



Prof. Dr. Qie Lisha is an Assistant Professor in Indonesian Studies Section, Department of Southeast Asian Studies, School of Foreign Languages, Peking University in expertise in Indonesian Studies.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Jejak Langkah: “Footsteps” of Pramoedya Studies in China

Qie Lisha

Peking University

ABSTRACT

Pramoedya Ananta Toer is the most influential literary figure in modern Indonesian literature, with over 50 outstanding literary works that have had a profound impact not only on Indonesian literature but also on the world literary stage. Pramoedya's two visits to China during the 1950s facilitated substantive exchanges with prominent Chinese writers. Pramoedya assimilated conceptual frameworks from China's developmental experience into his intellectual praxis. Simultaneously, engagement with Chinese literary works significantly expanded his creative horizons. Chinese academia has initiated translations of Pramoedya's works as early as the mid-20th century, subsequently developing dedicated research trajectories. This study traces his intellectual engagements in China, examines the historical evolution of Chinese scholarship on his literary works, and analyzes distinctive aspects of Pramoedya studies within China's academic paradigm.

KEYWORDS

China, Pramoedya Studies, Indonesia, Literature



©2025 The Author(s).
Published by Penerbitan LP2MPP Institut Seni Indonesia Bali. This is an open-access article under the [CC-BY-NC-SA](#) license.

Introduction

Pramoedya Ananta Toer is the most renowned novelist in modern Indonesian literary history. Born in Java in 1925, he grew up in Dutch East Indies society, experienced the tumultuous national independence struggle, and witnessed post-colonial political transformations. As one of the most influential literary figures in modern Indonesian literature, Pramoedya created over 50 literary works during his legendary lifetime. His writings have been translated into more than 40 languages, profoundly shaping modern Indonesian literature and achieving global recognition. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature for multiple times. Thus, Pramoedya has been acclaimed as "a writer who appears only once in a generation, or even a century."¹

Within the field of foreign literature studies in China, Pramoedya Ananta Toer is one of the foreign authors who has garnered significant attention. He visited China twice, and

¹ A. Teeuw, *Sastra Baru Indonesia I*, Penerbit Nusa Indah, Ende-Flores, 1980, hal. 242.

several of his literary works have been translated into Chinese, meeting Chinese readers and gaining considerable popularity. Nearly seven decades have passed since his literary works were first translated and introduced to Chinese readers. During this time, Chinese academia has conducted multi-level and multi-dimensional research on Pramoedya and his writings. Over the past decade, domestic scholars have undertaken efforts to systematically document the academic trajectory of Pramoedya studies within China. Currently, comprehensive reviews of Pramoedya research in China can be found in two primary sources. One source is Volume 12: *Ya Fei Zhu Guo Wenxue Yanjiu de Xueshu Licheng* (*The Academic History of Asian and African Literature Studies*, 亚非诸国文学研究的学术历程) within the series *Zhongguo Waiguo Wenxue Yanjiu de Xueshu Licheng* (*The Academic History of Foreign Literature Studies in China*, 中国外国文学研究的学术历程). This series was published in September 2016, edited by Professor Meng Zhaoyi (孟昭毅) from College of Liberal Arts, Tianjin Normal University, and other scholars. The volume comprises two main sections: "An Overview of Asian and African Literature Studies in China" and "Research on Important Asian and African Writers and Their Works in China." These sections respectively document the history of Indonesian literature studies in China and the development of Pramoedya studies. The other source is the Introduction to the 2015 PhD dissertation *A Study of Nationalist Thought in the Literary Works of Pramoedya Ananta Toer* (普拉姆迪亚·阿南达·杜尔文学作品中的民族主义思想研究) by Dr. Qie Lisha (郅莉莎) from the School of Foreign Languages, Peking University (北京大学). The literature review section of this dissertation not only outlines the development of Pramoedya studies within China but also reviews and synthesizes representative academic achievements in Pramoedya research from the international academic community.

Pramoedya Ananta Toer undertook two formative visits to China. His journeys to China expanded his vision regarding Asian and African countries and people while also enriching his literary ideology. His works entered the Chinese literary sphere during the mid-20th century, achieving sustained critical recognition in subsequent decades. The patriotism, nationalism, and humanism in Pramoedya's works resonated profoundly with the historical experiences and national sentiments of the Chinese people in modern times. Consequently, research on Pramoedya gradually began to prevail in China, integrated into the broader attention paid by Chinese academia and literary circles to the nationalism literature of progressive writers from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. He thus came to be regarded as an outstanding representative figure of modern Indonesian nationalism literature in the eyes of Chinese academia.

Pramoedya's Enduring Connection with China

There is a unique bond that exists between Pramoedya Ananta Toer and China. His literary thought resonated profoundly within the community of Chinese writers. During the 1950s, specifically in 1956 and 1958, Pramoedya visited China twice. The vibrant vitality of the new People's Republic of China that he witnessed greatly inspired him. The lives and creative endeavors of Chinese intellectuals had left him a deep impression. These two journeys enriched his ideological framework, incorporating insights from China's developmental path. Furthermore, the literary works of Chinese intellectuals broadened his creative perspectives, prompting him, upon his return, to advocate for the nationalist intellectual class to play an active role in Indonesia's nation-building.

