the 21st century, some sensitive content was altered. For example, references to CCP leaders Mao Zedong and Jiang Zemin in Chapter Three were removed in the mainland edition. In this chapter, the author made sarcastic comments about the irony in a news story that the atheist Chinese Communist Party General Secretary Jiang Zeming became interested in 推背图 [Tui bei tu], a superstitious book of prophecy from the 7th century Tang Dynasty. Not only did the editors replace "Mr. Jiang" with "they" to keep the paragraph readable, but they also cut controversial sentences.

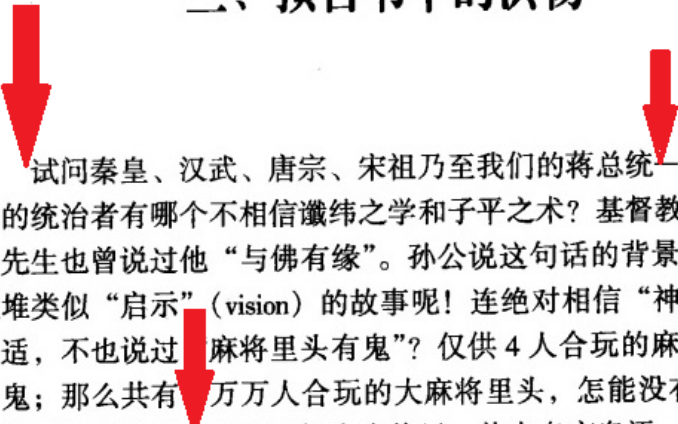
三、預言書中的蔣毛與洪楊

最近從香港傳來的大陸故事說，新任國家元首江澤民對中國古老的預言書《推背圖》，發生了興趣。此一傳聞可能是好事者所捏造。但是縱使實有其事，也不值得大驚小怪。試問秦皇、漢武、唐宗、宋祖乃至我們的蔣總統、毛主席——我國歷來的統治者有哪個不相信識緯之學和子平之術？基督教徒的孫中山先生也曾說過他「與佛有緣」。孫公說這句話的背景也曾有一大堆類似「啓示」(vision)的故事呢！連絕對相信「神滅論」的胡適，不也說過「麻將裡頭有鬼」？僅供四人合玩的麻將裡頭都有鬼；那麼共有十萬萬人合玩的大麻將裡頭，怎能沒有鬼？！我們的歷朝統治者，包括最近的江主席，想在

Figure 1. Original text on pages 59-60 of 晚清七十年 [The Final Seventy Years of the Qing Dynasty] with underlined words removed and the anonymous “they (他们)” replacing “Mr. Jiang (江公)” in the mainland China edition.¹⁷

¹⁷ 唐德剛, 晚清七十年 (台北: 遠流出版公司, 1998), 59-60.

三、预言书中的洪杨



试问秦皇、汉武、唐宗、宋祖乃至我们的蒋总统——我国历来的统治者有哪个不相信谶纬之学和子平之术？基督教徒的孙中山先生也曾说过他“与佛有缘”。孙公说这句话的背景也曾有一大堆类似“启示”（vision）的故事呢！连绝对相信“神灭论”的胡适，不也说过“麻将里头有鬼”？仅供4人合玩的麻将里头都有鬼；那么共有万万人合玩的大麻将里头，怎能没有鬼？！我们的历朝统治者，想在这场大麻将里，找点鬼言鬼语，有什么稀罕呢？！朋友。兴致好的时候，谈谈《推背图》，聊聊《烧饼歌》，算不得什么“提倡迷信”也。——茶余酒后，我们谈得，他谈不得？只是我们谈后直如清风过耳；他们谈后，就要变成“小道消息”罢了。

Figure 2. Corresponding mainland China edition of 晚清七十年 [The Final Seventy Years of the Qing Dynasty].¹⁸

Another Chinese-American scholar, Hsia Chih-tsing published *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction* in 1961, which was revised and republished three times and had become a classic in the field of the history of Chinese literature. One of the important chapters in the book is on Communist literature since 1958, in which Hsia criticized the CCP for stifling literary expression in China. In 2005, Fudan University Press in Shanghai published the first Chinese edition in China. Numerous sections, including the whole chapter on Communist literature, were removed.

In 2012, the Hainan Publishing House published a translation of U. S. President Richard Nixon's *Leaders: Profiles and Reminiscences of Men Who Have Shaped the Modern World*. In the chapter about Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, paragraphs about ruthless killings by Chinese Communists were omitted.

¹⁸ 唐德刚, 晚清七十年 (长沙: 岳麓出版社, 1999), 97.

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attack on Zhou Enlai. The verdict on the memorial speech given at Zhou's funeral cannot be changed. The people do not support the reversal of the verdict."

As a Leninist revolutionary, Zhou often exercised power ruthlessly and cruelly. A friend from secondary school who met Zhou many years later observed that "his eyes were far colder; they had become the eyes of a man who could kill." The history of Chinese politics and government is filled with bloodshed, but the tyranny of the Communist regime is in a category all its own. Mao, Zhou, and their comrades have been directly or indirectly responsible for the killings of tens of millions of their own people.

I became painfully familiar with the utter brutality of the Chinese Communists during an around-the-world trip I took as Vice President in 1953. I was riding along the border area between Hong Kong and Communist China and stopped to talk to a farmer. He told me, "My wife and two children and I walked one hundred miles to freedom in the new territories in Hong Kong." I asked why they went to such great lengths to leave Communist China. He replied, "My only brother was blind and had a farm next to me. Because he was blind he could not produce as much as the Communists required in order to pay taxes. The Communists took him away and shot him. We began walking to freedom."

My interpreter told me a similarly sad story about a seventy-year-old woman who frequently crossed the waterway that runs along the border between the Hong Kong territories and China because she had land on both sides. "One day when she crossed, a Communist shot her down," he said. "The first shot only wounded her. He walked up to her and pumped three bullets into her back."

The Communist ideology inured Zhou to such heartless cruelty. Marxism-Leninism has a determinist view of history. Its adherents believe that history will inevitably lead to world communism and that it is their job to hurry history along. By viewing themselves in this way, they sidestep all considerations of morality because all the crimes they commit are simply deemed necessary for the furtherance of history.

Figure 3. Original text in Richard Nixon's *Leaders* with boxed words removed in the Chinese translation.¹⁹

¹⁹ Richard Nixon, *Leaders* (New York: Warner Book Inc., 1982), 240.

~ Leaders ~
领袖们

礼，不肯脱帽，广东一群在街道居委会看电视的人便喊出“揍她！”

邓小平，这位周所选拔的副手，在悼词中那样高度颂扬这位已逝世的总理，致使这篇演说变成了一个政治问题。极左派在标语中呼吁毛予以谴责，说“这个评价应该推倒”。毛那时在政治上虽然是同情左派的，但是据称他回答说：“对周恩来进行任何攻击都肯定会遭到人民的反对。在周的追悼会上所做的悼词里的评价不能改变。人民不支持把这个评价推翻掉。”

马克思列宁主义有一种决定论的历史观。它的信徒们相信历史必定走向世界共产主义，相信加速历史的这种进程是他们的职责。他们这样看待自己，所以就避开道德的一切考虑。

Figure 4. Corresponding Chinese translation of 领袖们 [Leaders].²⁰

In addition to deliberately cutting paragraphs or sentences, the Chinese censor also attempted to change the meaning of the words to make the content less offensive. For instance, in the sentence “Zhou’s intellectual power and personal magnetism entranced many people who did not realize that these qualities went hand in hand with those of a ruthless political actor,” the phrase “political actor” was translated as “political activist [政治活动家]” or “political action taker [政治实行家]”²¹. Actually, from the context, the word “actor” chosen by Nixon means “theatrical performer [演员]” – just as a high-ranking Nationalist official described in the same section, “Finally, I came to recognize that there was not a grain of truth in him (Zhou). ... But in the end, I realized that it’s all acting. He is the greatest actor I have ever seen. He’d laugh one moment and cry the next, and make his audience laugh and cry with him. But it’s all acting!”²² Since the word “actor” carries a negative connotation for the description of Zhou Enlai, no doubt the translator or the editor tried to use a relatively neutral term.

In 1999, Amartya Sen, winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics, published *Development as Freedom*. Sen was famous for his work on famine, and especially, for his proposition that famines do not occur in democratic countries. “No famine has ever taken place in the history of the world in a functioning democracy,” he wrote in *Development as Freedom*.²³ This, he argued, is because democratic governments “have to win elections and face public criticism and have a strong incentive to undertake measures to avert famines and other

²⁰ 尼克松, 领袖们 (海口: 海南出版社, 2012), 260.

²¹ 尼克松, 领袖们 (北京: 世界知识出版社, 1983), 266.

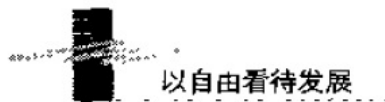
²² Richard Nixon, *Leaders* (New York: Warner Book Inc., 1982), 237.

²³ Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Anchor Books, 1999), 16.

catastrophes.”²⁴ The book mentions, “Famines have tended to occur in colonial territories.... or one-party states (as in Ukraine in the 1930s, or China during 1958–1961, or Cambodia in the 1970s).” However, in the 2002 Chinese edition of *Development as Freedom*, the reference to the Chinese famines “or China during 1958–1961” was deleted. Also, in his book, phrases such as “multi-party democracy” and “freedom of speech” were either removed or changed.

