

# The American Enlightenment Periodical *The Child's Paper*: Efforts in Adaptation, Translation, and Localized Reception in China

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## Abstract

In the mid-19th century, the United States published a series of children's education and enlightenment periodicals, among which *The Child's Paper* (1852-1879) sponsored by ATS, had a significant impact on domestic and international distribution. In the 1870s, foreign missionaries and their wives in China published three eponymous “小孩月报” (Xiaohai Yuebao, or XHYB): the Fuzhou version, the Guangzhou version, and the Shanghai version. The three XHYB were the translations and extensions of the American version of *The Child's Paper* in China, becoming an exemplary missionary Enlightenment periodical of its time. This paper discusses the historical facts surrounding the transplantation and translation of the American version of *The Child's Paper* in China. It summarizes the pragmatic principles of its secularization, localization, adaptation, and rewriting in translation and explores its influence on the emergence of indigenous Chinese modern periodicals and the tradition of enlightening the masses through periodicals in the late Qing Dynasty.

## Keywords

*The Child's Paper*, Translation, Sinicization, Enlightenment, Localized Reception

## 1. Introduction

In the mid to late 19th century, religious organizations in Europe and America placed a strong emphasis on children's education and enlightenment publications. The American Tract Society (ATS, founded in 1823) and the Religious Tract Society (RTS, founded in 1799) in the United States provided support to

institutions such as the American Presbyterian Mission Press, the Chinese Religious Tract Society, and the Christian Literature Society for China. These church-based publishers and organizations produced children's books and periodicals, distributing them globally and promoting missionary-led children's education and enlightenment publications. In January 1852, ATS published "*The Child's Paper*" (1852-1897)<sup>1</sup>, which was distributed in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Cincinnati, and New Orleans (*The Child's Paper*, 1852). It was later gradually distributed in local versions in countries such as Germany, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, Persia, Burma, Ceylon, India, and China (Chen, 2016). On the other hand, RTS published "*The Boy's Own Paper* (男孩报)" (1879-1967) and "*The Girl's Own Paper* (女孩报)" (1880-1956).

Since the 1860s and 1870s, foreign activities and missionary efforts in China expanded to treaty ports. Missionary publications in China underwent a transformation towards secularization and localization (Calvin, 1890). Children's journals, illustrated magazines, vernacular newspapers, and women's publications became prominent, initiating a tradition of enlightenment publications in modern Chinese journalism and contributing to the intellectual enlightenment of the Chinese populace. Young J. Allen (1836-1907), a Methodist missionary, advocated for the secularization and localization of religious publications in China. On September 5, 1868, he established the weekly magazine "中国教会新报" (*The Chinese Church Newspaper*), which was renamed "教会新报" (*The News of Churches*) starting from the volume 201 on August 31, 1872. Then, from Volume 301 on September 5, 1874, it underwent another name change to "万国公报" (*The Review of the Times*), whose publication was also issued on a weekly basis.<sup>2</sup> Nathan J. Plumb (1843-1899), a missionary from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, edited and published "郇山使者闽省会报" (*The Church Advocate*) in Fuzhou starting in 1874. In February 1874, Mrs. Nathan J. Plumb and Mrs. George H. Hubbard (wife of Rev. George H. Hubbard, 1855-1928), both American Presbyterian missionaries, founded "小孩月报" (*The Children's News*) in Fuzhou.<sup>3</sup> John Glasgow Kerr (1824-1901), a Presbyterian missionary, founded "小孩月报" (*The Child's Paper*) in Guangzhou in February 1874. After several issues were published by the Chinese Tract Society at Shanghai, it ceased publication. In October 1874, John Kerr urged his colleague John M. W. Farnham (1829-1917) to take over the editing and publishing of his periodical.<sup>4</sup> In May 1875, Farnham resumed "小孩月报" (*The Child's Paper*) in Shanghai, which was temporarily renamed "小孩月报志异" for

<sup>1</sup>*The Child's Paper*, January, 1852, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Farnham, J. M. W. Notices of Recent Publications. *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal*, 1876 (3-4): 151.

<sup>3</sup>In February 1874, American Presbyterian missionaries Mrs. Nathan J. Plumb and Mrs. Hubbard established XHYB, in Fuzhou, which had an English name of "*The Children's News*". John Glasgow Kerr started the Guangzhou version of XHYB, with its English name being "*The Child's Paper*". In May 1875, John M. W. Farnham took over John Giau-John's "*The Child's Paper*" and relaunched it in Shanghai. Fan John transformed the classical Chinese text of the first twelve issues into vernacular Mandarin, and it was published under the English name of "*The Child's Paper*".