His first trip to China allowed Pramoedya to witness personally that, among the various historical paths available for Asian and African nations (the Global South), there was a new developmental model exemplified by China. In July 1956, Pramoedya received an invitation letter from staff at the PRC Embassy, inviting him to participate in the commemorative activities in October marking the twentieth anniversary of the Chinese writer Lu Xun's death. By that time, Pramoedya was already aware of Lu Xun's stature in Chinese literature, having read a Dutch translation of *The True Story of Ah Q* (阿Q正传) and knowing that Lu Xun was called "China's Gorky."² During that period, Pramoedya was earnestly seeking a path forward for Indonesia's nationalist development, yearning for the country's intellectual class to assume a more significant role in nation-building. China became the catalyst for his inspiration and intellectual regeneration. Pramoedya delivered a speech at the conference commemorating the twentieth anniversary of Lu Xun's death. After his Beijing conference presence, Pramoedya visited Shanghai, Nanjing, and Guangzhou. During his trip in China, he met with a number of notable literary figures, including Zhou Yang (周扬), Mao Dun (茅盾), Wang Renshu (王任叔, also known as Ba Ren 巴人), and Yang Shuo (杨朔). Engagements with these Chinese writers generated substantive inspiration for his artistic praxis. He was deeply impressed by the social status of Chinese intellectuals and the influential role they were able to play. "Underlying Pramoedya's enthusiastic description of Chinese writers' enviable social and financial status was the implicit acknowledgement that the PRC practice was in effect a realization of his own ideals for Indonesia."³

Pramoedya's second visit to China occurred during his return journey after leading the Indonesian delegation to the First Afro-Asian Writers' Conference. Both the experience of attending the conference and the subsequent trip to China provided Pramoedya with

² Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Nyanyi Sunyi Seorang Bisu* (Jakarta: Lentera, 1995), p.158.

³ Hong Liu, *China and the Shaping of Indonesia, 1949-1965* (Singapore: NUS Press & Kyoto University Press, 2011), p.248.

numerous insights. The conference, which was held in Tashkent on October 7, 1958, was attended by writer representatives from over 40 countries, including Afghanistan, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, China, Cyprus, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Korea, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, Vietnam, as well as representatives from various African countries. China sent a delegation of 21 writers led by Mao Dun as the head of the delegation to attend the conference. The conference had two main agendas: "The Development of Literature and Culture in Afro-Asian Countries and Their Role in the Struggle for Human Progress and National Independence, Against Colonialism, and for the Defense of Freedom and World Peace." And "The Interrelations of the Cultures of the Peoples of Afro-Asian Countries and Their Links with Western Cultures."⁴ Writer representatives from over 40 countries delivered speeches and engaged in discussions on these two agenda items.

The First Afro-Asian Writers' Conference held groundbreaking and epoch-making significance for writers from Asia and Africa. It constructed a platform for Afro-Asian writers to exchange ideas and deliberate on the future. Through this event, Pramoedya was also significantly influenced by writers from other countries. Following the conference, Pramoedya visited China, Burma, and other nations. During his second visit to China, he stopped in Beijing, Wuhan, Chengdu, Kunming, and other cities, engaging in discussions with Chinese writers on several topics of mutual concern, before returning to Indonesia on October 21, 1958. This second journey to China not only allowed Pramoedya to exchange ideas on national liberation and explore paths of national development with fellow Afro-Asian writers and intellectuals, but also enabled him to experience more profoundly the dynamic vitality of the new China and the new developmental paradigm that it represented for Afro-Asian nations.

During his visit to China, Pramoedya was accompanied by his Chinese interpreter, Ms. Chen Xiaru (陈霞如), a student who graduated from the Indonesian Studies section at Peking University. A deep friendship developed between them during the visits, and they maintained correspondence for many years afterward. As an outstanding alumna of Peking University's Indonesian Language section, Ms. Chen Xiaru was fluent in Indonesian and had a profound understanding of Indonesian literature. In the 1950s, she translated the representative work *Salah Asuhan* (*Wrong Upbringing*, 错误的教育) by Indonesian writer Abdul Muis into Chinese. The Indonesian Studies section at Peking University, established as the first of its kind in China with a long history, has consistently maintained a leading position domestically in research on Indonesian language, literature, and culture. Within Pramoedya studies in China, the Peking University Indonesian Studies section possesses profound historical depth and has

⁴ World Literature Society (ed.), *Long Live the Spirit of Tashkent: Chinese Writers on the Afro-Asian Writers' Conference*, Writers Publishing House, 1959, p. 2.

remarkable research achievements. It stands as the undisputed leading team in domestic Pramoedya research in China, having undertaken extensive translation and introduction of his works, alongside conducting in-depth research on his creative philosophy and the connotations of his writings. In the 1980s, the Indonesian Studies section invited Professor A. Teeuw from Leiden University in the Netherlands for an academic visit to Peking University. Professor A. Teeuw was one of the leading scholars on modern Indonesian literature and Pramoedya studies, authoring several influential academic works, including *Sastra Indonesia Modern (Modern Indonesian Literature)* and *Citra Manusia Indonesia dalam Karya Sastra Pramoedya Ananta Toer (The Image of the Indonesians in the Literary Works of Pramoedya Ananta Toer)*. His visit encouraged and spurred interest in Pramoedya within Chinese academia and literary circles and simultaneously brought new insights into Pramoedya studies in China.

The Translation and Introduction Phase

The translation and introduction of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's works in China began in the 1950s. The 1958 Chinese edition of *Keluarga Gerilya (Youjidian Zhi Jia, The Guerrilla Family, 游击队之家)*⁵ stands as the primary textual evidence of the inaugural point of Pramoedya studies in China. Translated by Mr. Ni Zhiyu (倪志渔) and Mr. Zhu Bingyi (朱秉义) and proofread by Professor Tu Bingli (涂炳立), this edition includes a translator's note that not only praised the novel's vivid portrayal of the glorious struggle of the Indonesian people for national liberation but also affirmed the close friendship forged between the Chinese and Indonesian peoples in their shared pursuit of peace and opposition to war.⁶ Written during Pramoedya's first imprisonment in 1947-1949, *Keluarga Gerilya* focuses on a guerrilla fighter's household, with the protagonist, Saaman, being an active guerrilla. The characters' identities are skillfully crafted to reflect both social representativeness and underlying societal contradictions. Set entirely over three days and nights, the novel chronicles the complete destruction of a family amid war, delivering intense emotional impact. It embodies Pramoedya's reflection on the suffering war brings to the people and expresses his strong nationalist and humanist thoughts.