India, or Botswana, or Zimbabwe). Famines have tended to occur in colonial territories governed by rulers from elsewhere (as in British India or in an Ireland administered by alienated English rulers), or in one-party states (as in the Ukraine in the 1930s, or China during 1958–1961, or Cambodia in the 1970s), or in military dictatorships (as in Ethiopia, or Somalia, or some of the Sahel countries in the near past). Indeed, as this book goes to press, the two countries that seem

Figure 5. Original text in *Development as Freedom* with underlined words removed in the Chinese translation.²⁵



不管是经济富裕的国家（如当代的西欧或北美），还是相对贫穷的国家（如独立后的印度、博茨瓦纳或津巴布韦）。饥荒通常发生在外来统治者治理的殖民地（如在英属印度和由异族英格兰统治者掌管下的爱尔兰），或者一党制国家（如在 20 世纪 30 年代的乌克兰和 20 世纪 70 年代的柬埔寨），或者

Figure 6. Corresponding Chinese translation of 以自由看待发展 [Development as Freedom].²⁶

The events revolving around the censorship of Hillary Clinton’s *Living History* in China in 2003 once again created an uproar in the publishing world. Shortly after the publication of the book in America, Yilin, a Chinese press renowned for publishing foreign language books, obtained the publishing rights. The Chinese version became available in the same year. However, all the criticisms of social controls in China in the book were cut without notifying the author, or Simon & Schuster, the American publisher. For instance, the description of Harry Wu, the Chinese dissident in America, as a “human rights activist who had spent nineteen years as a political prisoner in Chinese labor camps” was removed (Figure 7. and Figure 8.). In a section referencing the Tiananmen Square Incident of 1989, Clinton wrote that she was “haunted by the events at Tiananmen. (Former President Clinton) and I debated whether we should attend a ceremony in Tiananmen Square, where Chinese

²⁴ Ibid., 16.

²⁵ Ibid., 16.

²⁶ 阿马蒂亚·森, 以自由看待发展 (北京: 中国人民大学出版社, 2002), 12.

authorities had used tanks to forcibly suppress pro-democracy demonstrations in June of 1989.” This section was also cut from the Chinese translation. Moreover, two sections that mentioned the Chinese governmental suppression of NGOs were deleted.²⁷

After learning about the excisions in the Chinese edition, Hillary Clinton demanded the removal of all copies of the translation from the Chinese bookstores. Meanwhile, she asked the American publisher to post the deleted and altered texts on its website.

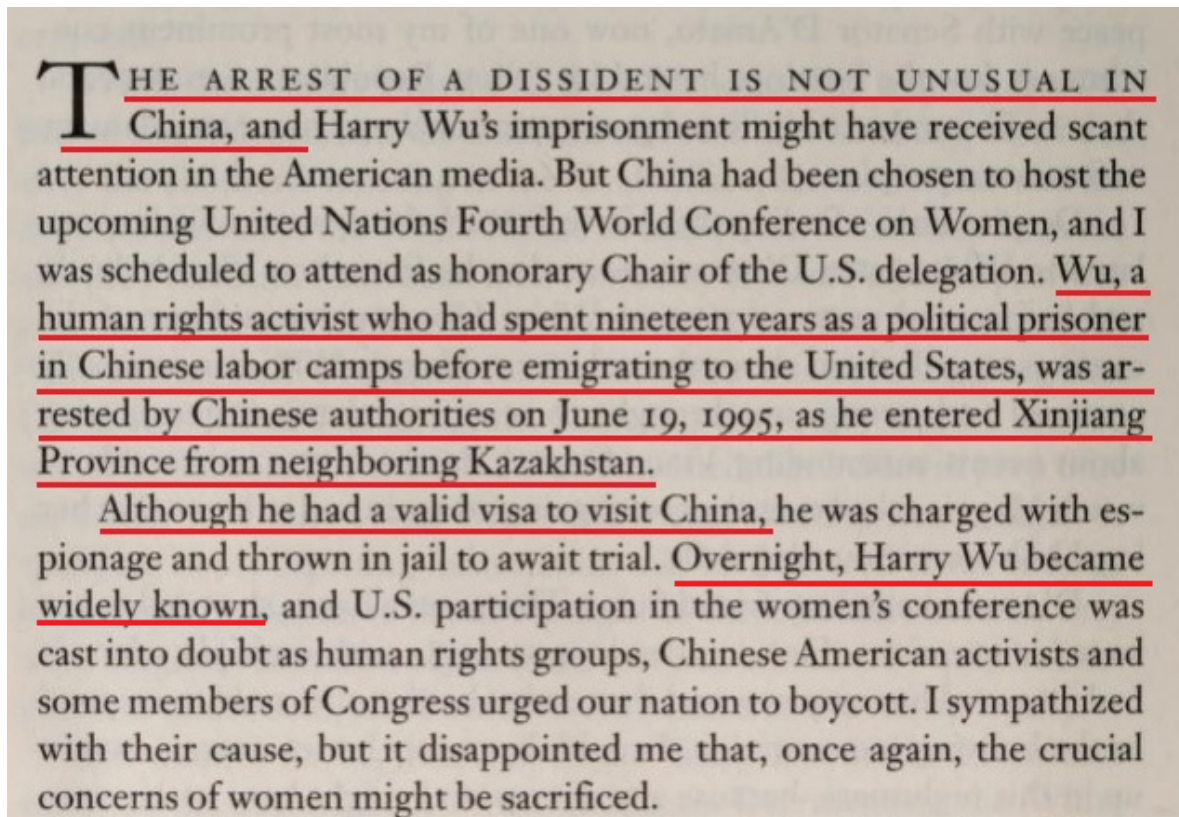


Figure 7. Original text in Hillary Clinton's *Living History* with underlined words removed in Chinese translation²⁸

²⁷ 希拉里, 亲历历史: 希拉里回忆录 (南京: 译林出版社, 2003), 263.

²⁸ Hillary Clinton, *Living History* (New York: Simon Schuster, 2003), 298.

吴弘达被捕的消息原本不会受到美国媒体的太多关注。但是中国已经获选为联合国第四届妇女大会的主办国,我也准备以美国代表团名誉主席的身份参加即将召开的大会。

吴弘达被控从事间谍活动,因此被拘押并等待审判。由于各种团体和一些美国国会议员呼吁美国抵制联合国第四届妇女大会,美国是否与会变得不确定起来。我同情他们的主张,可是妇女的权益可能再度被牺牲令我感到失望。

Figure 8. Corresponding Chinese translation of 亲历历史: 希拉里回忆 [Living History].²⁹

Jonathan D. Spence is one of the leading scholars on China in the West. His *The Search for Modern China* has become a classic text for students of China since 1990. In 2005, a Shanghai press published 追寻现代中国 1600–1912 [The Search for Modern China: 1600–1912].³⁰ In 2019, Sichuan People's Publishing House published a new edition of *The Search for Modern China: 1600–1949*.³¹ Both Chinese editions underwent extensive cuttings, with all of the chapters on the post-1949 history of China removed. An examination of the original book shows that Spence provided a critical analysis of Mao Zedong, the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping, and the Tiananmen Square Incident of 1989, etc., which are vital for the understanding of modern China. Fu Guoyong, a well-known Chinese independent scholar, revealed his disappointment about the poor quality of a scholarly publication by a renowned historian when he read the thin Shanghai edition of *The Search for Modern China: 1600–1949*. He felt cheated when he came across a complete three-volume Taiwan translation at the Hong Kong Book Fair in 2017.³²

In a similar vein, *The Rise of Modern China* by Immanuel C.Y. Hsü, a professor at the University of California at Santa Barbara, was published in America in 1970. Six editions have since been published, and the book became a standard for American college students of modern Chinese history. In 2013, a heavily censored Chinese edition of Hsü's book appeared in bookstores. However, chapters on the Cultural Revolution, Lin Biao, Taiwan, Tiananmen Square, and the Chinese model of development, were all deleted.³³

²⁹ 希拉里, 亲历历史: 希拉里回忆录 (南京: 译林出版社, 2003), 263.

³⁰ 史景迁, 追寻现代中国: 1600–1912 (上海: 上海远东出版社, 2005).

³¹ 史景迁, 追寻现代中国: 1600–1949 (成都: 四川人民出版社, 2019).

³² 傅国涌, “追寻现代中国 [The Search for Modern China],” Loongese View, November 8, 2017, accessed February 27, 2020, <https://loongese.com/blog/zhuixunxiandaizhongguo>.

³³ 徐中约, 中国近代史 1600–2000 中国的奋斗 (北京: 世界图书出版公司, 2013), 15–16.

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Figure 9. Original text in *The Rise of Modern China* with boxed chapters removed in the Chinese translation.³⁴

³⁴ Immanuel C.Y. Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), XX.

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Figure 10. Corresponding Chinese translation of the Table of Contents of 中国近代史 1600-2000 中国的奋斗 [The Rise of Modern China].³⁵

As the founding father of Singapore and the maker of the “Singapore Miracle,” Lee Kuan Yew is considered one of the great leaders of the 20th century. In September 2000, Lee

³⁵ 徐中约, 中国近代史 1600-2000 中国的奋斗 (北京: 世界图书出版公司, 2013), 15.

published *The Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew (1965-2000)* in Singapore. The publication of his deeply insightful book naturally attracted worldwide attention. Lee's 799-page memoir contained 43 chapters. After heavy censorship, the book was published in China as *The Economic Take-off: The Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew (1965-2000)* in 2001, but it was reduced to 656 pages spreading across 37 chapters. Ironically, as a book intended for Chinese readers, it lacked descriptions of China. Five consecutive chapters related to China including “尾巴特长的中国龙 [The Chinese Dragon with Long Tail],” “邓小平时代 [Deng Xiaoping's Time],” “北京城外看神州 [Looking at China outside Beijing],” “天安门事件之后 [After Tiananmen Incident],” and “走向富裕的中国 [Towards a Rich China]” disappeared without explanation. Also gone was a chapter “共产党的衰亡 [Decline of Communism]” outlining the demise of the communist influence in Singapore.

