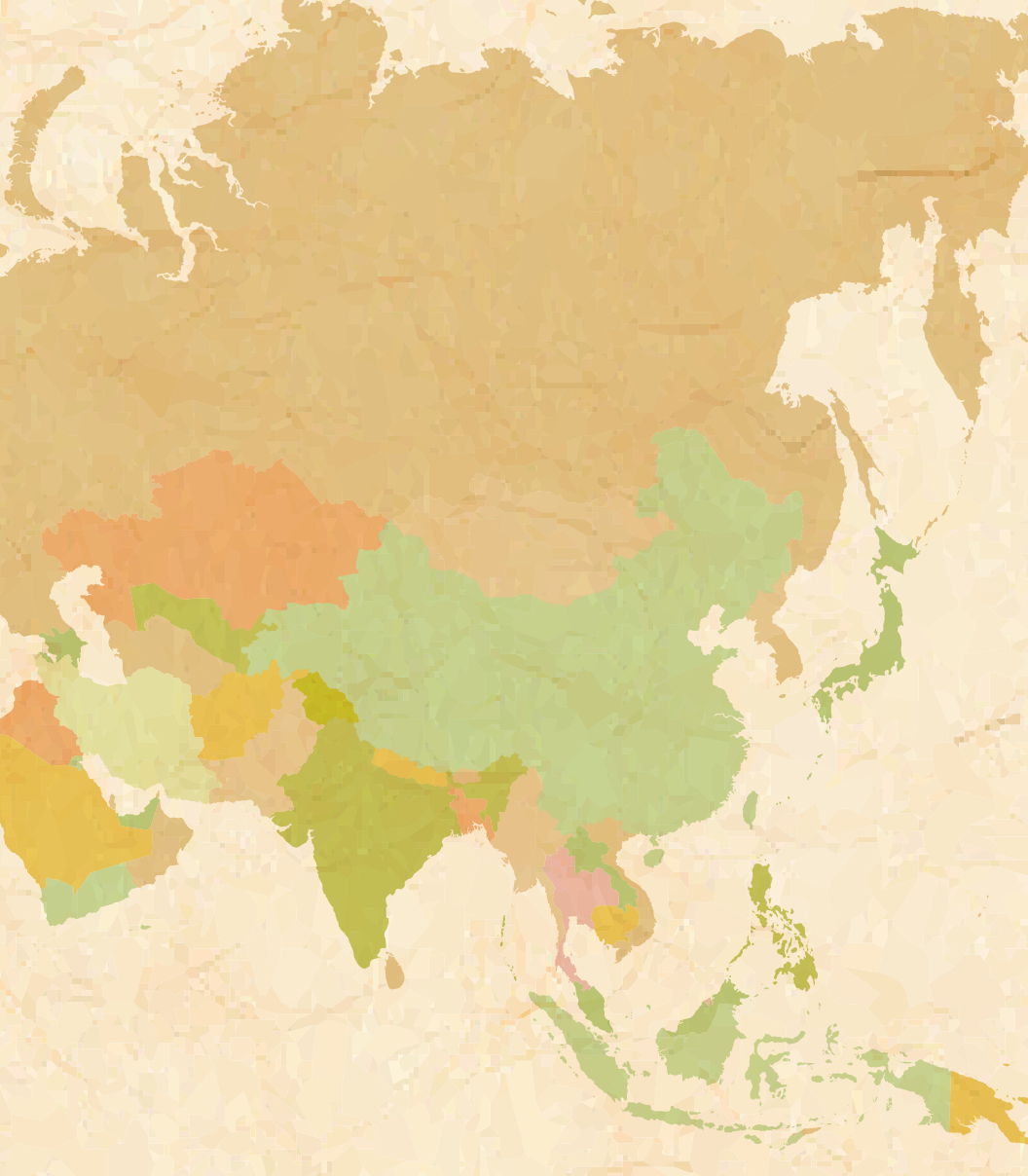


# The Rice Papers

Volume 4 • 2014



# The Rice Papers

A Student Journal of Asian Studies  
Volume 4 • 2014

Brigham Young University  
Provo, Utah

# The Rice Papers

A Student Journal of Asian Studies

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Submissions or inquiries may be directed to Gail King, 4523 HBLL, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602, or [gail\\_king@byu.edu](mailto:gail_king@byu.edu).

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## Special Thanks

There is much logistical and time consuming work that goes into the creation of an academic journal, which could not be done alone. *The Rice Papers* team was full of talented and capable editors, reviewers, and advisors for whom we are all grateful. Thank you all for dedication to this edition.

One who must be specially thanked for his long dedication to not only resurrecting the *Rice Papers* journal but also to putting together this year's edition is Crismon Lewis. After his countless hours in editing, formatting, and contacting our scholars for revisions, he moved on to graduate school in Taiwan and could not finish this edition himself. He left us with very little to finish. His work here was indispensable.

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## Foreword

by *Bradley Anderson*

In 2011, the Obama administration issued a series of statements to focus the second half of the twenty-first century on U.S. foreign policy on Asia, a strategy now termed the “Asian Pivot.” With the global economy becoming increasingly dependent on China’s economic rise, Sino-Japanese tensions threatening, and India’s new Prime Minister Narendra Modi moving India into prominence, truly the world is pivoting toward Asia. When such events arise, scholarship plays a major role in helping nations to bridge gaps of ignorance with understanding.

Within this issue of the Rice Papers, we have four insightful scholars sharing their academic considerations on Asian topics: Tasha Layton on the nuances of Japanese media on language, Brandon Christensen on Chinese domestic policy on the disabled workforce, Erin Meyers on the socioeconomic impact of motorcycles in Thailand, and Taylor Shippen on the use of economic leverage by the Chinese over other nations. From among the articles presented, I will emphasize a few ideas that impressed me.

The first idea is found in Tasha Layton’s article, where she emphasizes a manga translator’s quandary of finding the best English translation for the Japanese word “oro.” Quoting an interview with the translator of Rurouni Kenshin, Layton eloquently articulates that sometimes ideas with no equivalent word must be experienced in the original language. Often times, the best way to do so is not to translate the word at all and allow it to define itself.

The second idea comes from Brandon Christensen’s article on disabled workers in China. Christensen states that though there is a progressive overtone for the integration of disabled persons within the Chinese workforce, there are cultural traditions that inhibit their progress for greater human rights. He summarizes that pejorative terms, religious beliefs, and neglect in defining protection laws all indicate a long road ahead before the disabled community will receive equal treatment. Of particular note is that in not providing specific laws, the Chinese legal system is both intentionally and unintentionally segregating disabled workers, ultimately hurting the disabled and those within society who could benefit from their services.

The third idea is from Erin Myers’s often overlooked consideration on how Southeast Asian nations, specifically Thailand, modify motorcycles, which has subsequently been developing their informal economies. After noting annual increasing motorcycle accident rates, Myers points out that 50–60 percent of Thailand’s developing workforce have come to depend on modified motorcycles. Street vendors, builders, the police, and disabled workers have utilized modified motorcycles to more efficiently meet their needs.

The last idea is from Taylor Shippen’s article on China’s use of their growing economic influence on other nations. Throughout his article, Shippen emphasizes how China uses trade agreements and grants as a way to develop their economic leverage over the global community. One example he uses shows China wielding a trade agreement as a pressure valve on Australia to suppress their domestic protests against Chinese human rights abuses. The article leaves a lingering question about how nations can still engage in so dependent an economic relationship with China if China is using such overt tactics. Is it arm twisting or something else?

In conclusion, these scholars are impressive not only because of the richness of their topics but because of their evident dedication to the regions they have researched. Their scholarship is thorough, arguments well articulated, and topics worthy of the research. I have no doubt you will enjoy their presentations as much as I have.

## ***Oro?: Word Choice, Character, and Translation in Rurouni Kenshin***

by Tasha Layton

**A**nime is one of the most common forms of entertainment in the United States. Its ubiquitous presence causes some Western viewers to forget that anime is, in fact, foreign film. One of the only things that reminds us of this fact is the strangeness of the scripts, particularly the grammar—a quirky grammar that is often a target for anime critics and comedic imitators. While it is true that the Japanese language used in anime is quite stylized, there are more important explanations for why the English versions sound unnatural. Audiences often think only of the denotations and semantic functions of the words in translation and, therefore, have difficulty understanding why the English is somewhat disjointed. With denotations as the only consideration, translation would of course be simple and the result would be smooth. However, Japanese relies heavily on connotations to communicate, and these are often hard—perhaps impossible—to translate into polished English. In an attempt to maintain as much of the original text’s meaning as possible, translators often sacrifice some naturalness in speech. This sacrifice is noticeably the case in *Rurouni Kenshin*, an anime and graphic novel series in which the English translation choices are unnatural but meaningful. This paper will compare the original Japanese to its English translation in terms of unique Japanese linguistic components, such as phrases, honorifics, personal pronouns, and a key interjection, to explore the difficulty involved in creating a translation that is faithful to the original script and to note important parts of character and plot development that are lost.

