

The Early Diffusion of the Wealth of Nations in Missionaries' Renderings in Late Qing China

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Abstract: The article examines the role of protestant missionaries in introducing *The Wealth of Nations* to a Chinese readership by analyzing such works as *Manual of political economy; Chambers's Educational Course: Political Economy for Use in Schools, and for Private Instruction; Science Primers: Political Economy; and The History of the Nineteenth Century*. As popular economic enlightenment books in the late Qing dynasty, they were the first to introduce Adam Smith's theory to Chinese intellectuals. Classical Chinese vocabulary with historical and cultural origins was used to translate Western academic concepts in these works, so that the Western economic theory represented by Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* had its first sinification in these books. Chinese intellectuals first came to know Smithian doctrine from the translation of these sources and this has important implications for their understanding and acceptance of Smith's ideas.

Keywords: *The Wealth of Nations*, protestant missionaries, late Qing China

1. INTRODUCTION

The publication of Adam Smith's *the Wealth of Nations* (hereafter *WN*) in 1776 caused a sensation in Britain and Europe as a whole. It was translated into many languages and spread around the world. It spread to Japan, China, Korea, and other East Asian countries along with missionaries, businessmen, travelers, and colonists in the mid-nineteenth century. Its dissemination was assisted by the spread of Western learning to the East in the late Qing dynasty and with the gradual introduction of Western economic knowledge in China (Xiong 1994, pp. 567-613; Trescott 2007, pp. 23-25; Li 2011, pp. 165-172; Li & Liang 2008, pp. 92-98; Warner 2016, pp. 3-93, 171-182). Translated and published by Yan Fu (嚴復, 1854–1921) in 1902, *Yuanfu* (原富, *The Origins of Wealth*) was the first Chinese version of *WN*, although the protestant missionaries had introduced some of the contents of *WN* sporadically before the publication of *Yuanfu* (Zhang 2009, pp. 248-250; Zhang 2010, pp. 95-99; Zhang 2020, pp. 27-29;). Taking *Yuanfu* as an example, Lai Cheng-chung explored how Western economic theories were introduced into China when Chinese vocabulary and concepts were still insufficient to do these justice (Lai 1989, p. 303; Lai 2009, p. 1). As vanguards of the introduction of Western economics into China in the late Qing dynasty, these missionaries had encountered much earlier and greater difficulties than Yan Fu in introducing *WN*. However, there has been no such study of this issue in academia so far. Based on peer studies, this article pays attention to the creation of a new set of terms arising from the lack of a Chinese vocabulary for economic concepts and mainly discusses the role of protestant missionaries in disseminating Western political economy, especially Smithian theories¹ during the Self-Strengthening Movement (1860–1890), the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), and the Reform Movement of 1898. Introducing the diffusion process of missionaries' renderings, the article aims to assess the possible influences of Smithian theories on late Qing China.

2. WHEN DID WN ARRIVE IN CHINA?

The answer to this question needs to be explored from the background of missionaries importing modern Western economics into China. The British missionaries Robert Morrison (馬禮遜, Ma Lixun, 1782–1834) and William Milne (米憐, Mi Lian, 1785–1822) founded the first modern Chinese newspaper to

¹Smithian theories only refer to the theories in *WN* in the paper.

publish some economic and geographic knowledge in 1815. The German Lutheran missionary Karl Friedrich Gutzlaff (郭實獵, Ge Shilie, 1803–1851) published the first Chinese monthly magazine—*Eastern Western Monthly Magazine* on August 1, 1833 in Guangzhou, which introduced Western religion, science, politics, history, business, geography, news, etc. He published *Outlines of Political Economy* in 1939 and *Treatise on commerce* in 1840, which introduced the Western business system and trade. These two books were “the first recorded economics texts in Chinese language” (Trescott 2007, p. 23).

Treatise on commerce was an excerpt from the British economist John Ramsey McCulloch’s *A Dictionary, Practical, Theoretical and Historical of Commerce and Commercial Navigation*. There had been many discussions about Adam Smith and *WN* in the book (McCulloch 1835, pp. 107, 227, 371, 375, 377-378, 818). However, these had been deleted by Gutzlaff in the Chinese version. In spite of these, it was highly praised by Chinese intellectuals for spreading free trade, which paved the way for the diffusion of *WN*.