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Figure 11. Original text in Table of Contents of 李光耀回忆录 1965-2000 [The Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew 1965-2000] with boxed chapters removed in the 2001 mainland Chinese edition.³⁶

³⁶ 李光耀, 李光耀回忆录 1965-2000 (新加坡: 联合早报, 2000).

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鸣谢·····	(648)
名人读《李光耀回忆录》·····	(651)

Figure 12. Corresponding part of the 2001 Chinese edition of the Table of Contents of 经济腾飞路 李光耀回忆录 1965-2000 [The Economic Take-off: The Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew 1965-2000].³⁷

Deliberately altering the content of a book by changing the meaning of words so they look “harmless” is another technique used by censors. As a result, the doctored texts could provide readers with misleading information. For instance, in the Chinese version of Henry Kissinger’s 2011 book *On China*, the “tragedy” of Tiananmen in June 1989 was translated as an “incident,” a distinction that may have been lost on the millions of Chinese readers. Kissinger and Deng Xiaoping’s conversation regarding the Chinese political dissident Fang Lizhi six months after the Tiananmen Square Massacre of June 4, 1989, was also removed from the Chinese translation.

Another example of changes in content in Chinese translation is from *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* by Harvard Professor Ezra Vogel. The alteration involved coverage of CCP General Secretary Jiang Zemin and was intended to protect the image of the

³⁷ 李光耀, 经济腾飞路 李光耀回忆录 1965-2000 (北京: 外文出版社, 2001).

leader and thereby place the Party in a positive light. The removed sentences in the figures below are self-explanatory.

Deng's Finale: The Southern Journey, 1992

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from making their way to Beijing, they could not stop copies of the paper reaching audiences throughout China, including in the capital.

By mid-February, several days before Deng returned to Beijing, Jiang Zemin was already saying publicly that he supported Deng's calls for further reform.⁵¹ From the reports he had received from Zhuhai, Jiang realized that Deng was determined to remove him if he did not boldly promote reform and opening. Jiang could see from Deng's visit to the south that he had attracted a great deal of support from key leaders in Beijing and from local leaders. Later Jiang acknowledged that by then he had concluded that Deng's views would prevail and that he, Jiang, would be wise to support them.⁵²

Figure 13. Original text in *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* with underlined words removed in the Chinese translation.³⁸

2月中旬，邓小平回京前几天，江泽民已经在公开说，他拥护邓小平进一步改革的呼吁。⁴⁷江泽民通过从珠海得到的报告认识到，邓小平已经下定决心，大胆推进改革开放。江泽民从邓小平的南行中，能够看到他争取到了北京和地方重要领导人的很多支持。⁴⁸

郑必坚整理出的邓小平特区讲话概要完成后，江泽民经政治局批准，把稿子发给了人数有限的最高层干部。与邓小平的即兴讲话相比，整理后的讲话稿已不那么咄咄逼人，但依然有力，直截了当。当党内领导层开始意识到邓小平南行所受到的关注并读过报告后，他们认识到邓小平尽管已经年迈，但他在发动一场决定性的战役，

Figure 14. Corresponding Chinese translation of 邓小平时代 [Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China].³⁹

Authors such as Vogel caved-in to Chinese publishers' demands. Having arranged for the publication of *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, in which sections about "Tiananmen Massacre" and Chinese leaders Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin were altered,

³⁸ Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012), 679.

³⁹ 傅高义. 邓小平时代 (北京: 三联书店, 2013 年), 627.

Vogel responded to critics by arguing that it was better to have ninety percent of the book available than zero.⁴⁰

The deals between authors and publishers are varied and depend on the scope of censorship. In 2013, Kim Ghattas, a journalist for the BBC and an author who has covered the U.S. State Department, published *The Secretary: A Journey with Hillary Clinton from Beirut to the Heart of American Power*. In this book, Ghattas wrote about U.S. diplomacy under Hillary Clinton. The book was translated into Chinese in November 2013, with deletions in dozens of places. Instead of cutting content, such as her charge that Beijing was blocking the Internet “to make sure the Chinese didn’t see what people power could do to autocrats in the age of Twitter and twenty-four-hour news,” the Chinese editor did mention the deletions in the footnotes. Both sides likely made compromises regarding the changes. The author gave in on some points of “disputed content,” while the editor, for fear of censure from the above, further sanitized the book before releasing it to the press.

I was particularly struck by how, despite all the talk about the end of the American empire, no one seemed to be curious about what the Chinese were saying to Mubarak. The Chinese of course had even less leverage over him than the United States did, but the protestors craving outside recognition were neither asking nor getting it from China—or from Russia for that matter. Beijing was quiet, too busy blocking the Internet at home to make sure the Chinese didn’t see what people power could do to autocrats in the age of Twitter and twenty-four-hour news. Reacting to a major international crisis by looking inward with paranoia was not exactly the stuff of a superpower. Even the European countries barely uttered a word. Somehow what America said, what it did or didn’t do, still mattered, even if people’s grasp of what made up American power was out of touch with reality.

Figure 15. Original text in *The Secretary: A Journey with Hillary Clinton from Beirut to the Heart of American Power* with underlined words removed in the Mainland Chinese edition.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Andrew Jacobs, “Authors Accept Censors’ Rules to Sell in China,” *New York Times*, October 19, 2013.

⁴¹ Kim Ghattas, *The Secretary: A Journey with Hillary Clinton from Beirut to the Heart of American Power* (New York: Times Books, 2013), 238.

让我尤其感到意外的是，大家都在谈美帝国的终结之类的，几乎没人关心中国对埃及局势的态度。对比美国，中国对穆巴拉克没有那么大影响力，但埃及街头的示威者似乎没有要求也没有获得中国和俄罗斯的认同。北京一边保持沉默，一边忙着封锁国内的互联网连接。¹ 这种面对国际危机，第一反应是偏执地控制国内舆论的做法，实在没有超级大国的气度。甚至欧洲国家大多也沉默不语。尽管人们对美国权力的想象已经落后于时代，但美国的表态，美国做与不做什么，还有着巨大的影响力。

然而，一位美国官员却向我抱怨：矛盾就在这里。一方面，人们指责美国总是操控所有事情，到处施展霸权。另一方面，人们又指责我们无法操控所有事情，霸权得还不够彻底。现在只能由埃及人民自己做出对未来的抉择。”不管华盛顿做了什么，世界的期待总是与美国的政策相反。

美国真正能做的，大概也就介于霸权和无霸权之间。所以美国只能每天观察埃及街头的示威者，分析他们的诉求。当示威者群情汹涌时，美国的态度也更强硬。当示威者稍为平静时，美国就放软身段。华盛顿的每个相关官员每天都在打电话给每个认识的埃及官员沟通，并期望穆巴拉克发表下一次演说。但

1 此处删除62字。——编者注

Figure 16. A corresponding part in 见证 国务卿希拉里·克林顿 [The Secretary: A Journey with Hillary Clinton from Beirut to the Heart of American Power] in the mainland Chinese edition with “Note 1. Sixty-two words were removed here – Editor.”⁴²

Under the Chinese censorship system, books published in Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan also undergo strict scrutiny. In 2009, 巨流河 [The Great Flowing River], the autobiography of Taiwan-based author Chi Pang-yuan (Qi Bangyuan), was published in Taiwan, and soon it became a bestseller in the Chinese reading community outside China. Subsequently, the mainland China edition appeared in bookstores. Compared with the Taiwan edition, written in the traditional Chinese writing system and totaling some 250,000 words, the simplified Chinese edition on the mainland only had 220,000 words, a fifteen percent reduction. At first, San lian shu dian, the publisher in Beijing, hoped to delete the chapter on the development of Taiwanese literature. But Chi Pang-yuan insisted that “if that chapter is deleted entirely,

⁴² 金·伽塔丝, 见证 国务卿希拉里·克林顿 (北京: 中国友谊出版公司, 2013), 258.

the book will not be published.” Chi revealed that she wished to promote the understanding and appreciation of Taiwanese literature on the mainland and to have different voices heard.⁴³

For Chi’s book, the censors erased or modified everything likely to be contentious, such as the author’s views on Chinese history and politics, especially, on the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party. For instance, hints of the author’s nostalgia for the glorious days of Yenching University, an elite school in China founded by American missionaries in the 1910s, and her repugnance for the psychological termination of the collective memory of the school by the Chinese Communists after 1949, were altered or removed.

Sentences such as “I believe that in the second half of the 20th century *no one dared* to openly express his or her feelings to cherish Yenching University.... The political forces had flatly wiped out the collective memories of them!” (Figure. 15) was changed into “I believe that in the second half of the 20th century *not many people could* openly express his or her feelings to cherish Yenching University.” (Figure. 16). It is apparent that the semantic manipulation by a deliberate rephrasing of “*no one dared*” into “*not many people could*” considerably diluted the message the author was conveying.

The castration of Chi’s book in more than fifty places prompted defiance in mainland China. Readers began to seek the Taiwan edition. Some went to great lengths to ensure that censored parts were exposed by putting online comparisons of the unexpurgated Taiwan edition with that of the mainland.⁴⁴

⁴³ 廖珪如, “藝文短波—巨流河 克服觀點爭議在京出版 [Arts and Literature News Briefs: Great Flowing River Got Published in Beijing amid Controversies],” 中國時報, November 5, 2010, accessed March 19, 2020, <https://www.chinatimes.com/newspapers/20101105000924-260306?chdtv>.