The novella *Korupsi (Corruption)*, published in Indonesia in 1954, has two Chinese translations in China. One was retitled *Youhuo yu Duoluo (Temptation and Degradation, 诱惑与堕落)* and included in a collection of novellas with the same title published by Hunan People's Publishing House in 1986. Notably, this collection, co-translated by Professor Kong Yuanzhi (孔远志) and Mr. Chen Peichu (陈培初), features

⁵ Pramoedya Ananta Toer, trans. Ni, Zhiyu & Zhu, Bingyi. "Youjidian Zhi Jia" (*Keluarga Gerilya*). Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1st edition, 1958.

⁶ Pramoedya Ananta Toer, trans. Ni Zhiyu & Zhu, Bingyi. "Youjidian Zhi Jia" (*Keluarga Gerilya*). Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1st edition, 1958, p.390.

ten short stories or excerpts from Pramoedya's works, including selections from *Pertjikan Revolusi* (*Sparks of Revolution*) and *Tjerita dari Blora* (*Stories from Blora*). Among them are *Tongnian* (*Yang Sudah Hilang, Childhood*, 童年), *Yina* (*Inem*, 伊娜), and *Gugui* (*Lemari Antik, The Antique Cabinet*, 古柜), which reflected the miserable lives of ordinary Indonesians, as well as *Chuizi Dashu*, an excerpt from *Paman Martil* (*Uncle Hammer*, 锤子大叔), portraying a worker during the First Indonesian National Uprising. In addition to this version, the other Chinese translation of *Korupsi* was published by World Knowledge Press in 1985 under the title *Yige Guanyuan de Duoluo* (*The Fall of an Official*, 一个官员的堕落). This edition was translated by Kang Zhao (康昭) from the French translation of *Korupsi* (1981). After being translated into French, this work was then introduced to Chinese readers through a French studies scholar, demonstrating Pramoedya's global literary influence.

It is worth mentioning that the translation of *Inem* also appeared in *Yinni Malaixiya Duanpian Xiaoshuoxuan* (*Indonesian and Malaysian Short Story Selections*, 印尼马来西亚短篇小说选) published by Haixia Literature and Art Publishing House in 1986. Translated by Wang Shouye (王受业), this collection selected 20 representative short stories from Indonesia and Malaysia. Among them, *Inem* from Pramoedya's *Tjerita dari Blora* was translated and included under the title *Yineimu* (伊内姆). Based on Pramoedya's childhood experiences, the story *Inem* portrayed the tragic fate of a young girl in colonial society. Forced into marriage by her family while still a child, she suffered prolonged physical abuse from her husband before ultimately being abandoned. The translator described the protagonist, Inem, as "a typical image of an oppressed woman in pre-war Indonesian colonial society."⁷

Beyond the translations mentioned above, excerpts from Pramoedya's novel *Perburuan* (*The Fugitive*, 追捕), co-translated by Gong Xun (龚勋) and Yan Ping (严萍)—both graduates of the Indonesian Studies section at Peking University—were included in *The World Anti-Fascist Literature Series* (Southeast Asia Volume). *Perburuan*, which won a literary award (hadiah Sastra Balai Pustaka) in 1950, stands alongside *Keluarga Gerilya* as one of the representative works of Pramoedya's first creative peak. Written during his imprisonment in Bukit Duri prison, the novel has garnered significant attention from scholars both within Indonesia and internationally. Drawing from real historical events in Indonesia and set against the backdrop of the anti-Japanese uprising in East Java in February 1945, the novel followed the experiences of Sergeant Hardo of the Defenders of the Homeland (Pembela Tanah Air, PETA) and his comrades. It highlighted the intense clash between humanitarianism and nationalism during the war and reflected a short-

⁷ Wang, Shouye (trans.). *Selected Short Stories from Indonesia and Malaysia*. Fuzhou: Haixia Literature and Art Publishing House, 1986, p. 215.

term transformation in Pramoedya's creative thought, influenced by the prevailing universal humanist ideas in the Indonesian literary scene at the time.

In the 1980s, the faculty members from the Indonesian Studies section of Peking University translated several of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's works into Chinese, including the first novels of his renowned "Buru Quartet": *Renshijian (Bumi Manusia, This Earth of Mankind, 人世间)*, *Wanguo zhi Zi (Anak Semua Bangsa, Child of All Nations, 万国之子)*, and *Zuji (Jejak Langkah, Footsteps, 足迹)*.⁸ Upon the initial publication of *Bumi Manusia*, the first novel in the "Buru Quartet", Chinese scholars published papers introducing and analyzing this literary work that had already gained a reputation in the literary world. One of them was Professor Liang Liji (梁立基)'s "A Mirror of the Indonesian Nationalism Awakening: Reading *Bumi Manusia*," published in *Foreign Literature Studies* in 1982. In this paper, the author not only affirmed the typical and symbolic significance of Pramoedya's choice of Nyai Ontosoroh's family as the narrative center but also pointed out that the "Boerderij Buitenzorg" estate represented a microcosm of the colonial society at that time. The class divisions and conflicts within the family precisely reflected those in the wider society. Furthermore, the paper provided a detailed analysis of *Bumi Manusia* from perspectives such as character portrayal and narrative structure.⁹

