

Thomas Francis Wade's (1818–1895) Translations of *Yi* 夷 and Sino-British Relations during the Mid-Nineteenth Century

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Abstract

The translation of the Chinese character *yi* (夷) as “barbarian” caused a myriad of issues between Britain and China during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. When translating Chinese documents in 1861, Thomas Francis Wade (1818–1895) defended the use of the character by Qing officials and explained, “I incline to believe that the word barbarian was here introduced by mistake.” This was a unique occurrence. By comparing Wade’s various translations of *yi*, this article supplies ample examples of how the correlation between his various applications of *yi* coincided with the changing state of Sino-British relations. On the surface, his varying points of view appear contradictory. However, upon closer inspection, they are not inconsistent and were applied for the purpose of shaping Sino-British relations, as he adjusted the translation to coincide with the climate of Sino-British diplomatic relations. In addition, while being a diplomatic interpreter, he used the translations of *yi* as a bargaining chip to further political interests during negotiations. This further reflects the complexity of being a diplomat and interpreter overseeing Sino-British diplomacy.

Keywords

Thomas Francis Wade, barbarian, translations, *yi*, Sino-British relations

1. Introduction

As Lydia Liu (2004, 31) notes, “Never has a lone word made so much history as the Chinese character *yi* 夷.”¹ While this might be considered a slight exaggeration, it is true that the dispute over *yi* was a historic issue between China and Britain.

From ancient times, the Chinese had developed a kind of superiority complex over their neighbors. By designating tribal people around them as *yi*, uncivilized barbarians, the Chinese set themselves apart, justifying their assertion to rule over all regions “under Heaven” (*tianxia* 天下) (Wong 2011b, 76).² When the first European settlers arrived in China in the sixteenth century, they were also categorized by the Chinese as “barbarians,” a label denoting that they were inferior and uncivilized, people from peripheral distant lands (Wong 2011b). As a consequence, the British became increasingly intolerant of the *yi*/barbarian label and a confrontation ensued (Wong 2013). On the other hand, the fact was nearly neglected in academia, to the point that in many British writings in China in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Chinese were also depicted as barbarians (Wong 2013).³

There have been intense debates among scholars about the character *yi*. Lydia Liu (2004) argues that the character *yi* did not carry derogatory connotations and that the interpretation of the word *yi* as “barbarian” was but a construction of a “super-sign”—*yi*/barbarian—by the British. This argument was later challenged when Lawrence Wang-chi Wong (2013; 2016) analyzed the way *yi* evolved from traditional Chinese discourse to the Qing dynasty, before the Opium Wars. Wong (2013; 2016) argued that the idea of a *huayi* 華夷 (Sino-barbarian) dichotomy⁴ was ingrained in traditional Chinese culture—it was not an artificial construction on the part of the British. In other words, “the British were labelled *yi* in the sense of being ‘barbarians’ throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries” (Wong 2013, 366). This argument has paved the way for other studies to be conducted on the matter. While there has been a wealth of knowledge focusing on the controversies over *yi* prior to the Opium Wars,⁵ little research has been done on how the interpretations of this term have evolved since the 1840s. This article seeks to fill the aforementioned lacuna in the current research on *yi*.

Specifically, this article will explore the case of Thomas Francis Wade, one of the most prominent and influential figures in Sino-British relations in the nineteenth century. He first came to China as a lieutenant

of the 98th regiment in the Opium War. When he came to Hong Kong again in 1846, he became an interpreter for the British Superintendency. In 1853, he went to Shanghai as the British vice-consul but soon resigned to serve the Qing government as a customs inspector in Shanghai. He then resigned to return to the position of the interpreter. Finally, he shifted from an interpreter to a diplomat in Peking.⁶

2. Translation as a Means to Articulate Objections

The first time the British government formally objected to the Chinese use of *yi* was during a communication that was sent from the British Plenipotentiary to his Chinese counterpart on 12 November 1842 (Wong 2016, 306). The communication is as follows:

The Plenipotentiary observes that, in communication from the two High Officers jointly, the people of the British Nation are spoken of as “**E**” (**barbarians**), an expression quite out of tone with the friendly feelings that should exist between the two countries, and he has therefore to request, that it will be altered in the original document (now returned) and that all official writers and clerks will be strictly enjoined never again to write the word, that thus everything that might give rise to bitterness of feeling may be avoided, and good dispositions may be cultivated.⁷

After receiving that communication, Chinese officials made revisions and replied a few days later.⁸ By looking at the two communications, one would think that the dispute over *yi* had been resolved; however, this issue arose again, more than a decade later in the 50th article of the Sino-British *Treaty of Tientsin* 天津條約 that ended the Second Opium War. It stipulates:

It is agreed that, henceforward, the character “P” 夷 (barbarian), shall not be applied to the Government or subjects of Her Britannic Majesty in any Chinese official document issued by the Chinese Authorities either in the Capital or in the Provinces. (Inspector General of Customs 1973, 419)⁹

The signing of the treaty, however, did not resolve the disputes between the two sides over the use of *yi*.

The Qing court did not stop using *yi*. In the correspondence between the emperor and ministers, the number of times the British were called “British barbarians” stayed consistent with previous usages of the phrase

(Jia 1979c). On 25 July 1858, thirty days after the signing of the treaty, the character *yi* was again employed to describe foreigners. This can be found in a decree that was printed in the *Peking Gazette*.¹⁰

The **Barbarian**, on this occasion, had come headlong with their ships up to Tien-tsing: moved by the commands of Kweiliang and his colleague, signified to them with affectionate earnestness they have now weighed anchor and stood out to sea.¹¹

James Bruce (1811–1863), the 8th Earl of Elgin and 12th Earl of Kincardine, was infuriated and regarded the usage of *yi* as confirmation of China's reluctance to abandon their vain pretensions of superiority to other states.¹² He protested with the Imperial Commissioners Kweiliang 桂良 (1785–1862) and Huashana 花沙納 (1806–1859)¹³ that their use of the term “barbarian” was a breach of the treaty. His Chinese counterparts replied:

With respect to the use of the word “barbarian” on the impropriety of which the letter under acknowledgment remarks, it will be our duty at once to move His Majesty to direct the attention of the different public offices in the capital to the circumstance, and so to ensure the discontinuance of the use of this character for the time to come.¹⁴

This should be read as a friendly response from the Chinese side. But, when translating this communication, Thomas Wade, then Chinese Secretary of the British legation, added a note at the end to remind Elgin that “[t]he same sort of promise has been made to remonstrances on the same subject by one Commission after another, at Canton.”¹⁵

The main reason for Wade's remonstrance was the Qing official's perfunctory attitude over this issue. On 20 July 1852, John Bowring (1792–1872), Her Britannic Majesty's Plenipotentiary and Superintendent of Trade, complained about a proclamation that was issued by the district magistrate of Nanhae, because the term *yi* was used when referring to foreigners.¹⁶ Regarding the employment of this term as “offensive and calculated to humiliate and annoy,”¹⁷ Bowring addressed a remonstrance to Pihkwei 柏貴 (1793–1859), who was in acting charge of the government of Canton:

From time immemorial the word *E* has been a general designation for various tribes inhabiting the borders of the Empire of China, all

nominally, and many actually subjected to it as dependencies and all again to a more or less degree inferior to it in civilization and power. The classical and historical works of the country made this point indisputably clear.¹⁸

Thus, he lectured the Chinese Commissioners:

By the *Treaty of Peace* China entered into commercial obligations with England as an equal and friendly power and at the same time bound herself to abstain from any policy at all inconsistent with the new international relations of the two countries.¹⁹

At the end of this communication, he requested the prohibition of using the term, adding that “H. M. government will consider the continued use of any such terms as a matter not to be passed over or forgotten.”²⁰ In response, Pihkwei stated that he was truly ashamed and confessed his illiteracy and ignorance. He claimed that he never applied himself to study—nor paid any attention to the classics, histories, or dictionaries—therefore, he was completely unaware that the character *yi* bore such an offensive and annoying signification.²¹

The Governor was obviously making excuses. For an educated official, it was unlikely that he was ignorant of the character *yi* and of the many years of discord between Britain and China over the term. Nevertheless, he did offer this solution:

That such is the case, I now learn for the first time. It only remains for me for the future to command all the local authorities, when penning proclamations or official documents of any kind, to do away with the character *E*, where its employment may be thought necessary, and to substitute some other term in its place.²²

But the Governor's measures never went beyond that missive and because of this, Wade became increasingly annoyed. In his translation of Chinese documents that he was working on for Bowring in 1857, Wade (1857, para. 10) complained, “We are styled in all the papers, barbarians, devils, barbarian devils, or rebellious barbarians.”