The Qing government’s policy of prohibiting Christianity has gradually slackened since the Opium War in 1840, and missionaries can steadily preach freely in China. They encountered setbacks while preaching directly, and some of them were forced to change their preaching strategies. They were engaged in education, translation, practicing medicine, and writing, and they used to be teachers, translators, writers, sinologists, doctors, and government officials. The new schools where they taught, such as Tongwen Guan in Beijing and Guangzhou, and Guangfangyan Guan in Shanghai, had trained many talents for the westernization of the Qing Empire. They once worked in the Translation Bureau of Jiangnan Arsenal, founded universities such as Shanxi University, St. John’s University, and Anglo–Chinese Methodist School, societies such as Guang Xue Hui and Gezhi Xue Hui. These were the main sources where the Chinese people absorbed Western learning in the Qing dynasty. The Chinese publications they run, especially *Wanguo Gongbao* (萬國公報, Review of the Times), played an important role in enlightening Chinese ideological circles before the Reform Movement in 1898, and they were the main media of cultural exchanges between China and the West.

According to my investigation, Adam Smith and *WN* are mentioned in the following protestant missionaries’ works (see Table 1). These people include the American Reformed missionary Samuel Robbins Brown (鮑留雲, Bao Liuyun, 1810–1880), the Presbyterian missionary William A. P. Martin (丁隴良, Ding Weiliang, 1827–1916), and the Episcopal missionary Francis Lister Hawks Pott (葛舫濟, Bu Fangji, 1864–1947), the British missionaries William Muirhead (慕威廉, Mu Weilian, 1822–1900) and Joseph Edkins (艾約瑟, Ai Yuese, 1823–1905) from London Missionary Society, the Episcopal missionary John Fryer (傅蘭雅, Fu Lanya, 1839–1928), the Baptist missionary Timothy Richard (李提摩太, Li Timotai, 1845–1919), and the Canadian missionary of the Disciples of Christ William Edward Macklin (馬林, Ma Lin, 1860–1947).

Table 1. *Missionaries’ works*

Author	Work	Source
Bao Liuyun	<i>Zhifu Xinshu</i> (1847)	John McVickar, <i>First Lessons in Political Economy</i> (1835)
William Muirhead	<i>Da Yingguo Zhi</i> (1856)	Thomas Milner, <i>The History Of England: From the Invasions of Julius Cæsar to the Year A.D. 1852</i> (1853)
Wang Fengzao and William Martin	<i>Fuguo Ce</i> (1880)	Henry Fawcett, <i>Manual of Political Economy</i> (1863)
John Fryer and Ying Zuxi	<i>Zuozhi Chuyan</i> (1885)	Anonymous, <i>Political Economy for Use in Schools, and for Private Instruction</i> (1852)
John Fryer and Xu Jiabao	<i>Baofu Shuyao</i> (1896)	James Platt, <i>Money</i> (1880)
Joseph Edkins	<i>Fuguo Yangmin Ce</i> (1886)	William Stanley Jevons, <i>Science Primers: Political Economy</i> (1878)

Joseph Edkins	<i>Xixue Lueshu</i> (1886)	Chinese Maritime Customs Service
Joseph Edkins	Fushui Yuanli Xintan (1892)	<i>Wanguo Gongbao</i> , No. 41.
Joseph Edkins	<i>Chinese Currency</i> (1901)	Presbyterian Mission Press
Joseph Edkins	<i>The Revenue and Taxation of the Chinese Empire</i> (1903)	Presbyterian Mission Press
Francis Lister Hawks Pott	Shuilian Yaoli (1894)	<i>Wanguo Gongbao</i> , No. 67
Timothy Richard and Cai Erkang	<i>Taixi Xinshi Lanyao</i> (1895)	Robert Mackenzie, <i>The 19th Century: A History</i> (1880)
Timothy Richard and Cai Erkang	<i>Datong Xue</i> (1899)	Benjamin Kidd, <i>Social Evolution</i> (1894)
William Edward Macklin and Li Yushu	<i>Fumin Ce</i> (1899)	Henry George, <i>Progress and Poverty</i> (1879)

The above works were produced in the context of the introduction of Western learning to the east, and experienced the Opium War (1840–1842, 1856–1860), the Taiping Rebellion (1851–1864), the Self-Strengthening Movement, and the Sino–Japanese War, the Reform Movement of 1898, and the Boxer Rebellion (1899–1900). This showed that Smith’s doctrine was not suddenly introduced to China overnight, but gradually came to China.