That same year, Professor Ju Sanyuan (居三元) published "Imprisoned for Fourteen Years, His New Work Shocks the Literary World: A Review of the Indonesian Novel *Bumi Manusia*." This paper introduced the main content of the novel, evaluating it as a work that "condemned the injustices of the world" and "praised an indomitable spirit of resistance," while also affirming the profound ideological connotations and extraordinary historical significance of the work.¹⁰ It is evident that these early papers, which involved both internal and external analyses of the text, although limited in length and depth, were of great significance, as they were published in academic journals contemporaneously with the release of the Chinese translation of *Bumi Manusia*. Subsequently, Pramoedya's works faced a comprehensive ban in Indonesia. Following the prohibition of *Nyanyi Sunyi Seorang Bisu*, the domestic publication *Chuban Cankao (Publishing Reference, 出版参考)* reported on this situation in an article titled "New Works by Famous Indonesian Writer Pramoedya Banned Again" (印尼著名作家普拉姆迪亚新作又遭禁) published in 1995. The following year, Guo

⁸ Published by Peking University Press respectively in 1982, 1983, and 1989, and later reprinted in 2022, 2023, and 2025 correspondingly.

⁹ Liang, Liji. "A Mirror of Indonesian National Awakening: Reading This Earth of Mankind." *Foreign Literature Studies*, (1982).

¹⁰ Ju, Sanyuan. "Confined for Fourteen Years, a New Work Shakes the Literary World: A Review of the Indonesian Novel *Bumi Manusia*." *Foreign Literature*, (1982).

Xiaomei (郭晓妹) wrote "A Masterpiece Born in Exile"(流放地诞生的长篇巨著) , which was focused on introducing the plots and content of the "Buru Quartet."

The Specialized Research Phase

Entering the 21st century, the study of Pramoedya in China has developed into the specialized research phase and has apparently transcended fragmented studies focused on textual interpretation, introduction about the author, and thematic analysis on certain works. Scholars delved deeper into the exploration of Pramoedya's literary thought and the broader study of Indonesian nationalism literature represented by Pramoedya.

In 2003, Professor Liang Liji of Peking University compiled and published *Yindunixiya Wenxueshi (History of Indonesian Literature, Volumes I & II, 印度尼西亚文学史)* through Kunlun Publishing House. This work is part of Peking University's *Eastern Culture Collection* series. Professor Liang Liji, a pioneer in the study of Indonesian literature in China, was born in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1927. After returning to China, he dedicated himself to Indonesian language teaching and began his literary research. His *History of Indonesian Literature* is the earliest and most comprehensive literary history work on Indonesian literature published in China. The compilation of *History of Indonesian Literature* used a large amount of first-hand material in Indonesian and provided a detailed introduction to Pramoedya. Professor Liang meticulously organized and periodized Pramoedya's literary career, dividing it into the "August Revolution" period, the period around joining Lekra (the Institute of People's Culture), and the "New Order" (Orde baru) period. The book not only introduced representative literary works from each of Pramoedya's creative periods but also identified the two most prominent features of his literary works. "One is a firm nationalist stance and strong nationalism feelings; the other is a humanitarian stance and deep sympathy for the insulted and the damaged little people."¹¹ As the earliest Chinese monograph on literary history to systematically introduce Pramoedya's life and literary creation, *History of Indonesian Literature* laid a solid foundation for subsequent introductions and research on Pramoedya in many literary monographs and academic papers within China.

In 2000, Professor Liu Hong (刘宏) published two papers in the journal *Literatures in Chinese (华文文学)* under the series title "The Influence of China on Contemporary Indonesian Literature: The Case of Pramoedya Ananta Toer". These papers primarily discussed changes in Pramoedya's political views and literary thought around the time of his two visits to China in the 1950s. Subsequently, Professor Liu Hong published his book *China and the Shaping of Indonesia, 1949-1965* (2011), which included a dedicated chapter analyzing the influence of China and Chinese literature on the evolution of

¹¹ Liang, Liji. *History of Indonesian Literature* (in two volumes), Beijing: Kunlun Press, 2003, p.621.

Pramoedya's thought. Using Pramoedya's two visits to China in 1956 and 1958 as focal points, Professor Liu elaborated on the shifts in Pramoedya's ideas around the 1960s, which were influenced by Chinese intellectuals and writers, as well as the new perspectives and methods reflected in his artistic views and literary creations.¹²

In 2008, Zhang Bingjing (Tjong Cendrawaty, 张冰晶), a graduate student at Xiamen University, wrote her master's thesis titled *Feminism and the Literary Creations of Pramoedya Ananta Toer* (女性主义与普拉姆迪亚·阿南达·杜尔的文学创作). This thesis analyzed Pramoedya's literary works from the perspective of feminist literature, reviewed the Indonesian people's process of embracing feminism, and explored Pramoedya's feminist thought and its manifestation in his works. There were some dedicated chapters that introduced key figures who significantly influenced Pramoedya's feminist ideas, including Indonesia's first president Sukarno, as well as Pramoedya's grandmother and mother.