*Rurouni Kenshin* is about a wandering samurai (*rurouni* is a word made up for the series) named Kenshin Himura. It takes place early in the Meiji Era of Japan (mid-1800s) and at the end of the Boshin War. During the war, Kenshin was known as one of the greatest manslayers (Hitokiri Battōsai); however, when the war ended, he became a wandering samurai in hopes of redeeming himself for the many people he had slain during the war. In order to live his new ideal, Kenshin needed to embody an entirely different persona than the one that could kill without a second thought, so he developed a second personality to begin his new life and journey. In an almost Jekyll-and-Hyde dichotomy, Kenshin switches from one persona to the other as needed. The more prevalent side is that of Rurouni Kenshin—a peace-loving, quirky, calm wanderer. The less prevalent side is that of Battōsai Himura—the manslayer. This latter side only emerges in the most demanding situations—those that require a demonic swordfighter. Kenshin’s personas are significant to this paper because of their unique juxtaposition: They are so different that Nobuhiro Watsuki, the author of *Rurouni Kenshin*, constructed different grammatical speech patterns to further emphasize the opposition between the two.

Kenshin, the more predominant side, uses grammar and parts of speech somewhat foreign to both English speakers and Japanese speakers. In the English anime, Kenshin often uses tags at the end of his sentences, such as “that I am,” or “indeed I do”: for instance, “Your *sensei* [teacher] is Miss Kaoru, Yahiko, yes indeed” (*Rurouni Kenshin* 3) or “I’m merely a wandering swordsman, that I am” (*Rurouni Kenshin* 1). These tags serve as replacements for the Japanese original: *de gozaru*. As the web site *Verbal Tic: Television Tropes* notes, “Kenshin Himura in *Rurouni Kenshin* makes a habit of speaking in archaically formal Japanese, using the ‘de gozaru’ verb form.” *De gozaru* is a somewhat special phrase that has no real denotation (and no easy translation into English), only the connotation that the speaker is being very polite to the addressee. The *de gozaru* speech pattern is used to help the readers understand a number of aspects of Kenshin’s character. To begin with, the peculiarity of the construction reflects Kenshin’s unique personality. This is the connotation that successfully crosses the translation barrier. There are two additional connotations in Japanese that are missed in translation. One of these is that *de gozaru* is a phrase used almost exclusively by samurai. Using the phrase in speech is somewhat comparable to using *howdy* for a cowboy’s dialogue or *groovy* for a hippie’s. It is distinctive for one kind of character. In the creation of a recent “edutainment” game (the method and results of which were presented at the 2011 SICE Conference in Japan) that involved role-playing, the designers decided on characters with



specific speech patterns for children to imitate, one of which was a samurai. The designers of the game explained the concept in their report:

For each character, distinctive language was prepared so that the character can be easily identified. The users can enjoy make-believe play by role-playing the language and the characteristics. For example, when a user chooses the “Samurai” character, the user talks as “. . . de gozaru.” (Watanabe et al. 2572)

In present-day Japan, *de gozaru* has connotations additional to the speaker’s status as a samurai. As mentioned before, and as is most likely the case here, it is used to give the tone of almost impossible politeness. This is another important use of grammar to buttress the story and its characters. Kenshin’s persona is impossibly polite, and his speech emphasizes it. This emphasis is only understood by Japanese audiences, since English translations cannot convey the latter two connotations of *de gozaru*, namely Kenshin’s politeness and his status as a samurai. Unfortunately, two of the writer’s three reasons for using this semantic structure are lost when replaced by the English tags “that I am,” etc., leaving English-speaking audiences with the impression that Kenshin is a little odd but not conveying his politeness, humility, and samurai background. In short, the English translation only conveys a portion of the original meaning.

Another linguistic feature that supports Kenshin’s character is Kenshin’s choice in honorifics, a term largely unfamiliar to English speakers. This term refers to suffixes attached to the end of a person’s name to indicate rank, relation, or the speaker’s feelings toward the person, much like an expansive version of English titles such as Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms., and Miss. For example, the honorific *-bo* refers to a young boy in almost a teasing manner. The suffix *-san*, on the other hand, is used to speak to one’s superior, and *-sama* is an extreme version of *-san*. Even more outlandishly respectful is the archaic *-dono*, by which honorific Kenshin usually addresses his female counterpart, Kaoru: “Kaoru-dono.” This honorific suffix is especially outdated, and, as the author of the *Rurouni Kenshin* manga explains, “The effect in modern-day Japanese conversation would be along the lines of ‘Milord [or Milady] So-and-So.’ As used by Kenshin, it indicates both respect and humility” (Watsuki 1:200).

The translated graphic novel and anime take different approaches in conveying the original meaning in the honorifics. The graphic novel has the luxury of an index, where it explains the connotations behind them. The anime does not have this luxury, and so the translators opted to just use English titles like Miss, as in “Miss Kaoru,” instead of “Kaoru-dono.” In the latter case, the antiquity is lost, but something of the formality and humility remains.

Honorifics of any kind are rarely used when referring to oneself, but when they are, they make statements about the speakers: The suffix *-chan*, for example, is used on oneself to sound cutesy, and *-sama* is used on oneself to sound pompous or (sarcastically) arrogant. Just as in English, referring to oneself in Japanese speech is far more commonly done by using a simple personal pronoun, such as “I.” Kenshin uses a special personal pronoun in Japanese: *sessha*, which means something close to “‘this humble, unworthy, clumsy fool.’ [It is] archaic, not in use nowadays” (Stampede 1), according to a page on V.T. Stampede’s web site. An interesting aspect about the pronoun *sessha* is the way it is used to establish the setting. *Verbal Tic* explains that “it wouldn’t have been terribly odd to hear someone use it in the time period that *Rurouni Kenshin* is set in, but it’s very odd and distinctive today.” In this case, the pronoun is used to remind the audience that *Rurouni Kenshin* is set in a different time than the present. This is especially significant, because the Meiji era is considered Japan’s entry into modernity. Because everyone else in the series speaks like current anime characters, and Kenshin maintains a mostly archaic linguistic pattern in his discourse, the contrast of progress and tradition is constantly present. This aspect of the word is another element of language that does not transition into the English version well. Since *sessha* is much simpler than its English equivalent (this humble, unworthy, clumsy fool), the English translation in the manga uses “this one” instead. For instance, when a character comes to Kenshin seeking his help, he asks, “And what do you need of this one?” (Watsuki 2:54). It is not an exceptionally poor translation, since the use of third person to refer to oneself conveys the idea of Kenshin’s somewhat formal otherness; however, the author’s main purpose in choosing Kenshin’s distinct pronoun usage is to distinguish him from everyone else, especially Kenshin’s other self. This was likely the purpose in determining how to translate the pronouns.

As opposed to Kenshin’s *sessha*, the first-person pronoun the warrior persona Hitokiri Battōsai uses is more common. *Verbal Tic* further elaborates on the word choice:

Japanese has far more pronouns than the average language. There are more than three dozen Japanese words that can be translated as “I/me” and even more that can be translated as “you”. Each of them makes a different statement about the speaker’s gender, age, social status, and relationship with the addressee(s).