Among the works listed in Table 1, *Zhifu Xinshu* (致富新書, A New Book on Getting Rich) is a book about “political economy”, compiled and rewritten by Brown in 1847, who translated “political economy” into “Zhifu” (致富), meaning “Getting Rich”, which reflected the Chinese people’s desires for wealth since the Opium War. The book was described as “New Work on Political Economy” at that time (Edkins 1876, p. 36). Although *Zhifu Xinshu* introduced the general knowledge of Western economics, it was a new thing for isolated China. Nevertheless, it did not attract much attention at that time. There were almost no relevant records in the literature about this book because Brown left China and returned to the United States shortly after its publication. According to recent studies, the earliest Chinese translation on political economy should be *Zhifu Xinshu* (Wu 2011, p. 88, Casalin 2006, p. 85). Is it related to *WN*?

It is difficult to distinguish whether the following English and Chinese quotations come from *WN*:

各務壹藝，則精於壹藝。故器多有所成，而民亦多有所用。……人兼營兩業，方其舍壹就壹之時，固失時廢事，以求備其器用。及其器既備，未必便能精通，又必廢時以學之。……夫心專則智慧生，智生則藝巧。此所以省工而不失時也。(Brown 1847, pp. 9-10)

In proportion as men confine their attention to one operation, they become more industrious, that is, they work more steadily; and more skillful, so that they do more in the same time; and lastly, more ingenious in finding out inventions to save time and trouble. (McVickar 1837, pp. 17-18)

The difficulty lies in the fact that Brown has omitted a lot of contents of McVickar’s *First Lessons in Political Economy*² and added many personal views. Being a primary school textbook, *First Lessons in Political Economy* has deleted many theoretical arguments of economists and the reference books, and it also does not mention Adam Smith. If we compare it with McVickar’s earlier book *Outlines of Political Economy*, the puzzle can be solved. The above-mentioned comes from *Outlines of Political Economy*, which elaborated three benefits of the division of labor and pointed out that they came from *WN* (McVickar 1825, pp. 65-66). Except that, Smith’s other theories such as productive and unproductive expenditure can be inferred from a similar method (Brown 1847, pp. 33-35; McVickar 1825, pp. 160-164, McVickar 1837, pp. 68-72).

Zhifu Xinshu is related to *WN* in an indirect and concealed way. However, it was difficult for those who knew little about English in the Qing dynasty. Published in 1856, *Da Yingguo Zhi* (大英國誌,

²American economist John McVickar (1787-1868) had compiled three textbooks on political economy for students of varied ages: *Outlines of Political Economy* (1825) for middle schools, *Lecture of Political Economy* (1830) for universities and *First Lessons in Political Economy* (1837) for primary schools. According to my textual research, the English text of *Zhifu Xinshu* is *First Lessons in Political Economy*.

Chronicles of Great Britain) which was edited by Muirhead, provided the general history of England with Chinese people, and it mentioned Adam Smith rather than *WN* (Muirhead 1856, p. 22). It was the first time that the name of Adam Smith appeared in the Chinese version. Further information about *WN* began with the Self-Strengthening Movement.

3. DISSEMINATION OF SMITHIAN THEORIES DURING THE SELF-STRENGTHENING MOVEMENT

The Self-Strengthening Movement was a reform movement seeking for wealth and power by introducing Western military equipment, machines, science, and technology to China from 1860s to 1890s. In terms of education, Western-style schools were opened, and foreign textbooks of political economy were translated and imported. Martin's *Fuguo Ce* (富國策, The Strategy for Enriching a Nation), Fryer's *Zuozhi Chuyan* (佐治芻言, Homely Words to Aid Governance), and Edkins's *Fuguo Yangmin Ce* (富國養民策, The Strategy for Enriching a Nation and Supporting the People) were three popular Chinese translations during this period.