In 2015, Qie Lisha from the School of Foreign Languages at Peking University completed her doctoral dissertation titled *A Study on Nationalist Thought in the Literary Works of Pramoedya Ananta Toer*. This dissertation represented the first doctoral thesis by a domestic scholar dedicated to specialized research on Pramoedya and his works. This dissertation was supervised by Professor Zhang Yu'an (张玉安) from Peking University. Professor Koh Young Hun, a renowned Pramoedya research expert from Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, was invited to join the supervision team. As the most prominent Pramoedya scholar in Korea, Professor Koh provided valuable materials for the dissertation. This work became the first doctoral dissertation, both in China and internationally, that offered a relatively comprehensive and systematic analysis of nationalist thought in Pramoedya's works. Approaching the topic from a literary sociology perspective, the dissertation traced the development of Pramoedya's nationalist thought from its inception to maturity through the lens of his life experiences and intellectual evolution. It then analyzed the characteristics of his nationalist ideas from several aspects, such as creative principles, writing techniques, and the foundations of his nationalist thought. Finally, it interpreted the connotations of his nationalist thought from the perspectives of political nationalism and cultural nationalism.

Zhang Xudong (张旭东)'s 2010 book *Dongnanya de Zhongguo Xingxiang (Image of China in Southeast Asia, 东南亚的中国形象)* included a dedicated chapter titled "Pramoedya Ananta Toer and the Image of China in His Works in Post-Independence Indonesia." This chapter analyzed the portrayals of Chinese characters in the first three novels of

¹² Liu, Hong. "China's Influence on Contemporary Indonesian Literature: The Case of Pramoedya Ananta Toer (Part 1)." *Chinese Literature*, no. 1 (2000). Liu, Hong. "China's Influence on Contemporary Indonesian Literature: The Case of Pramoedya Ananta Toer (Part 2)." *Chinese Literature*, no. 2 (2000).

Pramoedya's representative work "Buru Quartet": the brothel owner Ah Tjong (阿章), the patriotic youth Khouw Ah Soe (许阿仕), and the progressive woman Ang San Mei (洪山梅). By introducing the analysis of Chinese figures into literary studies, it explored the Chinese images and bilateral cultural exchange, providing a fresh perspective for Pramoedya studies. Furthermore, in the 2015 publication *Yindunxiya Xiandangdai Wenxue Zuopin Xuandu* (*Selected Readings of Modern and Contemporary Indonesian Literature*, 印度尼西亚现当代文学作品选读) edited by Professor Tang Hui (唐慧) from the National University of Defense Technology, an excerpt from Pramoedya's *Bumi Manusia* was also included, with an introduction evaluating and introducing Pramoedya's life and works.

In 2016, *The Academic History of Asian and African Literature Studies*, Volume 12, of the series *The Academic History of Foreign Literature Studies in China* was published. This book systematically reviewed the research on Asian and African literature in China, classified by country, and dedicated specific chapters to introduce the most representative writers. As Indonesia's most influential writer in modern literature, Pramoedya Ananta Toer's life, literary creations, and the history of the translation and research of his works in China were presented comprehensively in this volume. The book stated, "When discussing Indonesian literature and its study, the Indonesian writer Pramoedya Ananta Toer is of foremost consideration."¹³ This evaluation highlighted Pramoedya's significance in Indonesian literature and the importance accorded to his study by Chinese academia. A dedicated chapter, "Pramoedya Studies," introduced the main content of his masterpiece, "Buru Quartet," and the global impact of this series. It also traced the academic journey of Chinese scholars in translating and researching Pramoedya's literary works, offering a systematic review of the academic history of Pramoedya research in China, which held substantial value for understanding the development of this field.

In addition to the previously mentioned master's thesis and doctoral dissertation on Pramoedya studies, a series of scholarly works on Pramoedya Ananta Toer have been published during recent years. These include papers by Qie Lisha, such as "Wavering Between Nationalism and Humanism: Analyzing Pramoedya's Creative Ideology (1947-1949) Through Two Novels"¹⁴, "An Analysis of Heroic Figures in the Literary Works of Pramoedya Ananta Toer"¹⁵, "An Analysis of the Typification Technique in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's Literary Works"¹⁶, "Interpreting Pramoedya's View of Women Through the

¹³ Meng, Zhaoyi et al. *The Academic History of Literary Studies in Asian and African Countries*. Chongqing: Chongqing Publishing Group Chongqing Press, 2016, p.79.

¹⁴ Qie, Lisha. "Wavering Between Nationalism and Humanism: Examining Pramoedya's Creative Ideology (1947-1949) Through Two Novels." *Peking University South and Southeast Asian Studies* 1 (January 2013).

¹⁵ Qie, Lisha. "An Analysis of Heroic Figures in the Literary Works of Pramoedya Ananta Toer." *Weiming Asia-Pacific Review* (May 2014).

¹⁶ Qie, Lisha. "An Analysis of the Typification Technique in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's Literary Works." *Asia-Pacific*

'Buru Quartet'"¹⁷, "Writing History, Reflecting Reality: On the Realism in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's Literary Creations"¹⁸. These studies provided multi-dimensional analyses and interpretations of numerous works by Pramoedya, including the "Buru Quartet," *Keluarga Gerilya*, *Perburuan*, *Korupsi*, *Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas*, and other significant pieces.

In 2019, Ma Feng (马峰) published an academic paper titled "Pluralistic Nationalisms in Contemporary Indonesian Literature: A Comparative Study of Pramoedya and Huang Dongping"¹⁹, which focused on Pramoedya's nationalist ideology while engaging in comparative analysis with a Chinese-Indonesian writer. This work revealed the diverse expressions of nationalism in contemporary Indonesian literary creations. A paper published in the journal *Qingnian Wenxuejia* (*Youth Literator*, 青年文学家) in 2010, titled "An Exploration of Postcolonial Feminism in the 'Buru Quartet'," applies postcolonial feminist theory to analyze relevant elements in the "Buru Quartet."²⁰ Additionally, in 2024, Zhang Yan (张燕) published the article "Nationalism and War Narratives in the Indonesian Novel *Keluarga Gerilya*", selecting Pramoedya's prison-era work *Keluarga Gerilya* as the subject of analysis to interpret the war narratives within the work and the author's ideological trajectory.²¹

Several Aspects of Pramoedya Studies in China

The above review demonstrates that research on Pramoedya Ananta Toer and his literary works in China has progressed through two main phases: the first "translation and introduction phase", and then followed by the second "specialized research phase". Over the past seventy years, the academic trajectory of Pramoedya studies in China has exhibited the following distinct aspects.