Because of the variety of personal pronouns available, the particular word that the Battōsai uses to refer to himself can mean any number of things. The one he uses in the Japanese manga and anime is *ore*. This pronoun has as many connotations as Kenshin’s *sessha*. Translated into English, it means

something like “I, a tough young man.” The use of the pronoun is aggressively masculine and informal (Niyekawa 87). It is also, interestingly, more modern than *sessha*, and could be used in contemporary dialogue without any confusion. The writer uses this pronoun to indicate that Kenshin Himura has made the transition from *Rurouni* (wanderer) to *Battōsai* (killer) and is ready to live up to his manslayer title. The impact of Kenshin’s pronoun choice first becomes notable through a scene in the second volume of the manga. Jin-e, an assassin, has kidnapped Kaoru, and Kenshin approaches, saying that he is full of “rage, at you [Jin-e] who involved Kaoru-Dono. And at me who couldn’t prevent it” (Watsuki 2:114). In Japanese, he uses the pronoun *ore* (“me”) instead of *sessha* (“this one”). This use delights Jin-e, who was hoping for a challenge, and frightens Kaoru, who prefers Kenshin’s gentle side. Both Jin-e and Kaoru specifically point out his pronoun choice in dialogue and thought, respectively. In English, this pronoun translates very well to the common “I” and “me,” and since it is different from Kenshin’s “this one,” which he uses to refer to himself most of the time, the English-speaking audience understands well enough that a shift has occurred in Kenshin’s mind and that this shift indicates his identity as the *Battōsai*. Although the English-speaking audience is unable to perceive the same connotation from “I” as the Japanese-speaking audience perceives from *ore*, the main idea and plot details are still available to the English audience, courtesy of the shift from third person to first person.

Another word choice that plays an important role in the script is the use of a specific interjection: *oro* or its extended form *orororo*. Not to be confused with the aforementioned *ore*, this word is basically nonsensical in both Japanese and English, and so it was not translated in the manga and most of the dubbed anime episodes. In later episodes, it is translated to a more common but still nonsensical interjection “huah,” which is phonetically closer to the English equivalent of “huh?” Clark Cheng, additional dialogue recorder for *Rurouni Kenshin*, said in an interview:

As for the “oro,” I felt it was important to have since it was Kenshin’s signature exclamation. Rika and I had decided to leave it untranslated in the subtitled version of *R[urouni] K[enshin]* for various reasons. As for the dubbed version, I asked Eric to keep it in when he wrote the scripts. . . . Eric told me he’d just do a funny sound to represent it. (Cheng 2003)

This interjection is, like Kenshin’s choice of pronoun, an indicator of his mindset. It is used to accentuate the quirky persona of *Rurouni Kenshin*, but it is never used by the warrior persona *Battōsai*. *Oro*, like many interjections, indicates confusion, surprise, and pain (the last of the three usually

leaning more toward orororo). It does not appear to have much background in Japanese but seems to have been invented (or adapted from the exclamation *ara*) solely for Kenshin Himura's character. Kenshin's signature phrase, whether it be oro or huah, was used as a "funny sound" with no real meaning except as an interjection. The effect this has on both Japanese and English audiences is the understanding that Kenshin is an odd character making an odd noise to express whatever feeling he is experiencing at the time. This interjection is one of the word choices that made an easy transition into English.

In *Rurouni Kenshin*, many of the original text's intricacies are unfortunately lost in the English translation. The phrase *de gozaru* is one example of this, with its English translation—repetitions of parts of the original sentence—failing to convey the core meaning behind its usage. Some other parts of the original Japanese make a somewhat smoother but still tricky translation, such as Japanese honorifics. While some linguistic and cultural dimensions of the script are maintained in English, some of the grammar and parts of speech cannot be adequately translated. This limits the English-speaking audience's perception of the story and characters to the point that some important aspects are completely unavailable in the translation. A similarly awkward, but somewhat more successful, case is found in the translation of honorifics. English cannot express all of the intended meaning behind many of these, but the most important meanings usually carry over. The graphic novel was more successful in this regard by choosing to just explain them, while the anime was forced to squeeze the honorifics into English titles like "Miss" or "Mister." Another difficult but overall successful translation was the use of first-person pronouns, *sessha* versus *ore*, to be specific. Using the English "I" for *ore* and "this one" for *sessha* allows the audience to understand when Kenshin's mind has shifted personalities, but it cannot convey the difference in meaning behind the two. Finally, the choice to not translate *oro* helped to accurately portray Kenshin's distinct character to both Japanese- and English-speaking audiences. There are many hidden difficulties in translating a text from one language to another, and different aspects will enjoy different amounts of success.

There is only so much information that can smoothly cross the language barrier, but translators usually make the choices that are most faithful to the script while maintaining a certain naturalness of speech. In some cases, the literal definitions of the words are accurately translated, but the essential meaning of the text is lost. This is the case with honorifics translation, but the opposite is true for the pronoun translation, where translators chose connotation over denotation because of the need to differentiate between

the two versions of “I.” The connotations embedded in certain semantic structures can add to the meaning of a sentence or phrase as much as the denotations of the words. *De gozaru* was another phrase that favored connotations, since there was no real denotation and could only translate one of the two connotations successfully. Connotations and denotations both carry significant meaning to the story and to the audience’s perception of characters, and these meanings are taken into account during the translation and dubbing processes.

Sometimes, a choice must be made between the connotation and the denotation, because it is too difficult for both to work in the translated script. Because of the difficulty—perhaps impossibility—of this translational task, viewers must keep in mind that apparent holes in English dialogue are filled by intricacies of the original language and that there is much more to the translated story than meets the eye.

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# **On the Fringe: China's disability Laws through the Lens of the Traditional Culture**

*by Brandon Christensen*

**E**xplosive economic growth over the last two decades has dramatically increased China's standard of living and given rise to a rapidly growing middle class. Political reform, however, has been slow to follow with decades-old legal restrictions on civil liberties still firmly in place. Among China's underdeveloped civil protections is the right for people with disabilities to enjoy freedom from popular and institutional prejudice in language or action, especially when seeking employment. Recent revisions of China's disability laws provide increased employment protections, but latent prejudicial language and traditional stereotypes in the law suggest these revisions may not reach the core objective of full integration for people with disabilities (Rosenthal). Investigating these traditional perspectives allows for a more holistic understanding of China's disability laws and provides insight into public and institutional perceptions of people with disabilities in China.

This paper assesses China's progress toward employment equality for people with disabilities by determining the extent to which traditional Chinese perceptions of disability persist in the language and content of China's employment discrimination laws. The first section examines traditional Chinese perceptions of disability, focusing on prejudice in the Chinese language and legally mandated or suggested employment roles for people with disabilities. The second section outlines the essentials of China's disability laws, including the official legal definition of disability and provisions

for the employment of people with disabilities. The third section discusses the progressive aspects of the law, and the fourth section investigates recalcitrant stereotypes in the law. The final section summarizes China's progress and recommends additional changes to facilitate the full integration of people with disabilities.

### **Chinese Culture and Traditional Perceptions of Disability**

Understanding the role of disability in the Chinese language and in traditional Chinese culture is a prerequisite to understanding the cultural roots of legal terminologies on disability. In this section, I briefly discuss the influence of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism on traditional perceptions of disability and examine the Chinese terms *zheng* 正, *canfei* 残废, *canji* 残疾, *xia* 瞎, and *feng* 疯. Next, I discuss traditional employment roles for people with disabilities, including popular conceptions about compensatory virtues.

#### *The Language of Disability*

ZHENG: CULTURAL CONCEPTS OF NORMALITY

The Chinese character *zheng* 正 means “orderly, proper, regular, and orthodox” (Stone 143). Within the context of China's Confucian tradition, this character represents conformity and adherence to ritual. In the Confucian mindset, deviation from social norms and prescribed conduct constitutes more than a breach of etiquette. Orthodox behavior cements society together, and without it, civilization fails; thus, “variation or difference is undesirable because it is unorthodox” (Ibid.). Confucian orthodoxy collides with disability in the phrase *wuguan buzheng* 五官不正, which means “the five senses/parts are not in their proper place” (Ibid.). Thus *buzheng* encapsulates negative perceptions of disability in Confucian tradition by defining the abnormal condition as disorderly, improper, irregular, and unorthodox.

Buddhism and Taoism have also influenced traditional perceptions of disability. For example, “In many areas of China, disability is viewed as a punishment for the disabled person's parental or past-life sins” (Zhang Liu). This societal judgment of people with disabilities—and all other perceived misfortunes—stems from the Buddhist doctrine of karma, by which a person's good or evil deeds in former lives directly determine their fate and fortune in this life. In addition, many Chinese people believe that “mental health [depends on] self-discipline . . . and the avoidance of morbid thoughts” (Zhang Liu). This emphasis on self-discipline and balance has roots in the Taoist principle of yin and yang, which points to the imbalance of yin and yang as the cause of degenerative diseases, includ-

ing learning disabilities such as attention deficit disorder (*Philosophy and Theory of Yin and Yang*; see also *Theory of Yin-Yang*). In summary, zheng encapsulates Chinese cultural and religious preference for orthodoxy and prejudice against the unorthodox, including people with disabilities.