<sup>4</sup>Farnham, J. M. W. Correspondence. *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal*, 1875 (6): 67.

a year before returning to its original name. In 1880, Farnham also founded the sister publication “画图新报” (*Chinese Illustrated News*).<sup>5</sup>

For a long time, the cultural conflict between Christianity and Confucianism has sparked several missionary incidents. To gain entry into China and establish a conducive environment for evangelism, a strategy known as “Syncretism of Christianity and Confucianism” was employed. Similarly, these religious periodicals used popular narratives, vernacular language, colloquialisms, and illustrations to introduce Western knowledge, making them advocates for late Qing enlightenment education and social reform. An vivid example of *The Child's Paper* is the interactive section called “Guess the Riddles”, which is a traditional Chinese folk game. Readers can send letters to the editor, and those who get it right would have their names published in the newspaper. The riddles featured in *The Child's Paper* involve traditional Chinese knowledge to cater to the reading taste of Chinese.

Modern Chinese enlightenment periodicals can trace their roots to secular publications initiated by Protestant Christian institutions. Missionaries in China took inspiration from *The Child's Paper* and utilized a popularized narrative style along with illustrations to introduce Western scientific knowledge and literary works. The three Chinese versions of “小孩月报” can be seen as faithful adaptations, translations, and expansions of the ATS edition of *The Child's Paper* specifically tailored for the Chinese readership.

Contemporary studies in journalism often focus on the origins and historical context of “*The Child's Paper*” and explore the editorial philosophies of the three Chinese versions of “小孩月报”, along with their lineage. However, many of these studies overlook the connection between them and the ATS edition of “*The Child's Paper*”. They fail to recognize how the ATS version and its enlightenment education principles were translated and extended to create the Chinese versions.

This paper aims to analyze the historical facts related to the dissemination and adaptation of the ATS edition of “*The Child's Paper*” in China, shedding light on its reception and localization strategies. It seeks to highlight the role played by the localization efforts of the three Chinese versions of “小孩月报 (XHYB)” in late Qing China’s enlightenment periodicals and their contribution to intellectual enlightenment.

## 2. The Origin of the Chinese Version of “XHYB” and Its Lineage with ATS Edition “*The Child's Paper*”

In the late 19th century, the focal points of activities and publishing bases for foreigners in China shifted from Macau, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong to treaty ports like Shanghai, Ningbo, Fuzhou, and Xiamen. This transition marked a strategic shift towards secularization and localization in the publications pro-

<sup>5</sup>Some journalistic writings mistakenly refer to the 画图新报 (Chinese Illustrated News) founded by John M. W. Farnham in 1880 as 图画新报, Subsequent discussions and references also involve the erroneous 图画新报.

duced by foreign residents, with a focus on Chinese-language religious periodicals. These publications gradually gained acceptance among Chinese readers, subsequently catalyzing the emergence of indigenous Chinese newspapers and periodicals and contributing to societal transformation.

The mission of missionaries in China to publish children's books and enlightenment periodicals was a consistent thread throughout their missionary activities in the country. The rise and fall of missionary publications in China were closely tied to the support provided by various mission agencies and religious organizations from their home countries. The establishment and growth of religious publishing houses in China largely relied on the financial assistance from organizations like ATS and RTS. ATS's publication, "*The Child's Paper*", circulated widely both in the United States and abroad, disseminating diverse knowledge (Chen, 2016). It also motivated missionaries worldwide to create children's and popular periodicals for evangelism. Pastors John Glasgow Kerr and John M. W. Farnham, along with Nathan J. Plumb's wife and Mrs. George H. Hubbard, followed the example set by ATS's "*The Child's Paper*" to create Chinese-language enlightenment periodicals. These publications aimed to introduce Western civilization, scientific knowledge, literature, and fables to Chinese children, making them pioneers in expanding American enlightenment publications in China. By 1890, among the secularized religious periodicals established by missionaries in China, only magazines like illustrated periodicals and children's publications were embraced by the Chinese population and youth. John M. W. Farnham's "小孩月报 (XHYB)" and "*Chinese Illustrated News*" continued to be published, while other periodicals survived for only a few years (Rudolf, 1940).

