

INDIGENIZATION OF CHINESE SOCIOLOGY IN THE 20TH CENTURY

20世纪中国的社会学本土化

Zheng Hangsheng & Wang Wanjun

郑杭生 王万俊 著

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Acknowledgement

As a translator, I translate this book in order to introduce the history of inter-communication and inter-improving between western sociology and Chinese sociology, and the process of Chinese sociology development to the English world. The first author of the Chinese version, Professor Zheng Hangsheng has been devoted to theoretical sociology for more than 20 years, with many works in this field. This book is one of his famous works, discussing how sociological knowledge becomes indigenization.

Known to all, it is very difficult to translate an academic work from one language into the other. If one wants to do this well, he must understand the relevant theories well, on the other hand, he also must use the translating language very well. Maybe, I can understand theory of Chinese sociology in systematically, but cannot use English at ease for it isn't my mother language. In the process of translation, I try my best to make English readers understand the main thoughts of this book, and to express them in a correct way. I wish I have done this well.

I would like to especially thank Professor Zheng Hangsheng, with whom I have discussed the main points of this book, helping me understand thoughts and theories in this book. Also, he has been encouraging and supporting me to do this translation well. With all of his help, I can finish the translation.

I would also like to thank Doctor Zhangchun and Doctor Liu Zhongxiang, who revised the first draft of translation version carefully, and gave me many good suggestions.

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Lu Yilong
May 26, 2008

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INTRODUCTION

1

“Sociology with Chinese characteristics” is neither a cliché nor empty words, but words with substantial meaning. It can be explained in both historical and theoretical contexts.

In respect of history, we have published two books, which are *Chinese Sociology in the 20th Century* [also named *Development of Chinese Sociology: History, Present and Future* (Dangjianduwu Press, July 1999)] and *New Edition of History of Chinese Sociology* (Higher Education Press, December 1999), co-authored by Li Yingsheng and me. *History of Chinese Sociology* has been one of the ten core courses in sociology department.^① Therefore, *New Edition of History of*

① In July 1999, National Conference of University Advisory Committee on the Instruction of Sociology (Chair Conference for Sociology) was held at Shanxi Normal University, which designated ten courses key to undergraduate sociology studies. They were: Introduction to Sociology, Social Survey and Research Method, Foreign Sociological Theory, History of Chinese Social Thoughts or History of Chinese Sociology, Social Statistics, Introduction to Social Work, Introduction to Community, Social Psychology, Economic Sociology, Sociology of Development (Social Modernization). It was also stipulated at the conference that syllabuses for these ten courses should be written and published in the name of National University Advisory Committee on the Instruction of Sociology. Those decisions were supported by relevant departments of Ministry of Education. In addition, the consensus on eight key courses for the social work major was also achieved. The eight courses are: Introduction to Sociology, Introduction to Social Work, Case Work, Group Work, Community Work, Social Administration, Life Security, Social Survey and Research Method.

Chinese Sociology becomes one of the newly established course textbook.

In respect of theory, it is *Indigenization of Chinese Sociology in the 20th Century* (also named *Sociology with Chinese Characteristics: Theory and Practice of Sociological Indigenization from the World to China*), co-authored by Wang Wanjun and me, which is continuation of *Chinese Sociology in the 20th Century*.

We think that only when we combine the historical aspect with the theoretical aspect, can we fully reveal the true features of Chinese sociology in the 20th century, and understand the meanings of sociology with Chinese characteristics.

In the research program “21st Century-Oriented Reform Plan of the Teaching Contents and Course System in Humanities and Social Science in Colleges” sponsored by the Ministry of Education, I am in charge of a branch program of sociology— “constructing sociological studies with Chinese characteristics”. The three books mentioned above are results of this program, which have been designed and planned on the basis of combining the historical aspect with the theoretical aspect.

Why do we review Chinese sociology, especially sociology with Chinese characteristics, from the new perspective of “theory and practice of sociological indigenization from the world to China”? In other words, why do we write this book?

First, the subject of sociological indigenization in China, or the sociological localization in China, should be reviewed in a wider perspective of sociological indigenization in all countries of the world. Studying the history, present and experiences of sociological indigenization in countries and regions outside China and the various thoughts concerning sociological indigenization will be necessary for us to examine sociological indigenization in China from the world view, because sociological indigenization in China is a part of world sociological indigenization movement.

Second, sociological indigenization in China plays an important role in sociological indigenization in all countries of the world. In the history of sociological changes, indigenization appeared first in Latin

America (especially in Mexico) and China in the 1920s and 1930s as a kind of self-conscious academic approach. For Mexico and China, sociology was initially introduced from Europe and North America. Sociological knowledge perceived by the two countries was reflection of European and American societies with significant western cultural characteristics. After the 1920s, as the discipline of sociology was institutionalized and indigenous sociological research ability strengthened, both Mexican and Chinese sociologists, who were familiar with western sociological knowledge and keenly aware of their own cultural identities, began to pay more attention to the realities, distinctive features and cultural traditions of indigenous societies in their studies, and began to seek theoretical innovations in sociology on such basis. Those scholars include Mexican sociologist Manuel Gamio and Chinese sociologists Sun Benwen and Xu Shilian. The two countries, especially China, played important roles in the history of world sociological indigenization, which could not be neglected by Chinese sociologists and more broadly, by Chinese social science Scholars.