CANFEI AND CANJI: GRADUAL TRANSFORMATION

The Chinese term *canfei* 残废 most resembles the English term “handicapped,” both because of its negative connotation and because it has largely faded from public use. The two characters in *canfei* are *can*, which means “to injure, to ruin; cruel, and incomplete,” and *fei*, which means “to abandon, to discard, crippled, and waste” (“Canfei,” MDBG). In the recent past, this term was widely used in the phrase *canfei wuyong* 残废无用—used to describe people with disabilities—which means “crippled and therefore useless” (Stone 137). *Canfei* goes beyond the conceptual nature of *zheng* to vilify disability in a direct and personal manner: Disability is undesirable because it serves no practical purpose. Thus, *canfei* makes the unorthodox become the unwanted.

In the 1980s, as China nominally adopted Western norms on disability, the government propagated a new slogan: *canji erbu canfei* 残疾而不残废, which means “disabled but not useless” (Stone 136). This relatively new term represents a shift in administrative and popular attitudes toward disability. *Canji* 残疾, which means “disabled,” eliminates the notion of waste and uselessness (*wuyong*) from *canfei*. However, much like the term “disabled,” which carries a negative, limiting connotation, *canji* retains a character in common with *canfei*—*can*—and thus still carries the associated negative meaning of cruel, ruinous, and incomplete. In addition, *canji* contains the character *ji*, which means sickness or affliction. As Stone explains, the use of the character or radical for sickness “signifies the perception of impairment as noteworthy and undesirable because [it is] non-normative and dis-ordering” (141). Therefore, the language of disability in China continues to reflect an underlying prejudice based on cultural tradition.

PEJORATIVE TERMS: XIA 瞎 AND FENG 疯

The term *xia* denotes visual impairment by combining the element of the character for eye (*mu* 目) with the element for harm or damage (*hai* 害). While this descriptive term may accurately describe some cases, it casts all forms of visual impairment in a negative light by associating them with harm. *Feng*, a common character for intellectual or psychological impairments, contains the radical for sickness. As explained by



Stone, the sickness radical creates distance from the Confucian conception of orthodoxy (142). In addition, feng contains the radical for wind, which—as opposed to qi 气, the positive “inner wind”—was associated with ghosts, fecundity, wildness, violence, and, in medieval times, madness (Hsu S117). In this way, feng divides people with intellectual or psychological impairments from the mainstream of society, thus hindering societal acceptance of these people.

### *Traditional Employment Roles for the Disabled*

Resources on traditional employment roles for the disabled are difficult to find, likely because there were no traditional employment roles for the majority of people with disabilities. A major exception, however, is traditional employment roles for people with visual impairments, including performing music, fortunetelling, and massage therapy. This paper uses visual impairments as a case study to examine the effect of traditional employment roles on current laws and society. The following background and analysis comes primarily from Steven Riep’s article “Beyond Fortunetelling and Massage Therapy: Exploring Visual Disabilities in Contemporary Chinese Cinema.”

#### COURT MUSICIAN

The earliest references to specialized employment for people with visual impairments—court musicians—come from the *Books of Songs*, the *Book of Documents*, and the *Rites of Zhou*, all of which predate 200 B.C.E. (Riep 7). For example, the commentary to the Books of Songs poem 208 notes, “While these musician-officers were blind, they had acute hearing, which qualified them for their positions” (Riep 8). This belief in the compensatory virtue of more acute hearing not only permitted the court to employ this traditionally marginalized group but also made visual impairments preferable to some extent.

#### FORTUNETELLING

The Chinese have traditionally ascribed people with visual impairments the “gift of second sight or ‘inner vision’ (*neiming* 内明)” (Riep 9). Evidence of this comes from the writings of Laozi, who used the term “knowing without seeing” (*bujian er ming* 不见而明), which suggests that true understanding does not come from physical vision but rather through inner vision (Jiang and Li 62). While this term does not exclude people without visual impairments, it does give an advantage to “the specially acquired powers a blind official might possess” (Riep 10).

#### MASSAGE THERAPY

Massage therapy is the most enduring and influential of the traditional employment roles prescribed for people with visual impairments (Riep 12). Like the roles of musician and fortuneteller, the Chinese likely favor the blind for massage therapy because of the compensatory gifts associated with visual impairments. These gifts “allow visually impaired people to focus more on their sense of touch than a sighted person could, and [blindness also provides] the side-benefit of reduced concerns over undressing before a [masseuse]” (Riep 12).

Traditional employment roles for people with visual impairments are a two-edged sword. On one hand, they provide a commonly marginalized group with an accepted place in society and the opportunity to work for a living. On the other hand, they inhibit qualified persons without disabilities from pursuing such professions. Prescribed employment roles limit opportunities for people both with and without disability. This kind of categorization based on subjective outward appearances is discriminatory, regardless of which way the blade cuts.

### **Disability Law in the People’s Republic of China**

#### *The Legal Definition of Disability*

Adopted in 1990, the Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Disabled Persons provides the most recent official legal definition of disability. Chapter I Article 2 of that law says, “A disabled person refers to one who suffers from abnormalities or loss of a certain organ or function, psychologically, physiologically, or in anatomical structure, and has lost . . . the ability to perform an activity in the way considered normal” (*Law*).

Article 2 continues: “The term ‘disabled persons’ refers to those with visual, hearing, speech, or physical disabilities, mental retardation, mental disorders, multiple disabilities and/or other disabilities” (*Central—Practical Evaluation Criteria*). The People’s Congress assigned the details for classifying disability to the State Council, which enacted the most recent version of “Practical Evaluation Criteria for Disabled People” in 2006 (*Ibid.*). This document divides disability into six categories: visual, auditory, verbal, intellectual, physical, and psychological, further dividing each of these classifications into several degrees of disability.

#### *Employment Regulations and Protections*

In 2007, the PRC passed the “Regulations on the Employment of People with Disabilities” in order to advance the employment and protect the labor rights of people with disabilities. These regulations are partially based

on Article 27 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol to which China became signatory in 2008 (Peterson). It accomplishes this by prohibiting employment discrimination against people with disabilities, urging people with disabilities to “improve their personal qualities and enhance their employability,” and encouraging self-employment and entrepreneurship (Chapter I Article 4; Chapter II Article 19). In addition, Chapter I requires government at all levels—as well as trade unions, the Communist Youth League, and the Women’s Federation—to assist in employing people with disabilities; however, Article 6 assigns the specific implementation and supervision of employment programs to the China Disabled Persons’ Federation. Chapter II Article 8 requires employers to reserve a certain percentage (1.5 percent) of suitable job types and positions for people with disabilities. Failure to comply with this requirement results in a tax that feeds into the Disabled Person Employment Security Fund, which pays for training and other benefits for people with disabilities (Chapter II Article 9).

Furthermore, the law rewards companies that employ 25 percent or more persons with disabilities by providing subsidies through the Disabled Person Employment Security Fund and preferential treatment when selecting companies for government projects (Chapter III Article 18). Chapter IV Article 22 requires the China Disabled Persons’ Federation to provide free vocational training and employment location services for people with disabilities. In the event of legal disputes between employers and employees with disabilities, Chapter IV Article 24 requires local legal aid agencies to provide legal assistance with the support of the local Disabled Persons’ Federation. In sum, China’s employment protection law includes a variety of provisions intended to increase the employment and employability of people with disabilities. The following sections discuss the extent to which the legal definition of disability and these employment protections perpetuate or deviate from traditional perceptions of disability.

### **Progressive Attitudes in the Law**

The legal definition of disability is progressive in that it entirely avoids common pejorative terms for people with disabilities, including *xia*, *canfei*, and *feng*. Avoiding these pejorative terms in favor of scientific descriptors represents an improvement over traditional prejudices.

China’s laws depart from traditional prejudices by not prescribing particular employment roles for people with disabilities. According to a 2010 Peking University study, the Chinese government promotes three primary categories of employment for people with disabilities: centralized

employment, employment by quota, and self-directed employment (*Labor Law and Social Security* 6). Centralized employment refers to job placement in social welfare enterprises, which typically include the “papermaking, printing, catering, food processing, and shoemaking industries” (Ibid.). However, the law does not mandate these particular industries (*The Central People’s Government—Regulations* Chapter I Article 2). Social welfare enterprises are businesses established by or with assistance from local governments—not the provincial or central governments—and cater to disadvantaged members of society (Ibid.). Chapter II Article 10 clarifies that social welfare enterprises must “focus on employing people with disabilities” but does not specify a particular percentage.