Both ATS edition "*The Child's Paper*" and the three Chinese versions of XHYB shared sponsorship from the RTS and the ATS. These two religious organizations were prominent global sponsors of Christian literature publishing. As of 1885, ATS had provided approximately \$1000 in funding for the Chinese edition of XHYB (Chen, 2016). These three Chinese versions of XHYB served as exemplars in the activities of missionary publications in China and the implementation of secularization and localization strategies. Extensive correspondence and related historical records between the founders, editors, authors/translators of these Chinese editions and ATS, RTS, as well as "*The Child's Paper*" editors, provide compelling evidence that: the Fuzhou, Guangzhou, and Shanghai editions of XHYB were, in fact, products inspired by and modeled after ATS edition "*The Child's Paper*", which serves as their foundational source.

### 3. The Chinese Editions of XHYB Emulated *The Child's Paper* Column Arrangement and Illustrated Design

From the column arrangement and content, the three Chinese versions of XHYB can be considered localized editions of ATS's "*The Child's Paper*". Both "*The Child's Paper*" and the three Chinese versions were monthly publications, with "*The Child's Paper*" releasing 12 volumes per year and the three Chinese ver-

sions publishing 12 issues annually. They shared similarities in column layout, story themes, and graphic design.

“*The Child’s Paper*” included sections like fables, children’s stories, Bible stories, nursery rhymes, and poems, with a focus on moral and religious teachings for children. The Fuzhou version had sections covering Bible stories, fables, short stories, proverbs, and illustrated Bible pictures. The Guangzhou and Shanghai versions had sections for essays, stories, fables, poems, biographies, novels, news, magic tricks, general science, and included news columns like “Church News” to provide updates and information related to the church and its activities. They also featured popular science columns like “Astronomy Made Easy”, “Art Illustrated”, “Self-Improvement Tips” and “Common Objects Discussed”, which provided easily understandable knowledge. The publications systematically introduced basic knowledge and achievements in modern sciences such as astronomy, physics, chemistry, mathematics, and medicine. The newspaper also features a music score section that includes Christian hymns such as “The Coming of the Cross (十字架到来)”, “Snowflakes (雪乎超白)”, “Exhortation to Righteousness (劝从乎义)” and “Blessings through Sincerity (福有诚守)”, as well as music curriculum materials for church schools.

The Chinese versions of XHYB emphasized a clear and simple presentation. First, the text was written in a straightforward manner. Second, illustrations were used to complement the text, with almost every article accompanied by 1 - 2 drawings, including color copperplate engravings and hand-drawn illustrations. One notable feature was the use of color copperplate engravings and hand-drawn illustrations as narrative aids. Some of these illustrations were directly sourced from ATS’ *The Child’s Paper*. *The Child’s Paper* featured vivid and imaginative illustrations accompanying its stories, while the Fuzhou and Shanghai versions extensively utilized color copperplate engravings and hand-drawn illustrations, placing them alongside the text to engage young readers.

The Shanghai edition extensively utilized color copperplate illustrations and hand-drawn artwork. Over time, these illustrations began to incorporate elements of Chinese culture, with characters featuring Chinese facial features and traditional clothing rather than Western ones.

#### **4. The Secularization and Localization Strategies of the Chinese Editions of XHYB in Adapting and Translating ATS’s *The Child’s Paper***

In the 1860s and 1870s, Shanghai gradually replaced Macau, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong as the primary gathering place for foreigners in China. Missionaries from various denominations established churches and developed their mission work (Calvin, 1878). Learning from the past failures of Christian publications in China and facing challenges such as internal disputes among different Protestant denominations, these missionaries adopted a strategy of secularization and localization for their missionary publications.