⁴⁴ 二马, “整理 巨流河 台湾版与大陆版删减对比 [Comparisons between the Taiwan Edition and the Mainland Edition of Great Flowing River],” Freewechat, December 19, 2016, accessed March 13, 2020, <https://freewechat.com/a/MzI0NTI3Mzc0MA==/2650192829/2>.

柳志琦也興沖沖地離開四川家鄉到了北平。她讀的燕京大學戰時遷往成都華西壩，我們同班大約有十人在那裡，都只差一年大學畢業。我在復員到武漢上學前，與她在北平重逢，也同遊歡聚。她初次到北方，充滿了好奇，古都的政治文化場面很大。柳志琦應是親身目睹燕京大學末日的人，因是「美帝」的基督教會大學，解放之初即被斷然廢校，美麗的校園，著名的未名湖（多不吉祥的名字！）硬生生地變成了北京大學校園；一九五〇年以後寫未名湖畔大學生活回憶的是北京大學校友。我相信在二十世紀後半葉的中國，沒有人敢於公開懷念燕京大學和她的優雅傳統。政治力量便如此斷然消滅了一個共同的回憶！我那充滿文學情懷的好友，在五十年激盪之後，如何回首我們分手的一九四九年？

Figure 17. Original text in Chi Pang-yuan's 巨流河 [Great Flowing River] with underlined words removed or altered in the Mainland Chinese edition.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ 齊邦媛, 巨流河 (台北: 天下遠見出版公司, 2009), 571.

一九四六年暑假，胜利复员的各大学，开始由四川、云南迁回原校。秋季上课，柳志琦也兴冲冲地离开四川家乡到了北平。她读的燕京大学战时迁往成都华西坝，我们同班大约有十人在那里，都只差一年大学毕业。我在复员到武汉上学前，与她在北平重逢，也同游欢聚。她初次到北方，充满了好奇，古都的政治文化场面很大。柳志琦应是亲身目睹燕京大学末日的人，因是“美帝”的基督教会大学，解放之初即被断然废校，美丽的校园，著名的未名湖（多不吉祥的名字！）硬生生地变成了北京大学校园；一九五〇年以后写未名湖畔大学生活回忆的是北京大学校友。我相信在二十世纪后半叶的中国，没有多少人可以公开怀念燕京大学和她的优雅传统。我那充满文学情怀的好友，在五十年激荡之后，如何回首我们分手的一九四九年？

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Figure 18. A corresponding part in Chi Pang-yuan's 巨流河 [Great Flowing River] in the Mainland Chinese edition.⁴⁶

It is a general practice for Chinese publishers to compile and republish collections of Chinese rare books and primary source materials. Frequently they encounter issues with government regulations that content that undermines national policies regarding ethnic groups or that hinder national unity must be changed. Due to these regulations, publishers could do nothing but publish abridged versions of primary sources including diaries, travelogues, and genealogies, which resulted in historical denialism.

Chen Da, a well-known Chinese sociologist, published a book in 1946 that documented his observations during his travels in China and abroad in the 1930s. In 2018, Yunnan University Press republished his book under a different title. In a few places, the editor mentioned that some content had been deleted. For example, on page 380, the editor put a footnote: "Sentences describing the customs of headhunting were removed here." A comparison of the original book showed that the editor took off the following words: "Some of the folk customs are noteworthy for social scientists. For instance, the uncivilized ethnic group of Wa took pride in headhunting. They cut off people's heads and put them on tops of wooden poles ranging from a few dozen to two hundred lined up along the road near the entrance to their village." (Figures 19-20).

It appears that the editor deemed the sentences offensive to the ethnic minority group mentioned and deleted them accordingly. However, the revision does more harm than good. In reality, scholars need to draw upon primary sources for the interpretation and presentation of history, and any inaccurate or incomplete recording of historical field observations by social scientists is unscientific in the first place since it destroys the foundation of research. Some of the revised editions may likely become the established

⁴⁶ 齐邦媛, 巨流河 (北京: 三联书店, 2010), 360.

source materials in which generation after generation of scholars and students will engage. As a result, the continued reinterpretation and appraisal of the redacted materials may present a distorted view of history.

並云將普洱茶送給英皇后，當時稱為有名的土產，足見普洱茶早已名揚海外。有些民風值得社會學者的注意，例如未開化的孟買族，以取得人的頭顱為榮，往往割下人頭，置於木之上端，成一單行，立於入村的路口，少者數十木，多者逾二百木。司高脫死於一九三五年，本書於次年出版。

印度人口普查（三二、五、十三）

印度一九四一年的人口普查，其結果最近公布(British Embassy, Broadcast News Bulletin,

Figure 19. The original texts of 浪迹十年 [Travelogues of Ten Years].⁴⁷

⁴⁷ 陈达, 浪迹十年 (上海: 商务印书馆, 1946), 373.

《掸山记事》(三十二·四·二十九)

《掸山记事》(*Scott of the Shan Hill*) 是 Scott 夫人记其丈夫在缅甸的生平。司高脱是苏格兰人,其一生在缅甸工作,对于缅甸划归英属一事,有重大的贡献。缅甸与安南、暹罗划界时,亦任划界大臣。至对于中国的关系,即中缅划界一事最为重要。司高脱忠于英国,字里行间,时时透露,对于划界自然时时为英国打算。关于景东的地势与人情风俗的描写,为我国册籍所未载,并云将普洱茶送给英皇后,当时称为有名的土产,足见普洱茶早已名扬海外。……^① 司高脱死于 1935 年,本书于次年出版。

空南文庫・大家文丛

印度人口普查(三十二·五·十三)

印度 1941 年的人口普查,其结果最近公布(British Embassy, *Broadcast News Bulletin*, May 10, 1913), 全国总人口有 3.88 亿,自

① 此处删除描写猎头风俗的一段文字。——编者注(2017 年)

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Figure 20. The revised section in 现代中国人口·联大琐记 [Population in Contemporary China: Notes of National Southwestern Associated University].⁴⁸

Another example can be found in the republication of the book *The Diaries of My Journey West* by Chen Feiran published in 1911. In his diaries, Chen recorded witness accounts of the killings and destruction by Chinese Muslim rebels in the 1870s. Phrases and sentences carrying negative connotations about the Chinese Muslims, such as “Muslims were number one trouble makers under the administrations of Tongzhi and Guangxu (1861-1909),” and “Muslims were incorrigible rebels who started rebellions once every few decades.” (Figure 21). In the republication in 2016, the editors replaced all the sensitive words with ellipses (Figure 22), making it hard for readers to comprehend. Generally, serious research is based on original un-redacted full-text materials. Obscured parts of a text, even for moral reasons, or for reasons of political correctness, present a dilemma for researchers. The whitewashed depictions of Chinese Muslims will result in knowledge of the truth passing away with the people who lived or witnessed it. What is worse, the altered version will be taken as true by future generations.

⁴⁸ 陈达, 现代中国人口·联大琐记 (昆明: 云南大学出版社, 2018), 380.

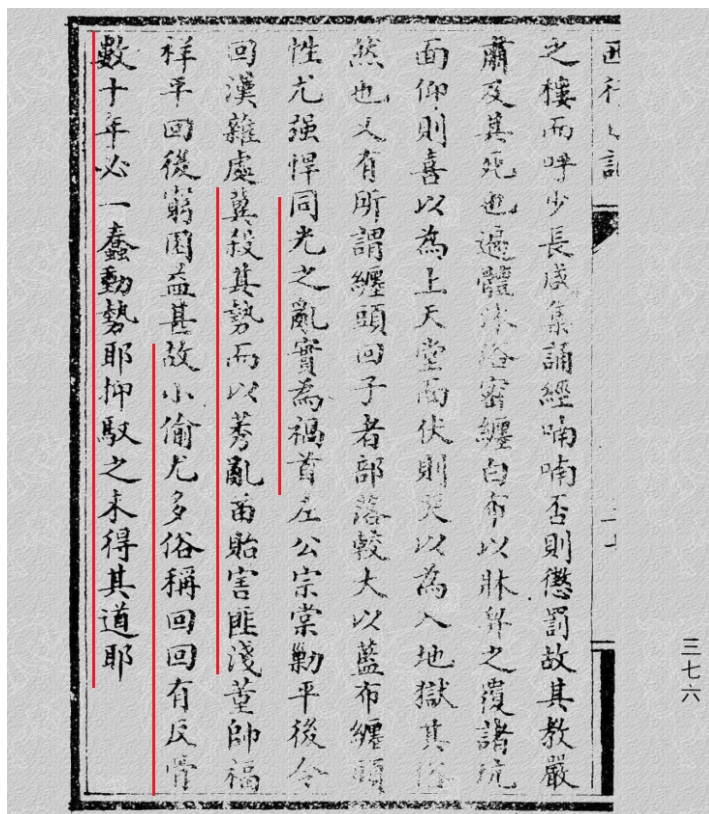


Figure 21. Original text in “西行日记,” 历代日记丛钞 [Diaries of My Journey West] with underlined words removed in the republication “西行日记,” 历代日记丛钞⁴⁹

回回

回回，唐回纥也。高鼻深目，性喜清洁，衣服言语与汉人、土人略同……盖自同光以来，叛乱相寻，酿为世仇。对西番不敢启衅，畏其强也。其人……善经商，灵秀者为阿混^①，以长乡里，主宗教，即杀鸡宰羊，非阿混至不敢自专。每逢礼拜，一人登教堂之楼而呼，少长咸集，诵经喃喃，否则惩罚，故其教严肃。及其口也，遍体沐浴，密缠白布，以床昇之。覆诸坑，面仰则喜，以为上天堂；面伏则哭，以为入地狱。其俗然也。又有所谓缠头回子者，部落较大，以蓝布缠头，性尤强悍……左公宗棠剿平后，令回汉杂处……董帅福祥平回后，穷困益甚……

Figure 22. Corresponding page of the republication of “西行日记,” 西域行程: 外三种 (Diaries of My Journey West).⁵⁰

⁴⁹ 陈斐然, “西行日记,” 李德龙, 俞冰, 历代日记丛钞 143 册 (北京: 学苑出版社, 2006), 376.