Employment by quota refers to Chapter II Article 8 of the State Council’s Regulations on the Employment of People with Disabilities: “Employers should provide a certain percentage (1.5%) of employment for people with disabilities, and provide them with suitable job types and positions” (*The Central People’s Government—Regulations*). Article 9 of the same chapter requires businesses that do not meet this requirement to pay money into the disabled person employment security fund, which is an effective tax on noncompliance.

The meaning of self-directed employment is obvious, and the Chinese government has increasingly promoted this avenue of employment in recent years. According to Chapter IV Section 34 of the Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Disabled Persons, “The State encourages and supports people with disabilities in selecting their own jobs and starting their own businesses” (*China Disabled Persons’ Federation*). This support includes free technical and vocational training programs for people with disabilities, as well as tax deductions for venture capital and micro loans (*Labor Law and Social Security* 7–8). These technical and vocational training programs typically include the following five areas: blind massage therapy, fine darning, software operation and 3D animation design, household electric appliance maintenance, and embroidery (Ibid.). While this list includes blind massage therapy, the law itself does not require people with visual impairments to choose massage therapy, nor does it prevent them from participating in the other available programs. Because the law delegates these decisions to the China Disabled Persons’ Federation, decisions about which programs to offer and how to disburse the money are determined by people with disabilities and not by government officials (*The Central People’s Government—Regulations* Chapter I Article 6).

Each of the employment categories advanced by the Chinese government avoids specifying particular employment roles for people with

disabilities, which is an improvement from traditional stereotypes of employment for the disabled. As evidence of this improvement, the total employment rate for the disabled population has increased from 50 percent in 1987 to 80 percent in 2007 (*Facts* 3). Among urban workers with disabilities, 11.9 percent were employed by social welfare enterprises, 11.5 percent through the government's quota requirement, and 15.8 percent through self-employment (*Ibid.*). In addition, in 2007 there were 3,127 employment service agencies that assisted over 300,000 people with disabilities each year (*Ibid.*).

Despite these improvements in legal language and employment protection, there are still a number of troubling issues with China's treatment of people with disabilities. The following section examines lingering linguistic concerns in the official definition of disability, as well as concerns with the implementation of China's employment protection laws.

### **Traditional Stereotypes in the Legal Paradigm**

#### *Lingering Linguistic Concerns*

There remain several troubling terms and ideas inherent in the legal definition of disability. First, the law consistently uses the term *canji* instead of a neutral term such as *shenxin zhangai* 身心障碍. *Canji* is a definite improvement on the more derogatory *canfei*; however, *canji* retains the character *can*, which conveys the negative meanings of injury and cruelty. Furthermore, the character for sickness in *canji* creates additional separation between "normal" people and those with disabilities. Not choosing a neutral term for disability betrays persistent prejudice in the legal system, regardless of whether that prejudice is intended or not.

Second, the legal definition of disability frequently uses the term *zhengchang* 正常, which means orderly, proper, regular, and normal. This term contrasts disability with normality, making people with disabilities the "other" to society's "normal." According to Simi Linton, "Those who are not deemed normal are devalued and considered a burden or problem" (22). In addition, comparing disability to a fictional standard of normality relegates people with disabilities to the fringe of society, increasing the sense of otherness already ascribed to "people who look too different, or behave too differently" (Blatt 305). While differences certainly exist between people with and without formal disabilities, disability differences are typically exaggerated (Murdick 310). Legal language should not contribute to this social distance by contrasting disability to normality; rather, legal definitions should include disability as part of the norm.

Third, the law uses somewhat pejorative colloquial terms for particular disabilities, including *mang* 盲, *tuobei* 驼背, and *chidai* 痴呆, among

others. *Mang* means blindness and is composed of the eye and death radicals. This pictographic character, not unlike *xia*, associates visual impairment with death. According to Steven Riep, the *Xinshidai Hanying cidian* (2003: 819) defines *mang* as “one who lacks knowledge; illiterate,” and provides example uses such as *manggan* (go it blind; act rashly), a derogatory description of people who fail to consider long-term consequences (Riep 16). While *mang* is primarily a neutral term, its negative connotation makes it inappropriate for an official state definition.

The State Council’s evaluation criteria uses *tuobei* rather than a medical description to describe kyphosis or hunchback. This term combines the character for “camel” (*tuo* 驼) with the character for “back” (*bei* 背) in a visual description of the condition. The animal character in this term dehumanizes the individual (Stone 141). A more appropriate term might be *jizhu houtu* 脊柱后凸, a medical description of kyphosis that literally means “convex spinal column” (“Jizhu Houtu,” MDBG).

The State Council also uses *chidai* 痴呆—which refers to dementia or Alzheimer’s disease—in its classification of intellectual impairments. The first character *chi* means imbecile or stupid; the second character *dai* means foolish, stupid-looking, and incapable of taking action (“Dai,” *NCIKU*). These implications are altogether inappropriate for describing any type of intellectual impairment, much less dementia. An appropriate alternative might be *shizhi zheng* 失智症, which literally means “lost knowledge illness” (“Shizhi zheng,” *MDBG*). Defining disability using traditional descriptions rather than neutral terms or medical terminology perpetuates misunderstanding and forgoes an opportunity to influence popular perceptions.

Finally, the law contains provisions that promote disability prevention as a government responsibility. Chapter I Article 11 of the Law on the Protection of Disabled Persons requires the state to “undertake . . . the work of disability prevention, . . . publicize and popularize knowledge of good pre-natal and post-natal care, . . . formulate laws and regulations dealing with disability-causing factors such as heredity, diseases, medical poisoning, accidents . . . and pollution, and . . . prevent the occurrence of disabilities by organizing . . . social forces.” It is admirable and necessary to disseminate correct medical information on proper pre-natal care and to regulate work and home environments to prevent avoidable accidents. However, the Chinese government should carefully avoid the intimation that all disability is the result of some failure by the parent or the government. This is especially necessary due to Chinese tradition that links disability with the sins of the parents (see Section I). While it may be true

that parental or government negligence causes disability in a few cases, the majority of disabilities in China are congenital and not reasonably preventable by parents or the government (M. Liu 1086). Suggesting otherwise contributes to the marginalization of people with disabilities. This is a delicate balance: On one hand, the government should work to minimize preventable disabilities, but on the other, it must ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities that could and could not have been prevented.

The dilemma between finding acceptance and seeking the cure has no simple solution, but there should at least be some mediating statement in the government's official position.

### **Employment Concerns, Implementation Questions**

China faces several serious challenges to disability employment, including a larger-than-reported number of unemployed people with disabilities and continued discrimination against people with disabilities in the workplace.

China's reported employment rate of 80 percent is most likely inflated for two reasons. First, many businesses hire and compensate the required number of people with disabilities, but they do not actually allow them to work (*Labor Law and Social Security* 7). This represents a failure in the fundamental purpose of the law: to integrate people with disabilities into the workplace (Rosenthal). Second, some businesses take advantage of poor government supervision and law enforcement by avoiding the quota requirement altogether, and some businesses—presumably larger ones—employ people with disabilities only immediately before and during government inspections (*Labor Law and Social Security* 7).

In addition, employers rarely hire people with disabilities for important or challenging jobs, and the law does nothing to remedy this discrimination; it simply requires employers to choose "suitable" positions and job types (Ibid.). Providing employment for people with disabilities is the first step toward full integration for this marginalized group. Nevertheless, providing jobs is not enough, and the law does not adequately address discrimination that occurs within the work environment.

The traditional means of resolving these issues is to increase enforcement and penalties; however, China's track record on the rule of law suggests that promises to step up enforcement rarely translate into action. An increase in the number of legal clinics available to people with disabilities indicates a promising trend, but the general lack of rule of law in China casts doubt on greater legal enforcement in the short term (*Facts* 3).

## Conclusion

Traditional Chinese perceptions of disability have contributed to the marginalization of people with disabilities. Furthermore, traditional employment roles segregate people with disabilities and impede their full participation in the workforce. In recent years, China's laws regarding people with disabilities have taken the first step away from traditional prejudices by removing offensive terms such as *canfei*, refraining from prescribing particular employment roles for people with disabilities, and providing resources for the education and integration of people with disabilities into mainstream society. However, these measures are far from complete; the legal definition of disability still perpetuates traditional stereotypes. In addition, China's poor enforcement fails to reach the high standard set by employment protection laws. Moreover, these laws do little to discourage discrimination in the workplace or change popular perceptions of disability in general.