In 1862 Tongwen Guan was founded to train diplomatic talents in Beijing, and American missionary William A. P. Martin served as its director for 25 years. Martin took the lead in introducing Western economics courses. He developed an economics course called *Fuguo Ce* in 1876, and he chose the *Manual of Political Economy* of the British economist Henry Fawcett (1833–1884) as the textbook. Martin believed that Britain was the most important country for studying economics at that time, and argued that Fawcett was better than classical economists such as Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and John Stuart Mill in defining political economy (Wang and Martin 1901, p. 3). Fawcett was an advocate of free trade, and Martin's motive was to spread it by translation. However, Fawcett's book was too difficult for elderly Chinese students with poor English. In this case, it was especially necessary to put it into Chinese. Its Chinese edition, which was published in 1880, is also called *Fuguo Ce*. The translation was undertaken by Wang Fengzao (汪鳳藻, 1851–1918), a vice-teacher of Tongwen Guan, and checked by Martin.

Besides the economic course and Fawcett's book, the term "Political Economy" was also translated as *Fuguo Ce*³ in classical Chinese, which was a new discipline for Chinese readers, and can cause wealth and power. As is known that the term was developed by Adam Smith as a distinct field of discipline, aiming at providing enough income for the state and the people (Smith 1976, p. 428). Smith was thereby described as its founder and *WN* had its earliest Chinese name (Wang and Martin 1901, p. 1, Fawcett 1863, p. 4). Furthermore, the thoughts of the major economists, such as Smith's theories of division of labor and taxation, Ricardo's theory of land rent, Malthus's theory of population, and Owen and Fourier's theory of utopian socialism were also illustrated.

The second political economy book was *Zuozhi Chuyan*, which was orally interpreted by Fryer and written by a Chinese intellectual called Ying Zuxi (應祖錫, 1855–1927) in 1885. Its source was the *Political Economy for Use in Schools, and for Private Instruction*, which was edited by William and Robert Chambers in Edinburgh in 1852, but its author has remained unknown. The original version had 35 chapters, but only the first 31 chapters were translated in its Chinese edition. The last four chapters of Commercial Convulsions, Accumulation and Expenditure, Insurance against Calamities and Taxes remained missing from the Chinese version (Anonymous 1852, p. vi; Fryer 2002, p. 2).

Since Chambers' edition aimed at promoting freedom, civil rights, and equality in the West, it had a strong attraction to the modernization of China, Japan, and Korea. Its Chinese translation was 18 years later than the Japanese translation, but 10 years earlier than the Korea translation. It was for beginners in the study of the political economy, which also linked Smith with the science of political economy. (Fryer 2002, p. 56; Anonymous 1852, p. 49).

Edkins's independent translation *Fuguo Yangmin Ce*⁴ was one of the "Enlightenment Series of Western

³"Fuguo" (富國, enriching a nation) is the basic concept of Chinese traditional economic thought. "Ce" (策) literally means "strategy, policies, and theoretical explanations". "Fuguo" has broad and narrow meanings. In the narrow sense, it refers to policies to enrich the national treasury, that is, to increase fiscal revenue and the treasury's reserves; in the broad sense, it means enriching a nation, that is, to increase all the wealth owned by a nation (Zhao 1998, p. 27).

⁴"Yangmin" literally means "supporting the people", which is the basic goal of the national economic management

Learning”, which was published by the Chinese Maritime Customs Service in Shanghai in 1886. It was also serialized in *Wanguo Gongbao* (Vol. 43–Vol. 88) from August 1892 to May 1896. *Fuguo Yangmin Ce*'s origin was *Science Primers: Political Economy*, written by the British economist William Stanley Jevons (1835–1882) in 1878. The work was suitable for elementary instruction. Edkins wanted to inform Chinese readers how Great Britain became rich, so he enlightened them with economic ideas. According to Edkins, *WN* reveals that British “prosperity” (Jevons 1878, p. 10) is the result of the study of “producing wealth” (Edkins 1892, p. 10), so he translated *WN* as “Fuguo Tanyuan” (富國探源), which is “exploring the source and reason of enriching a nation”. “Fu” (富) literally means “wealth”; “guo” (國) literally means “nation”; “Tanyuan” (探源) literally means “probing into the source or origin”, which conveys the connotation of “An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes”. Therefore, Edkins's translation seeks to produce the meaning of the full title of *WN*.