Third, sociological indigenization in China has close connection with sociological internationalization. With increasing international communication, the development of China has drawn great attention from the world, and sociological internationalization of China has become more and more prominent. In my opinion, the internationalization includes two aspects: one is that sociology in China has been an indispensable part to the world sociology due to its ability and status to be comparable with international sociology, and it has won recognition in the field of international sociological; the other one is that Chinese sociologists are able to explain Chinese society and construct Chinese sociological theory from the scope of the world and whole human being's practice. The two aspects complement each other. The latter is nature of the former, while the former is the manifestation of the latter. This sociological internationalization is not contradictory with sociological indigenization in China, but based on sociological indigenization in China. That is to say, sociological

internationalization will only be achieved following the sociological indigenization in China. If sociology in China just imitates every move of the theory in the western countries without constructing its own theory and its own characteristics, or describing, explaining, forecasting or instructing Chinese society, it would not be of any practical value to neither the world nor China. Obviously, this kind of sociology cannot be internationalized. It is undoubtedly important to study and understand western sociology, but we must absorb the essence and those that are applicable to China. The relationship between sociological internationalization and indigenization is that relation universality and particularity, which is the unity of opposites. From this point of view, the study of sociological indigenization is dispensable.

Fourth, sociological indigenization in China involves the relationship between discipline and reality, tradition and modernity, China and other countries. Introduced into China at the end of 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, sociology, as a discipline, possesses a history of one hundred years. We have pointed out that the hundred years history of sociology in China can be divided into two periods, which are the early sociology for the first fifty years and the contemporary sociology for the later fifty years with the founding of China as the division. Chinese early sociology before 1919 was mainly an introducing period to translate and introduce foreign sociology. The time from 1919 to 1949 was a developing period, in which, sociological research and education was explored and deepened. No matter in the introducing or developing period, No matter academic sociology, including Rural Construction School, Comprehensive School, Community School, or Marxist sociology, all of them dealt with the relation between sociology and Chinese social reality, Chinese academic tradition especially Chinese traditional social thoughts, foreign sociology and sociological thoughts. And it is in this dealing process sociology with Chinese characteristics has been realized its roles of innovation. Viewed from this aspect, the hundred-year developing track of Chinese sociology can be summarized in four phases: "basing on reality, exploring tradition, learning from abroad,

creating characteristics. "In other words, two main schools of sociology both take Chinese society as their standpoints, starting points and end points, and serve social reality in various forms, which is a good tradition of Chinese sociology. In China, there has never been simply sociology "to be academic for academy". They also absorbed abundant social thoughts in history of thousands of years, especially the thoughts about social rise and decline. In this way, real Chinese society was observed and the sociology from the western countries was interpreted with Chinese characteristics. Sociological indigenization in China is certainly based on reality first of all, and meanwhile closely related to tradition exploration. Besides, they drew on the experience of foreign sociology, including European, American and Japanese theories and methods. Based on reality, tradition and foreign theory, they created their own theory. In the early period, Yan Fu defined sociology with the thought of order and chaos; Fei Xiaotong explained the social structure of differentiation of people in rural society with 'Ripple Pattern'. All those theories are creative and with Chinese characteristics. After restoration and reconstruction of sociology in China, small-township theory and practice, social transformation theory and social operation theory are some of influential sociological theories with Chinese characteristics.

Viewed sociological indigenization from the present point of view, the sociology circle now has achieved some common understanding:

1. Indigenization of Chinese sociology is, in nature, to require Chinese sociology to describe and interpret Chinese social reality, and forecast future of social development, in order to contribute to development of Chinese society.

2. In modern China, sociological indigenization closely connects with developing directions of sociology. To solve the problem of indigenization correctly bases on the promise of correct choice of sociology development. The guiding thought should be that our sociology should adhere to the sociology of Marxism, Mao Zedong Thoughts and Deng Xiaoping Theory. On one hand, we must learn

their standpoint, ideas and methods of viewing the social life. On the other hand, we should grasp their statements on basic issues in Chinese society. Without those, sociological indigenization in China couldn't be achieved properly due to incorrect direction.

3. The mark of sociological indigenization in China nowadays is the formation of sociological theories and methods with Chinese characteristics. Here, Chinese characteristics means that Chinese sociology must base itself upon Chinese social reality to investigate, study, generalize and summarize. At the same time, Chinese sociology should study the history of Chinese society and history of Chinese social thoughts, absorbing nutrition from abundant social thoughts and long tradition.

4. Indigenization means neither exclusion nor thorough refusal, neither foreignization nor complete copy. In another word, indigenization itself includes using and sublating foreign sociology, especially western sociology.