In sum, China is making significant progress along the path to full legal protection and societal participation for people with disabilities, but remnants of historical and cultural discrimination in the law have not been adequately addressed. The Chinese government must now move beyond nominal protection of people with disabilities by removing lingering stereotypes from the language and content of the law and by enforcing existing laws.

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# **Modified Motorcycles: Stories from Chiang Mai, Thailand**

*by Erin Meyers*

## **Motorcycles in Southeast Asia**

Over the last two decades, a revolution has taken place on the streets of Asia. The ubiquity of motorcycles as a primary form of transportation has increased substantially. Since 1990, motorcycle ownership rates in Indonesia and Vietnam have increased by over 300 and 1,000 percent respectively (Muir and Brown 2011). Similarly, the number of motorcycles registered in Thailand has grown by over 280 percent, from 4,778,220 vehicles in 1990 to 18,451,518 in 2012 (Number). Asia has the highest level of motorcycle ownership in the world now (Barter 1999).

This unprecedented increase in motorcycle ownership has drawn the attention of scholars and the media. In his study on urban transport in Asia, Paul Barter states, “Because such high ownership of motorcycles in cities is a new development . . . this phenomenon has unknown long-term implications which urgently need further study” (Barter 1999: 259). This paper addresses the need for this research by identifying some of the ways motorcycles affect the society and economy of Southeast Asia.

Of the few studies on this topic performed over the last decade, many have focused on the negative implications of increased motorcycle use. Scholars tend to note the crowded streets and frequent crashes that now plague many Asian cities. For example, in Thailand, road accidents kill an average of two people per hour, and nearly 75 percent of these accidents involve motorcycles (Taniboriboon 2005). These types of statistics make

headlines and invoke valid concerns for governments and other institutions to address. However, this more sensational focus has overshadowed the many positive impacts of motorcycle adoption in Asia.

Ralph B. Brown (Muir and Brown 2011) placed the positive roles of motorcycles at the forefront of his research in Southeast Asia. Brown noted how motorcycles have helped rural women in Indonesia gain access to education and employment opportunities found in more distant labor markets and urban settings. More specifically, he discovered lower fertility rates correlate with women's access to a motorcycle, as women can take advantage of education and employment away from home, give birth to their first child at an older age, and tend to have fewer children overall. Their children are then more likely to enjoy a higher quality of life and to pursue educational and employment opportunities.

Aside from motorcycles' effect on fertility, Brown also studied how motorcycles are becoming agents of economic development for their owners; motorcycles are now a crucial part of the informal economy in Southeast Asia, which accounts for 50 to 60 percent of the total workforce ("The Informal Sector" 2000).

While the general increase in motorcycle use in Asia is remarkable, even more noteworthy is how workers in the informal economy have adapted this machine to their unique needs. The phenomenon of motorcycle modification has become commonplace throughout Southeast Asia. This paper, based on a study of the city of Chiang Mai, will show how modified motorcycles are helping increase economic opportunities and mobility for people in Thailand. First, it will describe the nature of modified motorcycles and those who use them. Next, it will detail how modified motorcycles are providing economic opportunities for street vendors. And finally, it will describe how Thailand's disabled population is benefitting from these machines.

### **Modified Motorcycles**

In order to use motorcycles for tasks such as vending food or transporting heavy loads, people modify their bikes by attaching creative apparatuses to meet their needs. The variety of these modifications is impressive, ranging from simple sidecars to elaborate structures with table tops and roofs.

The most basic modification is the addition of a short sidecar on the left side of the motorcycle. Made from strips and tubes of steel, these crate-like cars are sturdy and can transport heavy loads. Drivers can use this sidecar as a base for adding other features to their vehicles. For example, they can add a platform on top of it, which can be used as a tabletop surface. For protection from adverse weather, a large umbrella or permanent roof can

be attached to the vehicle. The more specific the task, the more accessories owners can add—fruit vendors can weld a glass ice box to the sidecar, and vendors who cook foods can attach gas stoves or grills.

There are many groups of people that use and work with modified motorcycles on a regular basis. Some of these groups are mechanic shops, private individuals who self-modify their vehicles, the police, and the Ministry of Transportation. The focus group of this paper is the drivers of modified motorcycles; this includes street vendors, ice cream companies, people with disabilities, and other individual drivers.

## **Drivers of Modified Motorcycles**

### *Street Vendors*

Perhaps the largest group of people who use modified motorcycles in Thailand is the street vendors. Thailand is estimated to be the home of over 390,600 street vendors (Mertens 2009). These vendors, most of whom are women, sell a large variety of products but most sell food. Fruit, fried chicken, coffee, and grilled squid are common items, along with a myriad of other treats. The food is cheap, about \$1–3 USD per dish, and convenient. Vendors may be found at nearby street corners from early morning until well past midnight. Street food is a booming business, bringing in about \$1.6 billion USD per year in Bangkok alone (Kusakabe 2006).

Vending has been a part of Thai culture since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Bangkok was once known as the “Venice of the East” and boasted scenes of floating markets on its many canals. The nature of vending changed as streets gradually replaced canals, and vendors took to wheeled carts or permanent stalls in markets. The most recent development in Thailand’s street vending history is the use of modified motorcycles. Thais have become experts at attaching food-vending apparatuses to their motorbikes, creating fleets of mobile restaurants.

Why are motorcycles so popular among these small street vendors? Many people cite the physical benefits of these vehicles. For example, vendors may load their supplies and their children or friends into their sidecar and drive a significant distance. This is much more efficient than using a pushcart or a motorcycle with no attachments. With the most basic sidecar, a person may transport a large amount of vending supplies. Some carry large coolers full of meat, others transport glass cases of fresh fruit on ice.

Aside from their carrying capacity, modified motorcycles provide another important physical benefit. Because they are small, these vehicles are more convenient for vendors than full-sized cars. They are easier to drive through Thailand’s narrow and crowded alleys, and it is easier to find space

to park modified motorcycles. Their compact size means vendors may simply pull over to the side of the road and set up shop.

The extremely portable nature of modified motorcycles links these vehicles' physical benefits with their perhaps more important economic benefits. Modified motorcycles afford their owners the ability to reach their customers in more efficient ways. Vendors park and sell in places where people congregate, such as schools, workplaces, or parks, instead of paying for a spot in the market, where they must wait for customers to come to them. Not only does this save vendors the expense of renting a stall in the market, but it also allows them to be more strategic about where and when to sell. Several motorcycle vendors are usually found parked outside of schools in the mornings and afternoons, selling snacks to schoolchildren and their parents. Motorcycles enable vendors to reach customers who need to grab something quick to eat, such as working people on their lunch break who do not have time to stop by the market.

### *Modified Motorcycles for Ice-Cream Companies*

Individual vendors are not the only ones who have noted the efficiency of motorcycle vending. In fact, several major ice-cream companies in Thailand—Nestle, Walls, and Magnolia—sell their products this way. Compared to the sometimes jerry-rigged nature of smaller vendors' vehicles, these ice-cream motorcycles have a more professional appearance. They have preassembled structures, custom paint jobs, and company logos. They also have speakers that broadcast catchy jingles, advertising the ice-cream brand and alerting potential customers of vendors' presence on the street.

These vehicles are assembled in Bangkok by the companies' offices there and are shipped to various locations throughout the country. Local managers order ice cream and sell it to individual drivers who then vend it on the streets. When asked why these companies choose to use modified motorcycles, both drivers and managers cited similar benefits to those already discussed. One manager said simply, "When we go out peddling, we can reach our customers easier" (Interview 2012).

In addition to helping vendors gain access to their customers, another benefit of motorcycles is that they are inexpensive and cost-effective. While vendors reported varying costs, most paid around 10,000 Baht (\$325 USD) for their motorcycle attachment. Even if using this attachment required the purchase of a new motorcycle, the total cost would be far less expensive than buying a car. Moreover, compared to full-sized cars, motorcycles are much more fuel-efficient. Many vendors spoke of how they could use their vehicles for a week and spend only 100 Baht (\$3.25 USD) on gas.

### *Modified Motorcycles for People with Disabilities*

Aside from street vendors, another group of people in Thai society who benefit from modified motorcycles is people with disabilities. Because these people cannot drive regular vehicles, modified motorcycles provide them with a primary means of transportation. While there are many public transportation options in Thailand, few cater to the needs of the disabled. For example, drivers of buses or public trucks often refuse to pull over to pick up people in wheelchairs, because it is inconvenient to help them into the vehicle. Therefore, modified motorcycles allow for increased mobility to people who otherwise would be unable to travel a significant distance by themselves.