⁵⁰ 陈斐然, “西行日记,” (宋) 继业, 张国栋点校, 西域行程: 外三种 (兰州: 甘肃文化出版社, 2016), 197.

The policies of China's State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film, and Television regulate every aspect of imported books, such as the quantity and the content of the publications. The censors will not even let go of imported original reference works, including English dictionaries. The absurdity of this type of censorship often aroused ridicule. In 2009, netizens posted several complaints about the blacking-out of *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* entries for Taipei, Taiwan, Taiwanese, Formosa, and the Republic of China.⁵¹ According to the posts, the censors went to ludicrous lengths to open the plastic wrapping around the books to black out the entries one by one with marker pens before repackaging them to make them look as if they had never been opened. Similarly, in 2016, *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* sold by Shanghai Foreign Language Bookstore was found to have pages with words such as "Taiwan," this time, torn.⁵² In another instance, an entry was covered with a rectangular label.⁵³ For the record, the definition of Taiwan in *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* is: "island China off SE coast E of Fujian; belonged to Japan 1895–1945; since 1949 seat of (Nationalist) Republic of China (* Taipei) area 13,807 square miles (35,760 square kilometers), pop 22,300,929."

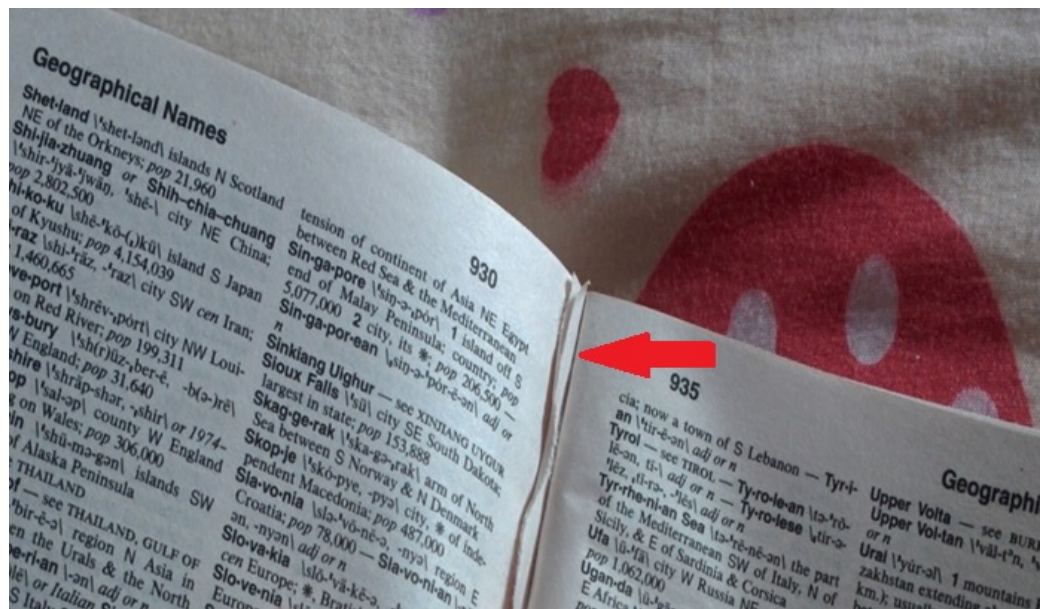


Figure 23. Pages 933-934 with the entry of Taiwan torn in *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* New Edition 2016.

⁵¹ Simon Denyer and Luna Lin, "The absurd face of China's censorship: Bookstore tears out Taiwan page from Webster's," *Washington Post*, October 13, 2016, accessed April 1, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/10/13/the-absurd-face-of-chinas-censorship-bookstore-tears-out-taiwan-page-from-websters/>.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.



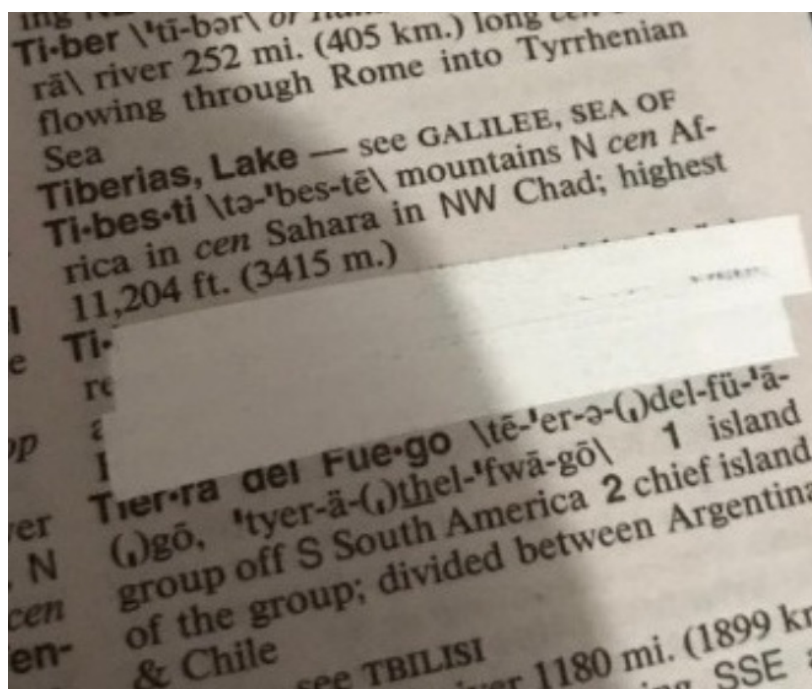


Figure 25. The entry of Tibet in *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* was covered with white correction fluid.

The most recent case of book censorship is that of *Permanent Record*, a book published in 2019 by Edward Snowden, the American whistleblower, who shocked the world by revealing highly classified information from the National Security Agency (NSA) in 2013. Shortly afterward, a Chinese translation 永久记录 [Permanent Record] came out in a heavily censored edition. The censor deleted texts about authoritarianism, democracy, freedom of speech, and privacy.⁵⁵ In a chapter covering the events of the Arab spring in 2011, the expurgator removed Snowden's observations on people involved in the protest: "The crowds were calling for an end to oppression, censorship, and precarity. They were declaring that in a truly just society, the people were not answerable to the government; the government was answerable to the people." The sentence, "Authoritarian states are typically not governments of laws, but governments of leaders, who demand loyalty from their subjects and are hostile to dissent," was removed, too. Other sensitive sections such as China's surveillance system, the Great Firewall of China, The Onion Router (free and open-source software for enabling anonymous communication), and the autonomy in Hong Kong were also censored. Snowden's remark touched the nerves of the censor since it was a real reflection of the situation in China.

Snowden criticized Chinese censors for a violation of his publishing agreement, posted images of the censored pages alongside the original pages, and made pleas to Chinese readers to help find the missing or doctored parts. He said in his post, "Let us compile a correct and unabridged version of #PermanentRecord to publish freely online in Chinese, by

⁵⁵ Lily Kuo, "Edward Snowden says autobiography has been censored in China: Sections on democracy and privacy appear to be missing in Chinese edition of *Permanent Record*," *The Guardian*, November 12, 2019, accessed January 15, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/nov/12/edward-snowden-says-autobiography-permanent-record-censored-in-china>.

assembling a cadre of translators to expose every shameful redaction the censors demanded.”⁵⁶

Books published and then banned

In 1999 Chinese author Xiao Shu published the book 历史的先声: 半个世纪前的庄严承诺: 《新华日报》《解放日报》社论选 [Heralds of History: Solemn Promises Half a Century Ago: A Selection of Editorials of Xinhua Daily and Liberation Daily] by Shantou University Press.⁵⁷ The book was a compilation of editorials for the CCP newspapers *Xinhua Daily* and *Liberation Daily* published before 1949, which were mainly about the CCP's claims to build a new constitutional and democratic order in China to promote the common good of the people. A few months after the publication, at an internal meeting, Ding Guangen, head of the CPD, slammed the publisher for publishing the book and for violating publication policies. A subsequent ban on the book took place nationwide, while the authorities suspended Shantou University Press for rectification, and transferred the head of the press out of Shantou University. All inventory books were located and turned into pulp. The authorities in Beijing even dispatched public security officers to search and confiscate copies of the book in bookstores in Beijing.⁵⁸ It is worth noting that in 2013 the University of Hong Kong Press republished the book in Hong Kong.

Sexuality, homosexuality, and drugs are literary taboos in China. In 1999, Zhou Weihui (Wei Hui), a Chinese novelist, published 上海宝贝 [Shanghai Baby], a semi-autobiographical novel about the life of the Chinese returnees and cultural elites of Hong Kong in Shanghai. The book reflects the cultural and social phenomena of China's rejoining the international community and financial markets. *Shanghai Baby* caused a sensation in the whole country after publication, but it was quickly banned for being decadent.

One of the authors censored most is Zhang Yihe, the daughter of Zhang Bojun, the “Number One Rightist” during the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957. In 2004, Zhang wrote her first important book 往事并不如烟 [The Past is Not Like Smoke]. The book describes the life experiences of Chinese democracy activists Shi Liang, Chu Anping, Zhang Boju, Kang Tongji, Nie Gannu, Luo Longji, and others during the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957 and the Cultural Revolution of 1966–1976. The author's photographic account of sufferings, persecutions, and people's unquenchable spirit in the face of unfathomable loss touched the emotional chords of readers and made the book one of the most talked-about publications of 2004. However, the authorities soon banned the book because of the sensitive political topics covered even though the book had undergone censorship before publication.