From May 10th to 24th, 1877, representatives from 142 out of 473 missionaries from 19 different Christian missions in China gathered in Shanghai for the Conference of Protestant Missionaries in China. The initial purpose of the conference was to discuss cooperation among the various missions. Reverend Alexander Williamson, a Doctor of Law, Reverend Joseph Edkins, a Doctor of Theology, and Reverend Young J. Allen were appointed as members of the Committee on Periodical Literature (Calvin, 1877). One of the main topics of discussion during the conference was whether the missionary publications in China should include secular content related to subjects such as science, geography, medicine, art, politics, and history. During the conference, two major factions emerged: the secular evangelical faction, which believed in missionary publications disseminating Western learning to the Chinese and publishing non-religious periodicals for better transmission of Western culture to the Chinese people; while the conservative faction, which opposed the strategy of spreading Western learning to the Chinese. Representatives of these factions presented papers at the conference. Reverend S. L. Baldwin (1835-1902), a U.S. Methodist Episcopal missionary from Fuzhou, submitted a paper titled “*Christian Literature: What has been done and what is needed*”; Reverend Chauncey Goodrich (1836-1925), an American Congregationalist missionary from Tongzhou, presented a paper titled “*Importance of a Vernacular Christian Literature, with Special Reference to the Mandarin*”; Reverend W. A. P. Martin (1827-1916), a missionary of the American Presbyterian Mission based in Beijing, submitted a paper titled “*Secular Literature*” (Calvin, 1877). In his paper, Reverend Martin emphasized the urgent need for secular missionary publications to include content related to history, geography, mathematics, physics, psychology, and social sciences (Calvin, 1877). Reverend S. L. Baldwin, Reverend J. Butler from Ningbo, Dr. Alexander Williamson, Reverend W. S. Holt from Shanghai, Reverend D. N. Lyon from Hangzhou, Reverend Griffith John from Hankou, Reverend H. C. Du Bose from Suzhou, Dr. Joseph Edkins, Mr. John Fryer from Shanghai, Reverend W. Muirhead, Reverend J. Hudson Taylor from Zhejiang, Reverend C. W. Mateer from Tongzhou, and Reverend J. S. Roberts from Shanghai engaged in vigorous discussions regarding Dr. W. A. P. Martin’s paper (Calvin, 1877). These discussions centered around the development of a secularized and localized approach to missionary publications, as advocated by figures like Young. J. Allen and John M. W. Farnham. They proposed the joint publication of illustrated magazines and periodicals featuring popular news and scientific articles by all missionary societies in China. Farnham and Allen were proponents of this transformation in the strategy of Christian publications in China. XHYB by Farnham in Shanghai and “*The Review of the Times*” by Allen became representative publications in the process of strategic transformation of Christian publications in China.

In the first half of the 19th century, Christian missions in China were conducted independently and in isolation by various Protestant missionary societies.

However, around the time of the 1877 Conference of Protestant Missionaries in China, these missionary societies began to strengthen their cooperation in publishing efforts. They implemented reforms in language use for publications, promoted collaboration between Chinese and foreign authors/translators, and embraced the concept of “syncretism” in their secular reporting. These initiatives marked the beginning of modern developments in the secularization and localization of foreign publications in China, aimed at enlightening education and the intellectual development of the Chinese population. During the Shanghai conferences of Christian missionaries in China in 1890, 1907, and 1922, the importance of enhancing collaboration between missionary societies and the adoption of a secularized and localized approach in missionary publications were repeatedly emphasized.

#### 4.1. Localization of Periodical Languages

Young J. Allen’s creation of the “*Chinese Church News*” and the “*The Review of the Times*” newspaper series, as well as the XHYB series of publications, advocated the use of Chinese dialects and vernacular languages to attract readers among Chinese audiences. This approach aimed to spread the information of these publications “to every corner of the vast territory of the Chinese Empire” (Alexander, 1867). This marked a departure from the practice of missionaries in the first half of the 19th century, who used classical Chinese to cater to the reading habits of the Chinese gentry. By 1867, missionaries in China had published 783 Chinese-language works, with 175 of them written in various Chinese dialects such as Cantonese, Hakka, Teochew, Xiamenese, Fuzhounese, Ningbo dialect, Jinhua dialect, and Shanghai dialect (Alexander, 1867). Between 1874 and 1876, Shanghai saw the emergence of the vernacular Christian newspaper “*Gospel News*”. Subsequently, many Christian publications in China adopted a simplified writing style and used dialects and vernacular languages.

When Mrs. Nathan J. Plumb and Mrs. Hubbard launched the Fuzhou edition of “*The Children’s News*”, they took into consideration the reading habits of the local audience in Fuzhou. They published the periodical in Fuzhou dialect Romanization. The “Annals of the American Methodist Episcopal Mission” noted this about the Fuzhou edition: “It is specially transcribed in Rong dialect (Fuzhou dialect). Due to the reason that many members of the church are not familiar with literary Chinese, reading this newspaper was easier for various missionaries” (The Catalog of The American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1898). In the case of Farnham’s Shanghai edition of XHYB, the first two issues were published in classical Chinese. However, starting with the third issue, it switched to vernacular Chinese to better align with children’s reading habits.