As a director of Tongwen Guan, Martin resigned from the Presbyterian Mission Board. He combined the gospel of Christ in translation and education, hoping to win the support of officials and intellectuals through Western learning. As a result, great achievements were made in his spreading Western learning rather than preaching. For almost 35 years Fryer seldom preached during his stay in China, but devoted himself to introducing Western science and technology into China. He is a sinologist and translator rather than a missionary. Edkins resigned from the London Missionary Society in 1880 and became a translator in the Chinese Maritime Customs Service. He edited and translated 16 Western scientific works which enlightened Chinese intellectuals. Martin, Fryer, and Edkins introduced Western economics into China, and economic liberalism including Smithian doctrine was also imported. The above-mentioned three books informed Chinese readers of the fact that Western economics was linked to wealth and power, and British prosperity was linked to *WN*. Thus, *WN* can be a sign of national prosperity, which supplied Self-Strengthening advocates with a model.

4. DISSEMINATION OF SMITHIAN THEORIES DURING THE SINO–JAPANESE WAR

China's failure in the Sino–Japanese War marked the end of the Self-Strengthening Movement, which cracked down on government-supervised enterprises and stimulated more private ones. Calls for political reform along with the development of capitalist industry and commerce were on the rise. As a result, China's national capitalist economy began to come into being, while Adam Smith, was once called the symbol of capitalism. Did Smithian theories have an impact on China's capitalist economy? There was no direct evidence to show their relationship, but the popularity of a book indicated Smithian ideas' influence to some extent. It was called *Taixi Xingshi Lanyao* (泰西新史攬要, *Essentials of the History of the West*), translated by Welsh Baptist missionary Timothy Richard and a Shanghai intellectual called Cai Erkang (蔡爾康, 1851–1921) in 1895. The source text came from British historian Robert Mackenzie's *The 19th Century : A History*, which described the capitalist history of Britain, France, the United States, Germany, and Russia in the 19th century. It covered international relations, political reform, the Industrial Revolution, religious culture, and many other aspects. Its democratic ideas and the evolutionary ideas advocated in the book inspired China to reform. It was “the best seller and most influential Western history book in late Imperial Qing” (Xiong 1994, p. 597).

The history of British free trade was discussed, and there were some quotations about Smith's trade theory (Richard 2002, p. 99, pp. 147–148, p. 187) in the Richard's book *Taixi Xingshi Lanyao*. Richard had sung high praise for Smith and *WN* (Richard 2002, p. 94), who attributed Britain's prosperity to the application of Smith's ideas. Smith was described as the image of wealth and power, but missionaries overlooked one important fact that Smith was a moralist. Later, Yan Fu came to know the dual image of Smith—economist and moralist. After the publication of *Yuan Fu*, Smith's image “as a possible savior for the old China” was constructed (Chen 2019, p. 6).

The early translation of Smith's trade theory into Chinese helped to change the traditional Chinese knowledge structure to a certain degree. It seems that the Chinese translation only attempted to translate or convey the meaning of a very small sample of Smith's arguments. Even so, *Taixi Xingshi Lanyao* had a vast space for broad reading and acceptance because it was a national history textbook for new

and it is similar to “Fuguo” because both refer to the national management strategies of the ruling class in ancient China. In essence, “Fuguo Yangmin Ce” and “Fuguo Ce” are alike.

schools. Emperor Guangxu (光緒, 1871–1908) realized the importance of revitalizing commerce while reading it before the Reform. He issued an imperial edict to encourage industry and commerce during the Reform, and the first charter to reward industry and Commerce was thereby established in the imperial Qing (Zhu 1909, pp. 13, 23, 28).