Another controversial author is Yan Lianke, the winner of the prestigious Lao She Literary Awards in 2004. In 2005, Yan published 为人民服务 [Serve the People], a novelette

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ 笑蜀, 历史的先声: 半个世纪前的庄严承诺: 《新华日报》《解放日报》社论选 (汕头: 汕头大学出版社, 1999).

⁵⁸ 笑蜀, “历史的先声與當下的尷尬 [Heralds of History and the Current Dilemma],” 亞洲週刊, August 25, 2013, accessed January 28, 2020, <https://www.yzzk.com/article/details/特稿/2013-33/1376538435461/歷史的先聲與當下的尷尬>.

in *Huacheng*, an influential literary magazine in China. In this erotic satire set during the Cultural Revolution, Yan told the story of an army commander's wife seducing a young orderly and becoming sexually excited while breaking statuettes of Chairman Mao Zedong and urinating on the sacred books by Mao. The authorities quickly banned *Serve the People* for vilifying Mao's ideals of serving the people, the Chinese army, the Chinese revolution, and politics, and for explicit descriptions of sex. The censors believed the novelette had disturbed people's thinking and propagated Western values.⁵⁹ The ban on Yan's works has been on and off ever since, which serves as a barometer for the Chinese publishing environment.⁶⁰

The year 2015 saw the last publication of 古拉格群岛 [The Gulag Archipelago] by Russian author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. The book is about Solzhenitsyn's own experience as a Gulag prisoner in a forced labor camp in the Soviet Union in the 1940s and 1950s. First published in 1982, the book became popular and was reprinted at least eight times in China. Despite that record, the book was banned in 2018. The report about the banning was confirmed by a Radio Free Asia correspondent who contacted one of the editors of the book. According to the editor, the banning instruction came from above, and no one was allowed to talk about this matter.⁶¹

In 2015, Tsinghua University professor Qin Hui published 走出帝制：从晚清到民国的历史回望 [Out of Imperialism: A Reflection on the History from the Late Qing to Republican China]. The book covers the history of the transition from Imperial to Republican China, from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century. Having covered sensitive issues including the failure of constitutionalism and democracy in the nation and reappraisals of the Chinese Communist movement, Qin's book caught the imagination of serious readers. Even though Qin wrote indirectly, one can easily figure out his central ideas that China is still in a cycle of dynasties. According to Qin, since the Xinhai Revolution of 1911, the Chinese have embraced the universal ideals of democracy and constitutionalism, but those high ideals remain unrealized. Ironically, around December 4, 2015, National Constitution Day in China, *Out of Imperialism* was taken off the shelves in bookstores. Qin confirmed the banning of his book over the phone with a *New York Times* correspondent, but under duress, refused to talk further about the book. Not only did the authorities remove books physically, but they also

⁵⁹ 舒心, "书评: 本年度大陆第一禁书《为人民服务》 [Book Review: *Serve the People*, the Number One Banned Book in the Mainland in 2005]," *Radio Free Asia*, December 2, 2005, accessed February 28, 2020, <https://www.rfa.org/cantonese/features/bookclub/bookreview-20051202.html>.

⁶⁰ Jiayang Fan, "Yan Lianke's Forbidden Satires of China: How an Army Propaganda Writer Became the Country's Most Controversial Novelist," *New Yorker*, October 8, 2018, accessed February 28, 2020, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/10/15/yan-liankes-forbidden-satires-of-china>.

⁶¹ Radio Free Asia, "官方图书馆首次公开焚书引发关注知识界忧现代版「焚书坑儒」到临 [The state-owned library's first public book-burning has caused concern for the intellectual community to worry about the advent of the modern version of 'book-burning and persecution of scholars']," *Radio Free Asia*, December 9, 2019, accessed January 28, 2020, <https://www.rfa.org/cantonese/news/burn-12092019062039.html>.

restricted online public discussions about *Out of Imperialism*. On Douban.com, a website focusing on serious talks on popular topics, pages of discussions of the book were deleted.⁶²

One of the instances of the Chinese government's banning of books on the politics and history of its leaders occurred in 2019 regarding the publication of 文武北洋 1912-1928 [The Men of Pen and the Men of Sword during the Beiyang Period of Republican China: 1912-1928]. In 2004, Chinese author Li Jie published this two-volume book, with one volume on four intellectuals: Yang Du, Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao, and Zhang Shizhao, and another on five warlords: Yuan Shikai, Li Yuanhong, Duan Qirui, Wu Peifu, and Zhang Zuolin.⁶³ It was well-received, and three editions were published in 2005 (Taiwan edition), 2006, and 2012. Due to market demands, a Chinese publisher published the fifth revised edition in 2019.⁶⁴ But because of the current political environment, the critical reappraisals of the four intellectuals, three of whom were veteran Chinese Communist Party members, were deemed politically unfit for publication, thus the volume on the "Men of Pen" was prohibited from going to press, leaving only half of the book published.⁶⁵

Through administrative measures, censors also removed non-conformist publications from bookstores and libraries. For example, books by Princeton professor Yu Ying-shih, the 2006 Library of Congress John W. Kluge Prize Winner and critic of the CCP, were removed from Chinese bookstores in 2014, even though most of Yu's books were about intellectual history in pre-1949 China. Chinese censorial authorities also regulated content in e-book databases. By the beginning of 2020, searches for Yu Ying-shih in Duxiu, a Chinese e-book database, returned zero results.⁶⁶

Chinese censorship reached a new level of notoriety in October 2019, when the staff at a public library in Zhenyuan County, Gansu Province, burned "banned books" in front of the library. The library stated it had removed "illegal publications, religious publications, and deviant papers and books, picture books and photographs" in an attempt to "fully exert the library's role in broadcasting mainstream ideology." The incident triggered an outcry among the library community and the reading public. Reports about the book-burning were quickly removed.⁶⁷ Zhang Lifan, a prominent Chinese historian, summarized the angry reaction in his online post: "Frustrations have been building the last seven years over growing

⁶² Kiki Zhao, "On China's Constitution Day, Book on Constitutionalism Largely Disappears," *New York Times*, December 4, 2015, accessed February 25, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/05/world/asia/china-constitution-qin-hui-book.html>.

⁶³ 李洁, 文武北洋 1912-1928 (桂林: 广西师范大学出版社, 2004 年).

⁶⁴ 李洁, 文武北洋 1912-1928 (北京: 九州出版社, 2019 年).

⁶⁵ Telephone interview with Li Jie on March 20, 2020.

⁶⁶ Duxiu, Superstar, accessed January 29, 2020.

⁶⁷ "Chinese library sparks outrage over report staff burned 'banned books'," *South China Morning Post*, December 9, 2019, accessed January 28, 2020, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/3041230/chinese-library-sparks-outrage-over-report-staff-burned-banned>

repression of intellectuals and freedom of speech,” hinting that Xi Jinping and his government were the targets of the frustrations.⁶⁸

As time and circumstances changed, the ban on some books already published was lifted without specified reasons, which is a vivid example of the oscillation in Chinese political life. In early 2002, the Institute of Sociology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences published a book, 中国当代社会各阶层分析 [The Analytical Report on Contemporary Chinese Social Classes], but it was banned a year later. The banning instruction came directly from senior party officials who by-passed all the government agencies in charge of book publishing. Wei Jianxing, one of the seven members of the elite CCP Politburo Standing Committee and chairman of the National Federation of Trade Unions instructed Li Tieying, the head of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, to ban the book because workers in Daqing Oil Field in northeastern China took to the street to protest against the government’s labor policies while quoting a specific section in the book:

“Because of their status and circumstances, workers have radical characteristics in every society and strive to change the status quo. When the goal cannot be achieved through peaceful means, drastic action is taken into consideration. These include strikes, demonstrations, riots, and revolutions. The characteristics of the resources possessed by workers determine that the cost of their radical action is low, and the benefits may be high (All you lose is the chain; what you get is the whole world). Compared with other social classes with lower social status, workers are more organized and disciplined, and their capabilities for fierce action are stronger. Compared with other upper social classes, the provocative activities of the working class are more likely to receive sympathy from the general public.”⁶⁹

This is a classic example of social turmoil that would trigger the banning of books. The decision was made arbitrarily by one of the top leaders in the country. With the title changed to *A Research Report on Contemporary Chinese Social Structure*, a new edition of the book was published fifteen years later in 2018. The paragraph, which had caused trouble, remains intact in the new edition.⁷⁰

Books prohibited from being published

Because of the topics covered, some books are banned entirely in China. One type of publication is those by ousted Chinese Communist leaders and their descendants. In the early 1980s, four high-ranking generals, Huang Yongsheng, Wu Faxian, Li Zuopeng, and Qiu Huizuo were tried and jailed due to their connections with Lin Biao, the alleged usurper of

⁶⁸ “China’s library officials are burning books that diverge from Communist Party ideology,” *Washington Post*, December 9, 2019, accessed January 28, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/in-china-library-officials-burn-books-that-diverge-from-communist-party-ideology/2019/12/09/5563ee46-1a43-11ea-977a-15a6710ed6da_story.html

⁶⁹ 杨继绳, “中国当代社会各阶层分析 / 一本书的辛酸故事 [The Analysis of Classes of Contemporary China / The Sad Story of a Book],” *Bannedbook.org*, May 23, 2012, accessed January 17, 2020, <https://www.bannedbook.org/forum2/topic750-4.html>.