#### 4.2. Collaboration between Chinese and Foreign Translators

In the 19th and 20th centuries, during their newspaper and translation activities in China, Robbert Morrison and William Milne successively employed Chinese workers, engravers, printers, or Chinese teachers like Yung Samtak, Leang-Kungfā,

Tase-a-ko, and Kew-agong. They nurtured the earliest group of Chinese journalists. In 1877, the Committee on Periodical Literature of the Protestant Missionaries in China encouraged local Christians and authors to contribute articles to their publications. “The magazines are open to all Chinese writers; they need not be Christians, and can discuss issues such as opium smoking, foot-binding, public education, and other moral and social problems” (Calvin, 1877). Missionary editors also recruited Chinese assistants through personal connections. In the 1870s and 1880s, Western missionaries partnered with Chinese collaborators in the foreign newspaper business. Examples include Timothy Richard (1845-1919) and Cai Erkang, Young. J. Allen and James Legge with Wang Tao, and so on. With the assistance of Chinese helpers or local Christians, Western missionaries became Sinologists and “China experts” during their newspaper operations. Simultaneously, the missionary press provided early opportunities for Chinese reporters, editors, and publishers, fostering the development of Chinese journalists who gradually moved towards independent journalism.

The authors and translators of the three Chinese editions of “*The Child’s Paper*” often employed a collaborative translation approach, which involved Western individuals providing oral narratives and Chinese writers serving as the main contributors. In the case of the Shanghai edition, chief editors such as Zhong Zineng (钟子能) and Chai Lianfu (柴连复) collaborated with foreigners for translation. Writers like C. C. Baldwin, George Piercy, and Calvin W. Ma-teer, who were English and American missionaries, would rephrase or translate articles from “*The Child’s Paper*” based on the accounts provided by local Chinese writers, thus promoting the popularity of this two-person collaborative translation method.

The Chinese writers and co-translators for XHYB typically used pen names such as Wuzhenzi (悟真子), Qingxinzi (清心子), or remained anonymous. In the Shanghai edition, there is an article titled “旅宿被惊” (Startled during Lodging) in the 9th volume from 1875, attributed to “联芳译” (Lian Fangyi). The story’s protagonist is a Frenchman lying on a kang (a traditional Chinese heated platform bed), using a Chinese-style pillow, surrounded by Chinese furniture, and with Chinese landscape paintings on the wall. The accompanying illustrations depict a character wearing traditional Chinese clothing. This fusion of Chinese and Western elements in both text and images transformed the original religious teachings, making it more acceptable to Chinese readers through a creative collaborative translation approach.

### 4.3. The Principle of Secularized Reporting Ideology

John Glasgow Kerr and John M. W. Farnham inherited the “cultural adaptation policy” of Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci during the Ming and Qing Dynasties in China, known as the strategy of “Jesus Plus Confucius”. They believed that the entry of Christianity into China should be combined with Confucianism and adopted the concept of publishing new knowledge. In the “*Introduction to 小孩*



月报志异 by Farnham, the criteria for selecting articles are stated as “If there are novel insights in accordance with the Holy Way, sufficient to enlighten the young, it can also be included”.<sup>6</sup>

The three Chinese versions of XHYB followed the traditional Chinese style of illustrated narrative in popular literature, downplaying their Christian elements in their writing. The Shanghai version introduced sections such as “天文易知” (Astronomy Made Easy), “游历笔记” (Travel Notes), “论说浅话” (Light Discussions), and “省身指掌” (Self-Cultivation Tips) in the magazine. This made for a clear and organized arrangement compared to the ATS version, which serialized various thematic articles without separating them into sections. For instance, an article titled “论潮汐” (On Tides) explained the tidal phenomenon caused by the gravitational changes of the Sun and the Moon without delving into religious content. However, the author concluded with, “The exchange of ships is greatly beneficial, which is enough to prove God’s mercy and fairness, awaiting humanity”. This demonstrates the characteristic of their religious publications (Chen, 2012).

#### 4.4. The Adaptation and Translation of Aesop’s Fables from ATS’s *the Child’s Paper*

The three Chinese editions of XHYB serve as exemplary instances of the secularization and localization of missionary activities and periodicals in China. Their founders, editors, and author/translator groups employed various adaptation and translation techniques while introducing ATS’s *The Child’s Paper* to cater to Chinese readers and their culture. Among these methods, the adaptation and translation of Aesop’s fables stands out prominently.