Richard translated *WN* into *Fuguo Ce* in *Taixi Xingshi Lanyao*, which perhaps led to the result that Chen Chi (陳熾, 1855–1900), a reformer and official, mistook Fawcett's *Manual of Political Economy* for Smith's *WN* (Zhao and Zeng 1997, p. 149). Recognizing that Western economics was the science of prosperity and strength, and Britain attributed its richness to *WN*, Chen wrote a book *Xu Fuguo Ce* (續富國策, A Sequel to *Fuguo Ce*) in 1895, and hoped that his book could perform the same function as *WN* does in Britain (Xu 1980, p. 386; Chen 2018, p. 10). Meanwhile, criticizing the quality of *Fuguo Ce*, Chen retranslated it with his friend to probe into the experience of British success since Britain dominated the global trade at that time. He regarded *WN* as a “marvelous literature” that could “travel all over the world” (Chen 1896, p. 1).

5. DISSEMINATION OF SMITHIAN THEORIES DURING AND AFTER THE REFORM MOVEMENT OF 1898

Stimulated by the defeat of the Sino–Japanese War, Emperor Guangxu and the reformers such as Kang Youwei (康有為, 1858–1927), Liang Qichao (梁啟超, 1873–1929), and Tan Sitong (譚嗣同, 1865–1898), initiated a reform aiming at constitutional monarchy from 11 June to 22 September, 1898, but ended in failure. This reform was called the Reform Movement of 1898. Although there were no new missionaries' works covering Smithian doctrines during this period, the above missionary works had influenced reformers. The Western learning that missionaries disseminated was the source of the Reform. To fight against the bureaucratic monopoly of government–supervised enterprises, the reformers demanded the free establishment of private enterprises. Liberalism promoted by the missionaries became the theoretical weapon of the reformers against feudalism. This section mainly examines the possible influence of Smithian theories on the reformers.

As a representative of the Reform, Kang Youwei did not understand English, and his limited knowledge of Smith came from the missionaries' translations he had read. He had admitted that his reform idea was deeply influenced by American Methodist missionary Young John Allen (林樂知, Lin Lezhi, 1836–1907) and Richard (Candler 1931, pp. 174–175). “Fuguo” (富國, Enriching a Nation) was one of Kang's reform proposals, and its essence was to ask China to imitate the West and develop capitalist industry and commerce. Kang mentioned Smith when he proposed a memorial to Emperor Guangxu on 26 June, 1898. This memorial dealt with learning Western science, technology, and culture, training talents, encouraging innovation, and awarding patents. Kang listed many celebrities in the West, including Smith. Kang argued that *WN* was a book about “Fuguo Xue” (富國學, Science of Enriching a Nation), and the reason why the British people were so rich was that the United Kingdom had adopted the proposals of *WN* (Kang 1898). However, nothing could be found about Smith in his other works, which revealed that Smith had not affected him to some extent.

As a major disciple of Kang and also a representative of the Reform, Liang Qichao had contacts with missionaries such as Richard, Fryer, and Allen. Liang was once Richard's personal secretary. Liang knew economics by reading the above–mentioned missionaries' works (Trescott 1989, pp. 489–494; Tokihiko 2015, pp. 268–287), and wrote a paper to advocated the free trade of British classical school (Liang 1999, pp. 116–121). He gave up Smith's laissez–faire economics after the failure of the Reform and supported interventionism instead. In 1902 he wrote *A Concise History of Economic Thought*, which was the first Chinese book of the history of economic thought, took Smithian theories as its central point (Liang 1999, pp. 982–1004). Liang's criticism, praises, and inheritance of Smithian doctrines, showed that he was profoundly influenced by Smith.

The Fiasco of the Reform strengthened the feudal dictatorship, and Smithian doctrines were rejected due to it. In this case, Richard advocated social evolution. In 1899 he translated and published *Datong Xue* (大同學, Theory of the Great Unity), which came from British sociologist Benjamin Kidd's *Social Evolution*. It mainly dealt with the theory of social evolution and religious principles, and it was the

first time to mention Karl Marx and his theory. Smithian doctrines were criticized in this book (Richard 1899, p. 15).