⁷⁰ 陆学艺, 当代中国社会结构研究报告 (北京: 社会科学文献出版社, 2018), 112.

the CCP leadership in the early 1970s. In the 2000s, after being released, they published their memoirs one after another in Hong Kong. All of their books were banned in China because the authors' accounts of history had not been authorized by the Party, and their highly personal renditions of what happened ran counter to the official historical narrative. Other books published in Hong Kong or abroad in the 2000s by purged CCP leaders of prominence included those written by Zhang Chunqiao, Qi Benyu, Chen Xitong, etc.

Publications by retired Chinese Communist leaders and their descendants are also forbidden from being published in China if their books touched sensitive issues. In 2006, Deng Liqun, the former head of the CCP Central Propaganda Department, published his book 鄧力群自述: 十二個春秋 [My Story: Twelve Years from 1975–1987] in Hong Kong. During his tenure, Deng oversaw the CCP's ideological works and cracked down on numerous publications and authors. Ironically, the top man in the censorship hierarchy was not able to publish his book in the very country where he used to have total control over publishing.

In 2009, New Century Press, a publishing house in Hong Kong well-known for publishing controversial books, planned to publish the diaries of former Chinese Premier Li Peng. Everything was apparently going smoothly, but three days before the launching of the book, New Century Press canceled the plan citing copyright entanglements. But it was believed that Beijing intervened since it viewed the publication of the diaries as an embarrassment for the regime.⁷¹ It was also believed that Li made attempts to present his account of events in June 1989, to deny his responsibility for the Tiananmen Square Massacre. Nonetheless, the book was published with the name 李鵬六四日記 [Li Peng Diaries] by West Point Publishing House in the United States in 2010.

Books by political dissidents or authors with unorthodox views are banned in their entirety. For example, Yan Jiaqi, a former director of the Institute of the Political Science of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, has published fifteen books. All of his books published after 1989, when he went into exile to the West, are banned. A search for his books in the online catalog of the National Library of China showed only four titles,⁷² while Peking University Library showed eight titles with fourteen different editions by Yan—all the first editions of which were published before 1989.⁷³ A search for books by Yan Jiaqi in the database Duxiu retrieved none.⁷⁴

In 1993, China Friendship Press made a contract with Jung Chang to publish the Chinese edition of her book 鴻: 三代中国女人的故事 [Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China], an autobiography that had become an international bestseller. The project went well until the publisher proposed to remove the contents of Mao Zedong. Chang agreed on the condition that there would be notes on the page indicating that “the following xxx words have been cut.” The publisher accepted the terms but never published the book. According to Chang,

⁷¹ Minnie Chan, “Li Peng diary won’t see light over copyright,” *South China Morning Post*, June 20, 2010, accessed April 16, 2020, <https://www.scmp.com/article/717621/li-peng-diary-wont-see-light-over-copyright>.

⁷² National Library of China Online Catalogue, accessed January 29, 2020, <http://www.nlc.cn>.

⁷³ Peking University Library Online Catalogue, accessed January 29, 2020, <https://www.lib.pku.edu.cn>.

⁷⁴ Duxiu, Superstar, accessed January 29, 2020.

“The version with the cuts eventually appeared—but only as a pirated edition. Even the pirates did not dare to publish the full version.”⁷⁵

In 2000, Gao Hua, a professor at Nanjing University, published 紅太陽是怎樣升起的一延安整風運動的來龍去脈 [How the Red Sun Rose: The Origin and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement] in Hong Kong. Gao's work is a critical history of the CCP before it won power. Widely acclaimed by the academic community as one of the best scholarly books about Mao Zedong in recent years, it had been reprinted dozens of times. But the book crossed the “red” line and was prohibited from publication in China.

In the autumn of 2009, Lung Ying-tai, a prominent author in Taiwan, published a non-fiction book, 大江大海一九四九 [Big River, Big Sea—Untold Stories of 1949]. With over 100,000 copies sold in Taiwan and 10,000 in Hong Kong in its first month of release, the book set off a “River-Sea phenomenon” in the Chinese literary world. Based on the memories of ordinary people in an eventful era, the author provided a vivid account of the great migration of 1949 from the mainland to Taiwan at the end of the Chinese Civil War of 1946-1949. Lung had been a critic of the CCP censorship. In January 2006, Lung published “Please Persuade Me with Civilization—an Open Letter to Mr. Hu Jintao,” to the then CCP leader Hu proposing freedom of speech and ideas. Subsequently, she was put on the list of prohibited authors.⁷⁶ A few Chinese publishers approached Lung to talk about the publication of her book, but nothing took place.

To some extent, Chinese writers nowadays live under circumstances similar to those of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in the Soviet Union, and Václav Havel in Czechoslovakia lived under. Censors not only censor and ban books, but they also repress authors by blacklisting them. For example, Wang Lixiong, author of the 1991 controversial book 黃禍 [Yellow Peril], an apocalyptic scenario in which a civil war breaks out between Northern China and Southern China, was banned from publishing any books in mainland China for two decades. Chinese authors such as 2010 Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo, who frequently wrote books or articles about China and openly challenged the authority of the CCP, ended up in prison. Other challengers including Yan Jiaqi, Gao Xingjian, Zheng Yi, Liao Yiwu, Su Xiaokang, Wang Juntao, Yu Jie, and He Qinglian were forced into exile abroad.

Overseas Chinese authors also face issues of censorship in China. Ha Jin, Yiyun Li, and a few other writers outside China chose to write in English so they could write as they wished. Ha Jin did have his books *In the Pond*, *Waiting*, and *Nanjing Requiem* published in China, but his other books were banned because they crossed the “bottom” line. Among those banned are 戰廢品 [War Trash], a novel about the Chinese POWs during the Korean War, and 背叛指南 [A Map of Betrayal], a book about a Chinese Communist spy in America, in which the protagonist mentioned that “Mao ‘sees China not as his responsibility but as his property.’”

⁷⁵ Jung Chang, *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), 18.

⁷⁶ Radio Free Asia, “龙应台新书《大江大海一九四九》遭网络封杀 [Lung Ying-tai's new book *Big River, Big Sea—Untold Stories of 1949* was blocked on the Internet],” *Radio Free Asia*, September 21, 2009, accessed April 17, 2020, <https://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/longyingtai-09212009091422.html>.

Chinese censorship overseas

Chinese censorship extends beyond books published in mainland China. There is increasing evidence of Beijing's attempts to exert its political and ideological influence outside China. It has encroached on the freedom of speech people in democratic societies have taken for granted for a long time.

According to the basic laws of Hong Kong, drafted after the handover of the British colony to China in 1997, Hong Kong is allowed to maintain the freedom of press and publication as it enjoyed before. Despite the agreement, a breach of law by the Chinese authorities occurred in late 2013 when Yao Wentian, Editor-in-Chief of Morning Bell Press in Hong Kong, was arrested and held in Shenzhen, China. Yao was accused of carrying contraband. But most believed that Yao's arrest was related to the publication of a book, 中國教父習近平 [Xi Jinping: China's Godfather], by Yu Jie, an exiled author and dissident living in the United States.⁷⁷

As shocking as the arrest of Yao was, other arrests made went beyond Chinese borders. In 2015, Gui Minhai (Michael Gui), a Chinese-born Swedish publisher, was abducted in Thailand by Chinese agents for writing, publishing, and distributing books about Chinese politics and political figures. As a writer and publisher, Gui wrote and supervised the publication of books in Hong Kong that cast a critical, sometimes, sensational light on the upper echelons of the Chinese political apparatus. Around the same time, a few book dealers such as Causeway Bay Books who were selling similar books in Hong Kong vanished from the public eye. Later they were reported to have been arrested by Chinese authorities for the same charges. On February 24, 2020, Gui was sentenced to ten years in prison for illegally providing intelligence to people outside China. The sentence drew criticism from international human rights advocates. Dr. Sophie Richardson, China Director at Human Rights Watch, expressed her anger over the ruling: "Today's sentence of Gui Minhai is an indictment not of him but of the Chinese government's bottomless hostility towards critics and shameless misuse of its legal system."⁷⁸

As an economic and political superpower, China is not only exporting material goods but also exporting censorship. Beijing has made efforts to extend the CCP's influence over discourse and behavior around the globe. For example, the PRC authorities attempted to infiltrate Australian life from politics to culture, business to social life, real estate to agriculture, academic institutions to unions, and even primary and high schools. In 2017, Allen & Unwin, an Australian publisher, planned to release *Silent Invasion: China's Influence in Australia* by Clive Hamilton, a professor of Public Ethics at Charles Sturt University. The book was about the influence on Australian politics exerted by rich Chinese-Australian

⁷⁷ Human Rights in China, "Urgent Appeal: Release Yao Wentian, Editor-In-Chief of Morning Bell Press, Defend Press Freedom in Hong Kong," *Human Rights in China*, January 21, 2014, accessed January 17, 2020, <https://www.hrichina.org/en/citizens-square/urgent-appeal-release-yao-wentian-editor-chief-morning-bell-press-defend-press>.

⁷⁸ Anna Fifield, "Swedish Bookseller Gui Minhai Sold Critical Titles about Xi Jinping. China Jailed Him for 10 Years," *Washington Post*, February 25, 2020, accessed February 25, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/china-sentences-swedish-bookseller-gui-minhai-to-10-years-in-prison/2020/02/24/2d6ebc4e-577a-11ea-8efd-0f904bdd8057_story.html

business donors with connections to the CCP. However, the publisher canceled the contract due to fears of “retaliation” by the Chinese government or its local proxies under the auspices of the CCP’s United Front Work Department.⁷⁹ Eventually, the book was published by Hardie Grant on February 22, 2018.