In the mid to late 19th century, *A Review of the Times* and XHYB emerged as significant vehicles for the translation and dissemination of Aesop’s fables in China, with *A Review of the Times* making the most substantial contribution in terms of sales, duration, and distribution (Gao & Wu, 2013). XHYB followed closely behind in terms of its impact (Gao & Wu, 2015). In the case of the Shanghai edition, the fable section featured a substantial number of Aesop’s fables accompanied by illustrations. Interestingly, the Chinese titles for these fables in the publication typically did not include the words “寓言” (fable) or “喻言” (parable), with only a few exceptions such as “狮鼠喻言” (The Lion and the Mouse Fable), “蛙牛寓言” (The Frog and the Ox Fable), and “骡影寓言” (The Ass’s Shadow Fable). In the English titles, many of these fables were labeled as “a fable.” Notably, works like “灯虫寓言” (This World and Heaven, A Parable) by Qingxinzi (清心子) and “蛇龟较胜” (The Tortoise and Snake, A Fable Illustrated) by Zhou Songhe (周松鹤) showed signs of imitation and represented early attempts at creating children’s literature in modern China (Hu, 1982).

Shanghai edition of XHYB often concluded its Aesop’s fables with translator’s remarks, summarizing the fable’s message using Chinese proverbs, idiomatic

<sup>6</sup>Farnham. J. M. W. Preface to the Child’s Paper (小孩月报志异). *The Child’s Paper* [J]. 1875 (5). Introduction.

expressions, or religious content. This practice aimed to clarify the fable's main point, blending moral lessons with storytelling in a concise and understandable manner. By incorporating teachings indirectly, these remarks help educate the readers without resorting to direct moralizing (Zhang, 2015). This approach served to enhance both comprehension of the original content and the acceptance of the fables by the readers. For example, in the March 1878 issue of Volume 3, "The Deceitful Wolf (负心狼)" concludes with the remark, "In the world, there are many people like the deceitful wolf. There's a saying that goes 'remove the plank after crossing the bridge,' and it's precisely about this wolf." Similarly, in the March 1878 issue of Volume 4, "The Two Cocks (雄鸡相斗)" ends with the remark, "There's a saying: 'The praying mantis stalks the cicada, unaware of the oriole behind.' Another saying goes, 'In times of prosperity, be prepared for adversity.' This is exactly what this fable means."

These remarks serve as evidence of how the Shanghai edition adapted and domesticated the Aesop's fables from the ATS edition or other English sources through translation. In the case of the fables "The Wolf and the Crane (豺求白鹤)" (adapted from "The Deceitful Wolf") and "The Rooster's Fight (鸡斗)" (adapted from "The Two Cocks") from ATS's *The Child's Paper*, the translator's comments in align with the messages conveyed in the remarks (Robert, 1840).

Example: an Chinese-English comparison on "The Greedy Wolf Devours the Lamb" between ATS's *The Child's Paper* and Shanghai's one.

The Wolf and the Lamb: A Wolf came upon a Lamb straying from the flock, and felt some compunction about taking the life of so helpless a creature without some plausible excuse.

《小孩月报·豺狼食羔羊》：话说有一奸恶豺狼，名叫恨天理，家居犯法村，还有一只良善羊羔，名叫傅福音，身居行善乡。

In the fable story *The Greedy Wolf Devours the Lamb* (豺狼食羔羊), Chinese place and character names were added with direct symbolic meanings. The innocent and vulnerable Christian believer lamb is named "Gospel Spreader", residing in the "Virtuous Deed Village", while the wicked wolf is named "Hate Righteousness", living in the "Unlawful Village". American missionary Mrs. Tarlton Perry Crawford added content to the story, likening the "wolf" to a "demon persecuting the righteous". Through personification, she conveys worldly wisdom and the moral lesson of "not being greedy for more than one's share".

## 5. The Legacy of XHYB in China as a Model for Indigenous Publications and Enlightenment Education

The three Chinese versions of XHYB were among the first influential children's illustrated magazines in modern China. They served as valuable references for the establishment of indigenous enlightenment publications and illustrated magazines. They also had a significant enlightening impact on adults who had not been exposed to Western knowledge. As John M. W. Farnham stated in

XHYB, “I have been visiting China for over a decade. I have gained some understanding of Chinese customs and culture, although my knowledge of the language is still limited. Despite my lack of formal education, I have undertaken this endeavor with the hope of enlightening young minds.”<sup>7</sup> The Shanghai edition had the largest circulation in China for a considerable period, with a monthly average distribution of 3500 copies and sometimes reaching as high as 4500 copies. Its readership extended to various regions, including Shanghai, Beijing, Baoding, and Guangdong, and it was even exported to locations such as San Francisco, California, and Europe.<sup>8</sup> In a sense, the Chinese version of XHYB initiated a developmental trend in modern China’s newspaper industry, contributing to enlightenment education and the cultivation of intellectual faculties.