In dealing with the relationship between discipline and reality, tradition and modernity, China and foreign countries, we suggest absorbing new nutrition from realistic society, everything that is quintessential and suitable for Chinese condition from ancient China and foreign countries. Neither, with innovation followed, thorough westernization nor total nation-essentialism will be approved. We disagree to lay particular stress on one side of China or western countries.

The main goal of Chinese sociological indigenization is to stick to instruction of Marxism, Mao Zedong Thoughts and Deng Xiaoping Theory, to absorb essence of ancient Chinese social thoughts and foreign sociology, to serve Chinese socialistic modernization, and to construct sociological theories and methods with Chinese characteristics. In the 21st century, sociological indigenization of this kind will speed up with the study of social transformation deepens in the accelerating period. We will feel gratified if this book can propel or benefit this process of Chinese sociology.

2

This book has the following characteristics:

First, emphasizing on exploration and innovation. There are few books in China or worldwide researching on sociological indigenization systematically. *Indigenization of Chinese Sociology in the 20th Century* may remedy the defect to some extent.

In world sociological changing history, sociological indigenization took place in the spreading and communicating process across countries, regional and culture. Sociological indigenization movement appeared in late developing countries or areas from as early as 1920s to 1930s. Up to now, though foreign sociologists have probed into sociological indigenization, the study was not deep enough and lack of system, and the achievements taking sociological indigenization as there theme were rare. Chinese sociological circles has been focusing on sociological indigenization for 70 years, with some articles and important collections of essays published, which mainly concentrated on the emphasis of the necessity and significance of sociological indigenization and the tentative ideas of the outline pattern of sociological indigenization. Under this academic background, this book focus on sociological indigenization systematically researches the meanings, types, characteristics and relevant concepts of sociological indigenization (see Chapter 1), investigates historic and present sociological indigenization in terms of the world and China based on the large amount of materials (see Chapter 2, 3, 4), and probes into strategies for pushing sociological indigenization in China (see Chapter 5). We can say this is a creative and innovative research work. We are deeply aware of the dual characteristics that of this kind of work. On one hand, it has some academic value, i. e. 'a creative and innovative research work'. It could contribute something new to this discipline academically. On the other hand, it is not faultless. Some theoretical

ideas proposed in exploring research achievements and some theoretical frameworks constructed in it are only preliminary need further researches.

Second, emphasizing facts and evidences. As ‘a creative and innovative research work’, this book poses many new ideas and opinions, all of which are based on factual materials. That is to say, while studying sociological indigenization, this book strives to pose the pleas and opinions on sociological indegenization through generalization and abstraction based on the fact of sociological indegenization.

We define sociological indigenization as a kind of academic research and approach that bases on combining reasonable elements of foreign sociology with indigenous social realities, improving its understanding and application in indigenous society, and forming sociological theories and methods with indigenous characteristics, which is pointed out on the basis of understanding history and the status quo of world sociological indigenization and facts of indigenization. This definition generalizes the forming mechanism of all types of sociological indigenization, and also reflects various levels of goals of sociological indigenization. For example, some scholars think based on intuition that Chinese sociological indigenization in early half of the 20th century didn’t achieve anything substantially. However, throughout the investigation of sociological indegenization in the first half of 20th century, Chapter 3 in this book shows that sociological indegenization in this period possessed various forms of manifestation and obtained a series of substantial achievements in sociological indigenization and its revising and innovation of theories and methods, and improving realization on Chinese society and application in China during that period. Another example shows that many scholars think sociological indigenization only takes place in developing countries. Through reviewing situation in developed countries, such as America, Japan and Canada, this book will show that sociological indigenization also exists in the changing and developing process of developed countries, though objects, forms

and difficulty degree of indigenization are different. We think that sociological indigenization always exists in countries or areas which have vulnerable sociology, if there are differences between advantage sociology and disadvantage sociology in the world sociological situation.

Third, emphasizing types analysis. The typological analysis on sociological indigenization is a main theoretical viewpoint throughout this book.

In Section 2 of Chapter 1, we will divide sociological indigenization into two types, i. e. movement type and non-movement type according to forms of their extension; and divide sociological indigenization into four types of indigenization theoretical research type, indigenous society recognition type, indigenous social problem solving type and revising-renovative type according to their formations of achievement. In the following chapters, we apply the typological framework constructed in Section 2 of Chapter 1 to research systematically on the changing process of sociological indigenization in foreign countries (Chapter 2), and analyze the changing process of Chinese sociological indigenization over almost a hundred years (Chapter 3, Chapter 4). For example, in Chapter 2, we discuss sociological indigenization in America and Japan, which has been considered as example of non-movement type, and analyze sociological indigenization in Latin American areas, India and Canada, which has been considered as example of movement type. Meanwhile, trying to combine with the changing process of sociological indigenization, we discuss the specific manifestation of indigenization theoretical research type, indigenous society recognition type, indigenous social problem solving type and revising-renovative type in those countries or areas.

Understanding those characteristics will help readers grasp the content of this book more easily.