1. Starts Early in Translation and Research, with Full Recognition of Pramoedya's Works

China's translation and research concerning Pramoedya commenced comparatively early, and his works have received comprehensive critical recognition within both literary and academic communities. The translation of Pramoedya's works began as early as the 1950s in China. Published in Chinese in 1958, the novel *Keluarga Gerilya*

Studies Review 15 (June 2019).

17 Qie, Lisha. "Interpreting Pramoedya's View of Women Through the 'Buru Quartet'." *Collected Papers on Oriental Literary Studies* 9. Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, May 2021.

18 Qie, Lisha. "Writing History, Reflecting Reality: On the Realism in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's Literary Creations." *Collected Papers on Oriental Literary Studies* 11 (November 2023).

19 Ma, Feng. "Pluralistic Nationalisms in Contemporary Indonesian Literature: A Comparative Study of Pramoedya and Huang Dongping." *Journal of Sun Yat-sen University (Social Science Edition)*, no. 3 (2019).

20 Zeng, Wei. "An Exploration of Postcolonial Feminism in the Buru Quartet." *Youth Literator*, no. 3 (2010).

21 Zhang, Yan. "Nationalism and War Narration in the Indonesian Novel *Keluarga Gerilya*." *Military Culture Research*, no. 4 (2024).

represents the earliest documented Chinese translation of Pramoedya's literary works. However, his masterpiece, the "Buru Quartet," seems to have the greatest influence in China among Pramoedya's works. Following Pramoedya's release from Buru Island in 1979, the first novel of the quartet, *Bumi Manusia*, was published in Indonesia in 1980, gaining a great reputation in literary circles. Chinese scholars at the time were already keenly aware of the work's literary value and impact. Thus, the third issue of *Guowai Wenxue* (*Foreign Literature*, 国外文学) in 1981 published an article titled "The Indonesian Novel *Bumi Manusia* Causes a Literary Sensation", authored under the pen name "Liang Zhi" (良知, meaning "Conscience"). The article briefly outlined the creation process of the "Buru Quartet" and noted, "Faculty members of the Indonesian Studies section in the Department of Eastern Languages at Peking University held enthusiastic discussions about this work, unanimously agreeing that *Bumi Manusia* is a rare masterpiece in Indonesian literature."²² As described, faculty members in Indonesian Studies Section of Peking University paid significant attention to the work, translating *Bumi Manusia* into Chinese by 1982, published by Peking University Press. This period marked a significant expansion of Pramoedya's intellectual impact on Chinese scholarship.

Following *Bumi Manusia*, the other two works of the "Buru Quartet", *Anak Semua Bangsa* and *Jejak Langkah*, were subsequently published in Indonesia. They were also translated by faculty members of Indonesian Studies from Peking University and published by Peking University Press in 1983 and 1989, respectively. The translation work at the time was a collaborative effort involving several scholars: Professor Ju Sanyuan, Professor Kong Yuanzhi, and Professor Zhang Yu'an from Peking University, along with Mr. Chen Peichu from the Institute of Literature at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). Professor Huang Chenfang was responsible for the final language unification and polishing. Professor Huang Chenfang was born in May 1931 in Bandung, Indonesia. He had been dedicated to Indonesian language teaching in the Indonesian Language section at Peking University for decades. He was also the chief editor of China's first Indonesian language textbook series, *Yindunxiya Yu Jichu Jiaocheng* (*Pelajaran Bahasa Indonesia, Basic Indonesian Language Course*, 印度尼西亚语基础教程). The translation of *Bumi Manusia*, *Anak Semua Bangsa*, and *Jejak Langkah* received high priority from the Peking University faculty involved, who devoted immense time and effort to the task. It is said that the translators held numerous discussions to resolve difficult translation problems, and the cards recording these discussions can fill a whole cabinet.²³

²² Liangzhi. "The Indonesian Novel *Bumi Manusia* Causes a Literary Sensation." *Foreign Literature*, no. 3 (1981).

²³ Meng, Zhaoyi et al. *The Academic History of Literary Studies in Asian and African Countries*. Chongqing: Chongqing Publishing Group Chongqing Press, 2016, p.308.

Notably, these translations emerged amidst a Chinese-Indonesian diplomatic rupture. Yet Chinese scholars secured textual access and translated these critically recognized works into Chinese in near synchrony with their ascendance within Indonesia's literary sphere. Their professional dedication was deeply moving and reflected the Chinese academic community's profound affirmation of Pramoedya's works and achievements. Subsequently, although the "Buru Quartet" series was banned in Indonesia, it continued to exert its artistic appeal and influence among Chinese readers for many years.