### 5.1. The Chinese Version Inherits the Educational and Enlightening Mission of “*The Child’s Paper*”

The three Chinese versions of XHYB played a significant role in enlightening Chinese children in terms of their thoughts, culture, and science. Farnham positioned the Guangzhou edition as a tool for children’s education and enlightenment, with a dedicated focus on the growth and development of children.

The aim of the Shanghai edition was to help Chinese children establish their “fundamental knowledge” and initiate their intellectual development through reading. John M. W. Farnham, in the preface to *小孩月报志异*, expounded on his editorial mission: “There are many types of newspapers—some are related to the nation, some to commerce, some indulge in gossip and sensationalism, some focus on peculiar phenomena, some are based on strange and extraordinary occurrences, some use poetry and rhetoric for persuasion, and some are ostentatious in style. However, all of them provide little benefit to the foundation of childhood. Previously, there was XHYB, and now, at the request of a friend, I continue with this periodical. For children, the foundation begins with knowledge of things, followed by literary art.” In XHYB, Farnham emphasized that it should prioritize the dissemination of Western scientific and cultural knowledge to Chinese children. He believed that it should open a window for Chinese children to “broaden their horizons”. He stated, “For a child’s foundation, the first step is knowledge, followed by literature. Therefore, we combine the two, calling it ‘*The Child’s Paper*.’ We hope that when children read it, they can gradually understand the ways of the world, expand their knowledge, stimulate their intelligence, and develop their literary skills. Even if they are just children, these efforts will not be in vain.”<sup>9</sup>

The Shanghai edition featured columns such as “Astronomy Made Easy”, “Art Discussions”, “Self-Improvement Tips”, “Casual Talks on Everyday Objects” and

<sup>7</sup>Farnham, J. M. W. Preface to the *Child’s Paper* (小孩月报志异). *The Child’s Paper* (journal). 1875 (2), p.6.

<sup>8</sup>Garritt, J. C. The Present Policy and Needs of the Christian Periodical Press in China. *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal*, 1908 (11): 597.

<sup>9</sup>Farnham, J. M. W. Preface to the *Child’s Paper* (小孩月报志异). *The Child’s Paper* (journal). 1875 (1). A1.

“Travel Notes”. These columns aimed to introduce fundamental knowledge and achievements in modern sciences like astronomy, geography, chemistry, mathematics, and medicine. Additionally, they provided insights into the history, politics, and current conditions of various European countries, promoting the political enlightenment and societal prosperity in the English-speaking world like Britain and the United States. These efforts served to enlighten Chinese readers who were confined by feudalistic thoughts. The cultural adaptation strategy adopted by the Chinese version of “*The Child’s Paper*”, focusing first on nurturing “cognitive skills” and later on nurturing the “soul”, continued to receive recognition for its enduring significance in enlightening the Chinese audience.

## 5.2. Missionary Work and Secular-Adaptable Edutainment Reporting: Demonstrative Effects

The Chinese Editions of XHYB, with their missionary and secular-compatible popular reporting and illustration techniques, initiated a modern era in Chinese journalism for children’s education and enlightenment. They are the longest-running and most influential illustrated magazines in modern Chinese journalism. On January 9, 1879, *Shun Pao* (申报) published “A Record of Reading XHYB,” stating, “Its content is very simple, and even those with slight knowledge can read and understand it. Moreover, when there are ideas that words alone cannot convey, fine illustrations are used to clarify them. Children enjoy it, and it is indeed the top newspaper for enlightenment.”<sup>10</sup> This can be regarded as an accurate reflection of the spread of popular periodicals in modern China under the influence of XHYB and its impact.

In the first half of the 19th century, Chinese-language publications established by missionaries in China were primarily targeted at adult readers. It was only through individual publications like Walter Henry Medhurst’s (1796-1857) “Child’s Primer” (小子初读易识之书课) (Alexander, 1867) that a focus on children’s educational enlightenment was introduced. Subsequently, with the creation of the three Chinese editions of “*The Child’s Paper*,” additional publications such as *A Miscellany of Useful Knowledge* (益智新录) in *A Review of the Times*, *The Little One’s Own* (孩提画报, 1886-1888) edited by Mrs. Foster, and *The Child’s Illustrated News* (训蒙画报, 1888-1890) edited by Alexander Williamson of the London Missionary Society, targeted children’s enlightenment and education.