Printing of foreign books in China has become the latest front in Beijing’s censorship campaign since all books that are printed in China are censored even though they are not supposed to be distributed in the country. On February 23, 2019, *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported that Chinese censors are “reading Australian publishers’ books and, in some cases, refusing to allow them to be printed in China if they fail to comply with a long list of restrictions.” According to the report, the Australian office of a Chinese printer created a list of “keywords to be alerted” for their publishing clients.⁸⁰ The list included “anything relating to Chinese political icons in recent history” such as political movements: the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, the 2011 pro-democracy protests, and the 2014 Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong. CCP leaders Mao Zedong, Xi Jinping, and current members of the Politburo Standing Committee were all labeled as sensitive keywords. Chinese dissidents such as Ai Weiwei, the Tibetan independence movement, Uighur nationalism, and Falun Gong were also on the list.⁸¹

Books with maps are under meticulous scrutiny by the censors. For example, the Chinese authorities requested that New Zealand’s leading scholarly publisher Victoria University Press change “Mount Everest” to the Chinese equivalent “Mount Qomolangma” in its book *Fifteen Million Years in Antarctica* because “Everest” could be interpreted as a way of “humiliating Mount Qomolangma with English-language hegemonism.”⁸² Because of the stringent censorship rules, some publishers planned to have their books printed in Vietnam or other countries.

Reactions to censorship

According to an age-old Chinese proverb, “Prohibiting people from speaking their minds is more dangerous than blocking rivers.” As the proverb implies, reactions to censorship are eroding the dam of thought control. There are various types of resistance. Some authors stood up firmly to the censors. On January 19, 2007, Zhang Yihe published an open letter online to Wu Shulin, the Deputy Director of the General Administration of Press and Publication, demanding Wu explain why he had given secret orders to ban her book 伶人往

⁷⁹ Jacqueline Williams, “Australian Furor over Chinese Influence Follows Book’s Delay,” *The New York Times*, November 20, 2017, accessed October 31, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/20/world/australia/china-australia-book-influence.html>.

⁸⁰ Michael Bachelard, “Chinese government censors ruling lines through Australian books,” *South China Morning Post*, February 23, 2019, accessed October 31, 2019, <https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/books/chinese-government-censors-ruling-lines-through-australian-books-20190222-p50zpn.html>.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Lew Linda. “Chinese censorship laws could prompt foreign book publishers to look elsewhere for printers,” *South China Morning Post*, August 25, 2019, accessed October 31, 2019, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3024150/chinese-censorship-laws-could-prompt-foreign-book-publishers>.

事 [Reminiscences on Peking Opera Performers]. The letter was the first one from a Chinese author questioning the authorities in the history of book publishing in China since 1949. Going viral on the web, Zhang's courage and defiance prompted support and solidarity from fellow authors.⁸³ In reality, the deliberate leaking of Wu's banning orders by officials within the establishment showed the unpopularity of Wu's actions among the very people in charge of publication and censorship in the regime.

Writers whose books are banned in China try to publish their works outside the country. Sheng Keyi wrote the novel *Death Fugue* using allegories to write about the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre. And she also wrote in her book about the "Swan Valley," the imagined one-party utopia, where impulses and feelings are put under control, and all aspects of life are regulated. For obvious reasons, the Chinese version was banned, but Sheng eventually managed to have the book published in English in Australia in 2014.

Facing the choice of publishing or not publishing on the condition of content changes, some authors refuse to compromise. To maintain their intellectual integrity, they would rather lose opportunities to sell books in China. Qiu Xiaolong, a St. Louis-based Chinese novelist, is famous for his crime thrillers set in Shanghai, his birthplace. Qiu had some upsetting experiences with the Chinese editors who rewrote plot lines considered unflattering to China. The novelist revealed that they even tried to change Shanghai, the setting of one novel, to "H City" in the Chinese translation, for fear of "tarnishing the image of the city as well as of local authorities." In 2013, Qiu rejected a Chinese publisher's proposal to publish his *A Case of Two Cities* set in St. Louis and Shanghai. He argued that "it would be completely absurd for the Chinese translation to have one real city and one fictional, H City, in the text."⁸⁴

In addition to smuggling banned books from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and abroad, readers got around censors by purchasing or downloading banned books online with the use of special VPN software to jump "the Great Firewall." Those who were able to visit foreign countries also made efforts to access books unavailable in China.

For content distribution, some authors came up with ideas to spread information by creating new channels and platforms. On December 31, 2019, Wang Lixiong, a well-known writer and dissident, announced that he would set up an online platform on which he would read his book section by section.⁸⁵

In the face of adversity, Western presses reacted strongly. In October 2015, twenty prominent publishers including Macmillan, Penguin Random House, and W.W. Norton,

⁸³ 刘晓波, "从禁书看中共的合法性败血症 [Book Censorship in a System of Sepsis Under the Rule of Chinese Communist Party]," *BBCCHINESE.com*, January 31, 2007, accessed May 20, 2020, http://news.bbc.co.uk/chinese/simp/hi/newsid_6300000/newsid_6309800/6309809.stm.

⁸⁴ Gabriel Domínguez, "China's Censors Put Western Authors in Tight Spot," *Deutsche Welle*, October 29, 2013, accessed May 21, 2020, <https://www.dw.com/en/chinas-censors-put-western-authors-in-tight-spot/a-17189205>.

⁸⁵ 王力雄, "權力扼殺與市場缺失夾擊下的中國 [China Crushed by Power Strangulation and Lack of Market.]," *China Digital Times*, January 2, 2020, accessed January 28, 2020, <https://chinadigitaltimes.net/chinese/2020/01/> 【cdtv】王力雄: 權力扼殺與市場缺失夾擊下的中國.

signed a PEN American Center pledge to “monitor and address incidents of censorship in Chinese translations of books by foreign authors.”⁸⁶ In the fall of 2017, Cambridge University Press (CUP) removed 300 articles from an online version of *China Quarterly* in China upon the request from Beijing (a similar request was made of the British publisher in the spring of 2017 regarding more than one thousand e-books). According to Cambridge University Press, the list of articles removed included topics ranging from the 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident, the Cultural Revolution, Tibet, Xinjiang, and Taiwan.⁸⁷ Due to the academic community’s outcry accusing the publisher of “selling its soul” over Chinese censorship, CUP reversed its decision several days later. At the time of this writing, there is no news about the Chinese government’s further blocking of the content of *China Quarterly* in China.

In 2018, editors of the *Transcultural Research* book series stopped publishing with Springer Nature to protest its acquiescence to Chinese censorship demands. Springer Nature defended the decision to restrict access to sensitive content in China for the reason that otherwise it would “run the very real risk of customers [in China] not being able to access any of our content.” But the editors of the book series were adamant that they would not accept standards that were lower than what is desirable, arguing that “For a scholarly publisher, this is an unacceptable breach of trust both with the authors and the international scholarly community.”⁸⁸

Conclusion

In the past three decades, the Chinese central government’s policies on censorship have swung back and forth. With Xi coming to power as the CCP leader, books among all forms of media have become increasingly censored as China retrogressed to a paternalistic and restrictive past. The country as a whole has entered a period of an even colder season due to Beijing’s more vigorous attempts to constrain ideas and impose opinions, which seriously debilitated and inhibited many authors and scholars. As a result, China is suffering a society-wide deterioration in intellectual and artistic creativity as well as academic prowess. It is easy to see that Chinese scholarship, especially in the field of social sciences, has stalled for years. Because of the blocking of free information, the Chinese perception of the outside world is distorted. The detrimental and negative effects of the pervasive censorship of books and all kinds of media content will be felt for years to come.

Generally, Chinese censorship has been effective on the surface, and it has helped the CCP keep a degree of stability. However, the censors’ suppression of authors and pursuit of

⁸⁶ PEN American Center, “U.S. Publishers Pledge to Address Chinese Censorship,” *PEN American Center*, October 15, 2015, accessed May 21, 2020, <https://pen.org/press-release/u-s-publishers-pledge-to-address-chinese-censorship>.

⁸⁷ John Ruwitch and Fanny Potkin, “UK publisher pulls scholarly articles from China website at Beijing’s request,” *Reuters*, August 18, 2017, accessed October 31, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-censorship-journal/uk-publisher-pulls-scholarly-articles-from-china-website-at-beijings-request-idUSKCN1AY1FM>.

⁸⁸ Elizabeth Redden, “An Unacceptable Breach of Trust,” *Inside Higher Ed*, October 3, 2018, accessed May 21, 2020, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/10/03/book-publishers-part-ways-springer-nature-over-concerns-about-censorship-china>.

ideas by the Orwellian “Thought Police” have rebounded adversely on the originators. The censorial system with global ambitions has created discontent both inside and outside China and sparked a conscious reaction. With the development of Internet technologies, it is becoming increasingly difficult for Chinese censors to control the spread of ideas. The resistance of authors, readers, and publishers against censorship eventually will prove that the CCP’s attempts to control people’s minds, in the long run, will be futile, and the backfire might play a part in triggering the decline of the authoritarian political structure. As He Weifang, a famed Chinese law scholar and political dissident, put it, “They can slit the throats of every rooster in the world, but the sky will still brighten. Let’s just sit and wait for the dawn!”⁸⁹

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⁸⁹ Samuel Wade, “Law Scholar He Weifang Quits Social Media,” *China Digital Times*, May 26, 2017, accessed March 25, 2020, <https://chinadigitaltimes.net/2017/05/law-scholar-weifang-quits-social-media>.

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Appendix: A selected list of banned or censored books in China

Books under pre-publication influence with content removed or altered

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