2. Abundant Introductions to Pramoedya and His Works Made, Relatively Limited Scope of Specialized Research Applied

The Chinese academic community has produced considerable introductory material on Pramoedya. His representative works have already been translated into Chinese and published. However, related research contents are relatively limited. Meanwhile, introductions to Pramoedya and his works can be found in numerous literary history monographs and literary works within China. Examples include:

- *Dongfang Wenxue Shi (History of Oriental Literature, 东方文学史)* edited by Professor Ji Xianlin (季羡林) (Jilin Education Press, 1995)
- *Jianming Dongfang Wenxue Shi (A Concise History of Oriental Literature, 简明东方文学史)* edited by Professor Ji Xianlin (季羡林) (Peking University Press, 1987)
- *Dongfang Geguo Wenxue zai Zhongguo (Oriental Literatures in China, 东方各国文学在中国)* by Professor Wang Xiangyuan (王向远) (Jiangxi Education Press, 2001)
- *Dongfang Wenxue Shi (History of Oriental Literature, 东方文学史)* edited by Professors Yu Longyu (郁龙余) and Meng Zhaoyi (郁龙余) (Peking University Press, 2001)
- *Yindunixiya Wenhua yu Shehui (Indonesian Culture and Society, 印度尼西亚文化与社会)* co-authored by Professor Liang Minhe (梁敏和) and Professor Kong Yuanzhi (孔元志) (Peking University Press, 2002)
- *Dongmeng Wenxue (ASEAN Literature, 东盟文学)* edited by Professor Meng Yizhong (孟益中) (Guangxi Normal University Press, 2012)
- *Waiguo Wenxue Jianbian (A Concise History of Foreign Literature, Asia and Africa Section, 外国文学简编)* edited by Professor Liang Liji and He Naiying (何乃英) (Renmin University of China Press, 2014)

These books above all contain basic introductions and general analyses of Pramoedya and his works. Furthermore, there are dictionaries in China that include entries for the item "Pulamudiya" (Pramoedya, 普拉姆迪亚) or "Du'er" (Toer, 杜尔), introducing his life and literary creations. In most of these works, Pramoedya appears as *the* sole representative writer of Indonesian literature.

- Waiguo Wenxue Dacidian (A Comprehensive Dictionary of Foreign Literature, 外国文学大词典) edited by Professor Diao Shaohua (刁邵华) (1990)
- Zhongwai Wenyijia ji Mingzuo Cidian (Dictionary of Chinese and Foreign Literary Figures and Masterpieces, 中外文艺家及名作词典) edited by Professor Shuai Benhua (帅本华) (1991)
- Dongfang Wenxue Cidian (Dictionary of Oriental Literature, 东方文学辞典) edited by Professor Ji Xianlin (1992)
- Dongfang Wenxue Mingzhu Jianshang Dacidian (Grand Dictionary of Oriental Literary Masterpieces Appreciation, 东方文学名著鉴赏大辞典) edited by Professor Tao Dezhen (陶德臻) et al. (1994)
- Xinbian Ershi Shiji Waiguo Wenxue Dacidian (Newly Compiled Dictionary of Twentieth-Century Foreign Literature, 新编二十世纪外国文学大词典, 1998)

However, it is important to note that many literary publications in China largely remain at the stage of Pramoedya's biographical and work introductions, which means they are just at the preliminary level. While a number of thematic or dedicated studies have emerged, covering fields such as nationalism and feminism, China's Pramoedya research still holds significant potential for growth, both in terms of the volume of studies and the diversity of research perspectives. Professor Koh Young Hun from Hankuk University of Foreign Studies once commented, "Pramoedya, as a prestigious writer, should inspire more academic research on his literary works. The reality, however, is quite the opposite—existing research achievements are still too few."²⁴In my view, the true emphasis of this assessment is that Pramoedya, as a writer renowned in Indonesia and indeed on the world literary stage, is worthy of and should receive more attention, particularly more in-depth research and discussion of his works. Regrettably, these constraints in research scope and the scarcity of substantive scholarly advances also persist within Chinese academia.

²⁴ Koh Young Hun, *Pramoedya Menggugat, Melacak Jejak Indonesia*, P.T. Gramedia, 2011, h. xvi.

3. Research on Pramoedya's Works Remains Uneven in Scope and Depth

The attention and research devoted to Pramoedya's works by Chinese academia are concentrated primarily on his masterpiece, the "Buru Quartet". Related introductions and studies on this series are relatively abundant. However, scholarly attention to his other works remains inadequate. Throughout his life, Pramoedya created over 50 literary works, including nearly ten representative pieces. Yet, a notable feature of research on his works in China is that the predominance of studies has always been concerning the "Buru Quartet," while there has been significantly less attention paid to his other creations.

In specialized works on Oriental or Southeast Asian literature studies, introductions to Pramoedya also tend to focus on the "Buru Quartet," particularly the first novel, *Bumi Manusia*. As Pramoedya's most influential work, *Bumi Manusia* has consistently been the primary research focus for scholars both domestically and internationally, with the most abundant scholarly output dedicated to it. Nevertheless, this research imbalance in Chinese Pramoedya studies remains fundamentally constrained by translation availability. Since the first three novels of the quartet were translated into Chinese as early as the 1980s and have been reprinted in recent years, they have reached a relatively wider readership and will consequently achieve broader influence in China.

From this perspective, translating and introducing more outstanding literary works into China is obviously an urgent need of foreign literature studies today. This demand is equally evident in Pramoedya studies and even in the broader study of Indonesian literature. In recent decades, several internationally significant Indonesian literary works have reached Chinese readers through English-translation mediation. This approach serves as an effective supplement, helping to alleviate the current shortage of Chinese translations of Southeast Asian literature. However, this "roundabout approach" also faces certain limitations, such as the translator's limited understanding of Indonesian culture and society and the inherent difficulty in fully capturing the original essence and artistic conception of a literary work when translators cannot access the first-hand materials.

Conclusion

Reviewing the trajectory of the translation, introduction, and research of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's works in China reveals that Chinese academia has maintained nearly seven decades of scholarly engagement with the author and his writings. The early initiation and substantial achievements in translating and studying his works underscore the sustained academic interest in Pramoedya's legacy. Since his works were first translated and introduced to China in the mid-20th century, they have not only broadened the literary experiences of Chinese readers but have also promoted literary

and cultural exchanges between China and Indonesia. The efforts of Chinese scholars in translating and researching Pramoedya's works reflect a strong appreciation for their literary significance and a keen interest in Indonesian literature and culture within Chinese academic circles.