Witnessing the serious poverty in China, Canadian missionary Macklin translated American economist Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* into *Fumin Ce* (富民策, The Strategy for Nourishing People) with his Chinese assistant Li Yushu (李玉書, ?) in 1899. Standing for the lower part of the society, Macklin urged equal distribution of wealth and propagated George's "single tax" on land for the first time in China. In addition, he assessed Malthus's theory of population, Darwin's theory of evolution and Ricardo's theory of land rent, and Smith's eight categories of capital, division of labor, transaction, tariff, currency, and taxation (Macklin and Li Yushu 1911, pp. 24, 28, 39, 59, 63, 67, 72). George's "single tax" had a great effect on modern China. Sun Yat-sen (孫中山, 1866–1925) was the first president of the Republic of China, and his "equalization of land rights" originated from George's theory. Sun criticized Smith's land theory and free competition theory, and Smith's doctrine was doomed when the Republic of China was founded.

Great changes had taken place at the end of nineteenth century and the beginning of twentieth century, and Smithian doctrine had lost its importance in China for capitalism and economic liberalism were hindered. Besides George, Friedrich List and Karl Marx gradually attracted attention, which was a challenge to Smith. More serious was the anti-Christian uprising the Boxer Rebellion which did great harm to missionaries, which hindered the diffusion of Western economics. Smithian doctrine was persisted by Yan Fu, who took the place of missionaries in importing classical political economy (Wang 1986, pp. 91, 528; Schwartz 1964, pp. 113-129).

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The main task of missionaries was to spread Christianity in China. They were engaged in translation and running schools and newspapers when the direct preaching was not effective in the early stage of missionary work, and they were committed to reforming the society and changing people's fates in this world. In this sense, they are liberal missionaries, who have direct or indirect connections with Chinese intellectuals and top officials. Edkins interviewed the leaders of the Taiping Rebellion, and Chinese top officers such as Li Hongzhang and Zeng Jize wrote prefaces in Edkins's books. Richard made acquaintance with Li Hongzhang, Zhang Zhidong, Weng Tonghe, and the reformers. Furthermore, Richard participated in the Reform and put forward reform proposals for Kang and Emperor Guangxu. Involved in China's political, economic, and educational reforms, Martin, Fryer, Edkins, and Richard were promoted by the imperial court. All these created good conditions for the diffusion of Western learning.

The missionaries, who were not majoring in economics, could not systematically and completely introduce Western economic theories. What they imported were only political economics textbooks, to wit, the common sense and elementary knowledge of economics. On the other hand, their written Chinese was poor, so most of them needed Chinese assistants to write down what they said. These assistants, doubtless, played an important part in the translation. After all, economists such as Smith, Ricardo, Malthus, Mill, Henry George, and Marx, were introduced into China. Generally speaking, there are not many places to introduce Smith and *WN* in missionaries' works, but these books always equate Western economics with Smith. The theme of these books is just in line with China's urgent goal of enriching the nation during the Self-Strengthening Movement and the Sino-Japanese War, the images of Smith and *WN* were often described as the reason and symbol of British prosperity. Smith's economic liberalism was the theoretical weapon of the reformists against feudalism and bureaucratic monopoly. However, Liang abandoned Smith's theory and turned to the protectionism after the failure of the Reform. It can be concluded that Smithian doctrine is not the "good prescription" to cure China's social crisis.

In terms of the content of Smith's theory, missionaries' works involve the division of labor, transaction, capital classification, wage, taxation, trade, currency. It is only the division of labor that is most described, and other theories are simply discussed. Ancient China was a country with a small-scale peasant economy, which adopted a policy of promoting agriculture and suppressing commerce. The division of labor in Chinese traditional thinking was, therefore, more focused on political stability, security, and social order. As a result, the social division of labor in the industrial sector was not well

developed owing to the backward industry in the late Qing.

Missionaries actively adapted to Chinese culture and quoted classical Chinese to translate Western academic concepts. The missionaries imposed a heavy burden on the Chinese classical vocabulary. “*Fuguo Ce*” means economics, Fawcett’s book, and even *WN*, thus causing confusion in understanding. The quality of missionaries’ translations is not good, which has been criticized by Chen Chi and Yan Fu, not to mention the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Smith’s theories. However, when we go back to the history, we must admit that it is the missionaries who act as the protagonists of the early dissemination of Western economic theories including Smithian doctrine in China. There is no doubt that they have contributed much to the intellectual enlightenment of modern China.

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