In May 1880, Farnham founded the sister publication of XHYB called “Hua Tu Xin Bao” (《花图新报》), featuring beautiful illustrations alongside text, and consistently promoting XHYB. Starting from the second volume, 花图新报 was renamed 画图新报 (*Chinese Illustrated News*). According to the “Catalog of Pictorial Magazines in Beijing and Shanghai at the End of the Qing Dynasty and the Beginning of the Republic of China” (《清末民初京沪画刊录》), *Chinese Illustrated News* was founded in May 1880 (the 6th year of the Guangxu reign)

<sup>10</sup>“The Chronicle of the Child’s Paper”. Shen Bao. 1879 (2061), p.3.

and published monthly by the Shanghai Episcopal Mission. Its content primarily focused on promoting Christian doctrine and included commentaries, stories, poetry, and geographical knowledge. Each issue featured a large, beautifully carved illustration on the first page. This continued until the magazine ceased publication in 1913 (Zhang, 1957). *Chinese Illustrated News* shared similar content with XHYB, using copperplate and traditional woodblock prints to introduce moral and geographical knowledge while presenting these topics through cartoon-like illustrations.

In 1887, the American Presbyterian Mission Press established the “*Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge among the Chinese*” in Shanghai and published “The Chinese Boy’s Own” (1889-1991). The Christian Literature Society for China published *The Little One’s Own* and *The Child’s Illustrated News*. These three magazines had relatively short publication periods and largely offered content similar to Farnham’s XHYB. Additionally, the children’s magazine market in China was limited during that time (Chen, 2016).

During the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republican period, the social groups influenced by children’s magazines became a significant force in advocating social change through children’s publications. The Reformers and their Mengxuehui (蒙学会) made an early attempt to improve children’s enlightenment education by founding the popular magazine *Mengxue Bao* (蒙学报) in 1897. However, it ceased publication in 1899. From 1902 to 1904, Peng Yizhong (彭翼仲) established *Qimeng Huabao* (启蒙画报), a magazine with vivid illustrations and clear language, which attracted not only children but also adult readers. It became quite popular and widely circulated (Chen, 2003).

In April 1903, Cai Yuanpei (蔡元培) and others founded *Tongzi Shijie* (童子世界), setting an example for children’s magazines. Liang Shuming (梁漱溟) once said that *Qimeng Huabao* was the best learning material he had during his childhood.

## 6. Conclusion

XHYB, as an exemplar of modern Chinese enlightenment periodicals, served as a model for various publications, particularly illustrated magazines. Its literary style, illustrations, and content provided valuable inspiration for later periodicals. The newspaper featured a wide range of Western knowledge and fables, playing a significant role in children’s enlightenment. Its inclusion of diverse subjects, such as Western learning and moral stories, had a profound impact on children’s education.

During the “Gospel Novel Translation” period of XHYB, Europe was experiencing a translation boom of evangelical novels for children, and the newspaper featured a plethora of translated Western children’s literature. XHYB published both original stories by missionary authors and translations of popular novels by writers like Mary Martha Sherwood and Hesba Stretton (Chen, 2016). In the sixth issue of the Fuzhou edition of XHYB, two pages narrated the story of

the Good Samaritan from the Bible, and the last two pages contained a short story titled “Good Begets Good, Evil Begets Evil”. Meanwhile, the Shanghai edition consistently included one or two translations of works by famous children’s literature authors such as Aesop, La Fontaine, and Lessing in each issue. These translations mostly consisted of concise and straightforward fables, representing a beneficial experiment in simplifying literary works for young readers.

The Aesop’s fables introduced in XHYB gained wide popularity and became valuable materials for children’s enlightenment education. The storytelling quality of Aesop’s fables, combined with skillful translation and adaptation by the editors, made them highly sought-after reading material for children. Subsequently, many children’s magazines and periodicals published in China featured Aesop’s fables. The Aesop’s fables presented in XHYB not only served as literary content for children’s enlightenment but also established a form of childhood education widely accepted by the public.

Undoubtedly, XHYB promotes the Translation and Circulation of Western Children’s Literature in China.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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