While significant progress has been made in Pramoedya studies in China, certain limitations persist. Firstly, the amount of dedicated research on his works remains relatively limited, and the focus of this research is unevenly distributed. Most studies concentrate primarily on his masterpiece, the "Buru Quartet," while his other works receive comparatively less attention. This imbalance constrains a comprehensive understanding of Pramoedya's literary legacy.

With accelerating cultural diplomacy between China and Indonesia, Pramoedya studies are poised to attract heightened attention from a new generation of scholars. Additionally, enhancing the translation of original Indonesian texts and introducing more of Pramoedya's notable works to Chinese audiences is essential for the further development of Pramoedya studies. It is strongly anticipated that in the near future, Pramoedya studies in China will produce more significant academic contributions, offering new and creative insights into Indonesian literature and society.

References

- [1] Teeuw. *Citra Manusia Indonesia dalam Karya Sastra Pramoedya Ananta Toer*, Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, 1997.
- [2] Koh, Young Hun. *Pramoedya Menggugat, Melacak Jejak Indonesia*, Jakarta: P.T. Gramedia, 2011.
- [3] Liang, Liji. *History of Indonesian Literature* (in two volumes), Beijing: Kunlun Press, 2003. Liang, Minhe & Kong, Yuanzhi. *Indonesian Culture and Society*. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2002.
- [4] Li, Yuejin. *On the Development of Oriental Modern Nationalist Literary Trends*. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2011.
- [5] Meng, Zhaoyi et al. *The Academic History of Literary Studies in Asian and African Countries*. Chongqing: Chongqing Publishing Group Chongqing Press, 2016.
- [6] Pramoedya Ananta Toer, translated by Ni, Zhiyu & Zhu, Bingyi, *Youjidui zhi Jia*, (Keluarga Gerilya), Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1958.
- [7] Pramoedya Ananta Toer, translated by the Pramoedya Ananta Toer Research Group at Peking University, *Renshijian*, (Bumi Manusia), Beijing: Peking University Press, 1st edition, 1982.
- [8] Pramoedya Ananta Toer, translated by the Pramoedya Ananta Toer Research Group at Peking University, *Wanguo zhi Zi*, (Anak Semua Bangsa), Beijing: Peking University Press, 1st edition, 1983.
- [9] Pramoedya Ananta Toer, translated by Kong, Yuanzhi & Chen, Peichu, *Youhuo yu Duoluo*, Changsha: Hunan People's Publishing House, 1st edition, 1986.
- [10] Pramoedya Ananta Toer, translated by Zhang, Yu'an and Ju, Sanyuan, *Zuji*, (Jejak Langkah), Beijing: Peking University Press, 1st edition, 1989.

Theses:

- [1] Qie, Lisha. *A Study on Nationalist Thought in the Literary Works of Pramoedya Ananta Toer*. PhD diss., Peking University, 2015.
- [2] Zhang, Bingjing. *Feminism and the Literary Creations of Pramoedya Ananta Toer*. MA thesis, Xiamen University, 2008.
- [3] Ma, Feng. "Pluralistic Nationalisms in Contemporary Indonesian Literature: A Comparative Study of Pramoedya and Huang Dongping." *Journal of Sun Yat-sen University (Social Science Edition)*, no. 3 (2019).
- [4] Ju, Sanyuan. "Confined for Fourteen Years, a New Work Shakes the Literary World: A Review of the Indonesian Novel *Bumi Manusia*." *Foreign Literature*, (1982).
- [5] Liang, Liji. "A Mirror of Indonesian National Awakening: Reading *This Earth of Mankind*." *Foreign Literature Studies*, (1982).
- [6] Liangzhi. "The Indonesian Novel *Bumi Manusia* Causes a Literary Sensation." *Foreign Literature*, no. 3 (1981).
- [7] Liu, Hong. "China's Influence on Contemporary Indonesian Literature: The Case of Pramoedya Ananta Toer (Part 1)." *Chinese Literature*, no. 1 (2000).
- [8] Liu, Hong. "China's Influence on Contemporary Indonesian Literature: The Case of Pramoedya Ananta Toer (Part 2)." *Chinese Literature*, no. 2 (2000).
- [9] Qie, Lisha. "Wavering Between Nationalism and Humanism: Examining Pramoedya's Creative Thought from 1947-1949 Through Two Novels." *Peking University South and Southeast Asian Studies* 1 (January 2013).
- [10] Qie, Lisha. "An Analysis of Heroic Figures in the Literary Works of Pramoedya Ananta Toer." *Weiming Asia-Pacific Review* (May 2014).
- [11] Qie, Lisha. "An Analysis of the Typification Technique in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's Literary Works." *Asia-Pacific Studies Review* 15 (June 2019).
- [12] Qie, Lisha. "Interpreting Pramoedya's View of Women Through the 'Buru Quartet'." *Collected Papers on Oriental Literary Studies* 9. Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, (May 2021).
- [13] Qie, Lisha. "Writing History, Reflecting Reality: On the Realism in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's Literary Creations." *Collected Papers on Oriental Literary Studies* 11 (November 2023).
- [14] Zeng, Wei. "An Exploration of Postcolonial Feminism in the Buru Quartet." *Youth Literator*, no. 3 (2010).
- [15] Zhang, Yan. "Nationalism and War Narration in the Indonesian Novel *Keluarga Gerilya*." *Military Culture Research*, no. 4 (2024).