In addition to providing basic transportation for disabled people, these motorcycles also enable their owners to earn an income. While they may not sell food items like other vendors, disabled users of modified motorcycles often sell another popular product: lottery tickets. This requires that the vendor can travel to and park in a place where people congregate—the same as other types of vending. However, it requires fewer supplies and less set up and is a popular occupation among the disabled. They only need a simple table or box to display their lottery tickets.

The most common type of modified motorcycle used by the disabled community is the type designed for people in wheelchairs. These vehicles have sidecars attached to the left of the motorcycle. A short ramp at the back of this sidecar allows a person in a wheelchair to roll themselves up into the vehicle. Using a chain, the ramp can then retract and close, much like the tailgate on a truck. The steering mechanism of these motorcycles is removed from the body of the motorcycle and mounted on the front of the sidecar, allowing the user to control the vehicle while seated in their wheelchair inside the sidecar. The brakes and throttle are also controlled by the handlebars on the sidecar.

### **Conclusion**

The modified motorcycles in Thailand represent an important development in the country's economic and social history. They represent how an ancient cultural tradition of street vending can thrive with the adoption of new technology. Thai people are enthusiastic about these machines and the ways they have improved their everyday lives. More broadly, modified motorcycles showcase the ingenuity and adaptability of the Thai people and their ability to design unique solutions to meet their needs. So, while many economic and social issues remain unresolved in Thailand and in the rest of the developing world, the story of modified motorcycles offers the hope that everyday people may create powerful engines of change.

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# China's Use of Economic Hard Power in the 21st Century

*by Taylor Shippen*

## **Introduction**

China's growing willingness to project military power may make the nightly news, but military power is not China's greatest tool in achieving political ends. Since Deng Xiaoping began his reforms in 1978, economic influence has been the source of many of China's diplomatic breakthroughs with the West. Although there is some dispute among scholars about what to call China's growing influence (Klein 1994: 39; Huang 2013), for the purposes of this paper, China's growing persuasiveness will be based on Joseph Nye's definition of hard power, which he defines as "the ability to use the carrots and sticks of economic and military might to make others follow your will" (Nye 2003). As China's power grows, Western nations should not be surprised to find China capable of influencing their policies using tactics that Western countries have used throughout the twentieth century. The Chinese have been wielding economic power for a long time. Ancient records show that when countries on the periphery of ancient China combined forces, Chinese emperors would employ "gifts" to help turn hostile forces against each other.

Today's China is more reliant upon foreign trade than ever before, but this has only served to increase China's ability to capitalize on its own economic power. Just as the U.S. has used its economic power to build the "Washington Consensus," so China has threatened to torpedo trade agreements and used aid money to gain political advantage while attempting to build its own aid system (Kissinger 2011).



### Sources of Economic Power

In 2014, the economic power stemming from China's economic growth seemed to have been inevitable. Since the 1970s, China has seen real GDP growth unparalleled by any other nation in the developed world. It is hard to remember that for much of the twentieth century China's economy was shut off from the Western world and subject to stagnant growth. During the "Century of Humiliation," Chinese leaders suffered as their traditional economic influence was overshadowed by the West's technological advances. This deprivation led to a series of humiliating military and diplomatic defeats, which have haunted China ever since. Because of China's historic reliance upon economic power, it is not surprising that Deng's first priority was economic growth. He understood that his country's power was linked to its economic prowess rather than military force.

While pushing for reforms, Deng often used ideological justifications to persuade fellow party members. Ideological phrases like "China [needed] to catch up with the other major powers" (Goodhart and Xu 1996: 56–80) equated the growth of the economy with the growth of the nation and allowed Deng Xiaoping to cover ideological reform in the guise of nationalism. Disguising these changes in nationalism was essential to their success. Many of the changes he proposed were similar to those implemented by Eastern European countries, and those policies eventually accelerated the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe.

Deng's reforms combined a market economy and a command economy that would allow the Communist Party to retain control over many of China's most important industries. This middle course between free-market economics and a command economy created problems similar to those faced by Eastern Europe and members of the former Soviet Union. China's state-owned enterprises were inefficient, the central government lacked fiscal revenue, social programs were overstretched, the government faced stiff inflationary pressures, and financial institutions lacked adequate infrastructure (Goodhart and Xu 1996: 56–80). These problems kept Eastern Europe stuck with relatively stagnant growth for many years despite "shock treatment" liberalization policies that Western economists designed to stimulate economic growth. On paper, China's reforms should have suffered a similar fate, yet China has seen consistently high growth rates since beginning of the 1980s.

According to Jeffrey Sachs and Wing Thyee Woo, China's economic reforms succeeded for a couple of reasons. First, Chinese workers did not have a social safety net associated with their place of employment within

the agricultural industry. With no safety net, luring peasants away from agricultural communes in the heart of China was not difficult. As jobs with higher wages began to open on the coasts, laborers did not have to choose between a retirement pension and a new job in the city, making the choice between agricultural and factory work painless compared to Europe. For those who had been forced to work in the fields because of the Cultural Revolution, returning to the city was even less of a challenge—they were returning home. The Cultural Revolution had dismantled much of the central government's bureaucracy. Though initially disastrous, the destruction of China's central bureaucracy created competition between regional governments after Deng initiated his economic reforms (Sachs et al. 1994: 101–45). As provinces competed for investment, labor-heavy exporters were lured to China's coastal regions by special economic zones that promised to be tax free. This in turn created an insatiable demand for labor (Crane 1990). Farther into the hinterland, local governments began investing in "township and village enterprises" (Harding 1987) that could attract labor from the agricultural industry to more productive areas of the Chinese economy. Thus, provinces overcame their Soviet era inefficiencies in order to compete, creating the explosion of private enterprises within villages and special economic zones during the early years of Deng's reforms.

While much of China's economic growth may be associated with the reforms begun in 1978, the restoration of China's former economic prowess was as much a factor of the creative destruction caused by Mao's Cultural Revolution as it was the results of Deng's reforms. The very backwardness of China that Deng inherited from Mao proved to be one of China's greatest strengths as it rebuilt its economy and economic influence. Additionally, Mao left another important legacy: His gift-giving foreign policies in Africa provided China's future leadership with a model of how to use economic power to influence foreign states in the modern world.

### **China's Use of Economic Power in Africa**

From 1950 until 1974, Mao gave large amounts of aid to developing African countries to encourage socialist revolution. At its peak in 1973, China contributed 2.05 percent of its GNP to projects in Africa to show solidarity (Li 10). After 1973, aid to Africa dropped off dramatically as Mao's traumatic last years forced Chinese officials to focus inward, and efforts at inciting communist revolution in Africa appeared to have failed. However, Mao's gifts to Africa were not unappreciated; China's projects earned lasting loyalty from African nations. After twenty years of relative neglect, African leaders were the first to visit China after the 1989 Tiananmen Square

massacre. China's generosity also set a valuable precedent for its current economic influence within the African sphere (Liang 2012: 667–92). Since the early 1990s, investment in Africa has picked up again as China's search for energy and resources grows more urgent. China's previous engagements within Africa have now become an opportunity to enter a new market while broadening China's influence within multilateral institutions like the UN and the WTO (Brooks 2007). Although Beijing claims its more recent aid comes with "no strings attached," recent developments show that Chinese investments come with the expectation that African countries will return the favor through access to valuable resources and diplomatic cooperation.

This influence is most easily observed at the UN, where China has been successfully deploying its economic influence. Within the UN, African diplomats have been so effective at killing resolutions that condemn the Chinese government for human rights abuses that Felice Gaer, a U.S. Human Rights expert, commented:

A colleague used to say that more roads than one could count were built in third-world countries that happened to be members of the Commission on Human Rights, because of the introduction of the annual China resolution. He called the annual China resolution a "development plan for the third world." (Sceats and Breslin 2012: 3)

China's success in the UN has been matched by increased cooperation with individual states within Africa. Of the fifty-five recognized states in Africa, forty-five have signed bilateral trade agreements that have enhanced cooperation in the areas of customs, taxation, and inspection and quarantine regimes while lowering tariffs on 95 percent of the goods China exports to Africa. This has allowed China a chance to access the developing African market and create brand loyalty before many Western corporations have chosen to seek a strong foothold (Anonymous 2012: 1).

China's dominant role in Africa has not been without resistance. African leaders have become wary of China's investments because of their side effects. Some of China's business contracts create unfair competition by underbidding African companies using Chinese government subsidies, while new investment has not led to significant job growth in African economies, because Chinese contracts mandate that development projects employ Chinese citizens. In addition, as cheap Chinese products drive fledgling African industries out of business, some African leaders have become concerned that the relationship developing between Africa and China is becoming neocolonialist (Liang 2012: 667–92). Although these issues have not become crippling to relations between Africa and China,

these criticisms cast a shadow over the prospects of future trade relations and show the limits of China's economic power within the region.

### **The Effects of Chinese Economic Power on Western Democracies**

In a strategy similar to the ancient Chinese tactic of keeping “barbarians” from combining against China, Chinese delegations have repeatedly persuaded Western nations to refrain from punishing Chinese human rights violations with any meaningful action. After the Tiananmen Square protests, European nations were under immense domestic pressure to place sanctions on China to punish it for violating human rights. But rather than placing meaningful sanctions on China as a bloc, China used its economic influence to convince individual nation states to enter into meaningless bilateral negotiations over “alleged” human-rights violations that would limit the damage a hard line EU coalition could impose. Similarly, China successfully used its economic relations with the U.S. to influence President George H. W. Bush to forgo sanctions similar to Iran's isolation following the Tiananmen Square Massacre (Wu 2009: 80–89).

Guoguang Wu claims China's economic influence is effective against Western democracies advocating for human-rights reform, because Western democracies are subject to powerful commercial interest groups that can determine a politician's future. When China dangles trade incentives before a functioning democracy, it mobilizes business leaders eager to make a profit while the public remains ignorant of the deal until it is done. Wu cites a recent Australian trade deal as an example of just how far some Western countries are willing to go to get China's trade.

In 2003, China's President Hu Jintao traveled to Canberra, Australia, to give a speech before the Australian parliament and to sign a new free trade agreement with the Australian government. Before giving the address, the Chinese government put heavy pressure on the Australian prime minister to promise President Hu Jintao that he would have a “silent reception” during his speech, which would have put the entire agreement in doubt if the Australians had shamed the Chinese president. The Australian government granted this request and repressed its own citizens to appease the Chinese government and received a free-trade agreement in return. When opposition parties criticized the ruling Australian government for “kowtowing” to a communist dictatorship, the government justified its position because of its success in creating a range of economically cooperative agreements during Hu's visit (Wu 2009: 80–89).

Western governments are not the only ones implicated in this human-rights-for-wealth bargaining. U.S.-based corporations like Yahoo! recently

gave up the identity of three Chinese dissidents to Chinese authorities. Wang Xiaoning, Li Zhi, and Shi Tao all now face a decade-long prison sentence because Yahoo!'s business in China was threatened (BBC News 2005), while Google was accused of cooperating with China's censorship policies until 2010, when it chose to voluntarily leave China.

Until more corporations and interest groups are willing to take a stand like Google, it is likely that China's economic influence will continue to grow in Western democracies, while the nature of China's autocracy makes Western attempts at similar influence futile.

### **The Reaction of ASEAN to China's Growing Economic Power**

China's neighbors have felt the brunt of the negative effects surrounding China's rise. In *China's Second Revolution*, Harry Harding points out with prophetic accuracy that China's domestic success would lead to a resurgence in belligerent behavior toward China's neighbors:

China's emergence as a great power offers both benefits and risks for the international community. The benefit would be a prosperous and stable China, engaged actively and constructively in the international economy and contributing to the peace and security of the Asian-Pacific region. The principle risk is that growing Chinese resources will be harnessed to an assertive nationalism in ways that threaten national security of neighboring countries and the economic stability of the entire region. (Harding 1987)

China's recent actions in the South China Sea and the Senkaku Islands have realized this fear, but for leaders in Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Japan, reservations about China's rise run deeper than territorial disputes. Between 1990 and 1999, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries dropped by 17 percent, while FDI into the People's Republic of China (PRC) has steadily risen over the same period. This shift has raised concerns among ASEAN nations that feel they are losing FDI to China. At the same time, trade between ASEAN nations and China has grown from 7.9 billion USD in 1995 to 39.5 billion USD in 2002, a five-fold increase in less than ten years that has created a lucrative opportunity for businesses in the region (Rajan 2003: 2639–43).

Because of China's dominant trade position, ASEAN leadership is presented with a challenging problem: How can countries dependent upon access to Chinese markets remain politically autonomous of Beijing? ASEAN's private sector is becoming increasingly dependent upon trade with the PRC, even as ASEAN nations attempt to distance themselves politically. In order to increase Asia's comparative advantage in large scale production, ASEAN

business leaders recently moved to more fully integrate themselves into the PRC economy, putting pressure on ASEAN governments to bring China into ASEAN's free trade circle. This led to a new free-trade agreement signed with China in 2010 that caused a 37.5 percent increase in bilateral trade between China and ASEAN in 2010 alone, while FDI from ASEAN into China has grown by 50 percent (Mabasa and Antonio 2011: 1). However, it is still unclear how willing China is to accommodate ASEAN's need for FDI. Even as China has modernized because of incredible amounts of foreign investment, FDI to ASEAN nations from China grew by a paltry 6 percent in 2010, creating a disparity between China and ASEAN states that has led academics to question the motives behind China's actions within the ASEAN framework. Most of China's investment and trade occurs with its neighbors, not with ASEAN as a whole, pulling those nations away from ASEAN and into China's economic sphere of influence. ASEAN states acknowledge the need for increased economic cooperation with China to survive, but they have also become wary of Beijing's growing leverage in their own domestic affairs. The siren song of "regional cooperation" has disguised a series of Chinese diplomatic victories that have advanced China's core interests. Since joining the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), China has signed a peace treaty in the South China Sea maintaining Chinese claims of sovereignty that excluded the U.S., convinced ASEAN leaders to recognize China's "One China" policy on Taiwan, and smiled upon the creation of the "ASEAN way," a regional code of conduct indistinguishable from Zhou Enlai's principles of peaceful co-existence put forward in 1955 (Hiro Katsumata, David Martin Jones, and Michael L.R. Smith 2008: 182–88).

On the surface, it appears ASEAN nations are still committed to greater economic involvement with China, but given China's past history, one could ask if China is seeking to restore suzerain-style relations with its southern neighbors. While China does not appear interested in taking back more territory from its southern neighbors by force, economic influence may eventually tie ASEAN states' economies into the Chinese sphere of influence so tightly that they may once more be subject to Beijing's indirect rule.

### **Limitations of Chinese Economic Power**

Despite China's economic success with ASEAN, it has hit a wall with countries where there are irresolvable cultural conflicts and economies large enough to be somewhat independent of China (Huang 2013). Japan, South Korea, and to a lesser extent the U.S., have all repeatedly defied Beijing's wishes on a variety of issues, particularly on issues with Taiwan and the East China Sea. Japan's unwillingness to bend to economic pressure has been

sorely tested in the Senkaku Islands dispute. Despite economic losses to Japanese firms from Chinese boycotts, Japan has continued to defy Chinese requests to negotiate over the disputed islands and has defiantly flown military aircraft in China's newly created ADIZ (Bloomberg 2012).

Similarly, South Korea and the U.S. have been equally unyielding in their own respective arenas. South Korea has been taking a hard line with its northern neighbor despite Beijing's reservations about destabilizing Kim Jung-Un's leadership by cutting off foreign aid to the north, while the U.S. has refused to give ground on the Taiwan issue. It appears that nationalism and value-based differences at the street level are not easily combatted with economic sticks and carrots.

### Conclusion

China's ability to influence other nations to do its bidding is growing, even in Western nations traditionally opposed to China's agenda. Deng's development plan was unlike the development of most Western powers; his economic growth emphasis took precedence over military modernization, a path the West supported, but this same path now seems to create suspicion within the U.S. and in Europe as China's economic reforms now seem to be a preparation for China to challenge Western hegemony. Globally, many of China's trading partners share the West's wariness toward China's real intentions (d'Hooghe 2010), although most countries continue to bow to China's wishes in public. Whether this wariness is caused by China's lack of transparency, economic policies, or cultural friction is not clear, but it does beg the question: How often can the Chinese employ economic hard power to win public debate before other countries incite a backlash that could harm Chinese interests? It seems the Chinese Communist Party has no qualms about testing those waters.

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DAVID M.  
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