This complaint was published in the Government Notifications of the British colony in Hong Kong. Like many of his compatriots in China,²³ Wade did not think that the Chinese were superior to the British. He (1850,

85) seemed to incur negative beliefs about the Chinese during his time in China and his annoyance can be seen in his work:

A Chinese is a short-sighted utilitarian: industrious and gain-seeking, he strives assiduously to accomplish his object; this achieved, he does not trouble himself about cause or effect; and it may be added, that, in the present day, were his interest to incline him to an examination of principles, the tenuity of his intellect is such, that a difficulty, quickly to be solved by the reason of a European, would be beyond the grasp of his comprehension.

It is not difficult to understand that Wade's translation was a means to articulate his objections whenever his countrymen were described as barbarians.

In essence, Wade's frequent remonstrance about the term *yi* between 1857 and 1859 was related to the British gunboat diplomacy at that time.²⁴ During the Second Opium War, Wade held an unflinching attitude towards China. Even at the risk of breaking the Foreign Office's consulate regulations,²⁵ he asked Bowring's permission to write to Sir Howard Douglas (1776–1861)²⁶ and his father's friends at the Horse Guards (troops of the regiment of the British Army) to urge the sending of troops.²⁷ On the Chinese side, Wade was regarded as a notorious barbarian and singled out, along with his partner Harry Parkes (1828–1885),²⁸ as scapegoats for the Qing officials' failure in getting Elgin to comply with the peace terms. When the negotiations were in the final stages and as Wade and Parkes continued to drive home Elgin's demands, He Jing 何璟 (1817–1888), a Qing official, engaging in a bit of futile rhetoric, remarked bitterly:

Of all the foreigners **Wade** and Parkes are the most deceitful. They have evil plans known to all. We should imprison Elgin as a hostage and behead Parkes and **Wade** before they can do more damage. Letting them go would be like letting the tiger go back to the mountain. (Cooley 1981, 38)²⁹

In this hostile context, it is not difficult to understand Wade's frequent remonstrances about the Chinese use of *yi*.

3. Justifying the Qing Government's Use of Yī

On 22 May 1861, when translating a court document for the British legation in Peking, Wade took a different stance towards the Chinese use of *yī*. The document was directed to the High Commissioners, which included officials as well as the emperor's uncle, the Prince of Hwei, who were appointed to report on the regulation of interactions with foreign nations.³⁰ The original passage involving *yī* is as follows:

……口岸較多，事務更繁，誠恐該督曾國潘兼司其事、非特鞭長莫及，並慮未能諳悉夷情。(Jia 1979c, 2676–2677)

Wade made the following translation:

...it is much to be feared that with the increase of business so many ports will bring, Tsang Kwoh-fan will find, if he have [*sic.*] to add to his functions [as governor general, those of imperial commissioner], not only that he has more on his hands than he can manage [lit. that his whip, though long, does not reach far enough], but, which is another source of apprehension, that he cannot keep himself fully informed of **barbarian affairs**.³¹

Wade translated *yī* as “barbarian,” but he added a note after the translation, “I incline to believe that the word barbarian was here introduced by mistake.”³² He further added, “...throughout the paper the word foreign is rendered either by ocean, or, outer nation, that is foreign nation.”³³

This is strange when compared to Wade's previous attitude. With careful analysis of the original text and translation, it appears that Wade skipped the opening paragraph of the memorial and instead translated the remaining paragraphs. It is thereby necessary to present the opening paragraph of the aforementioned memorial:

竊為(惟)夷情之強悍……夷禍之烈極矣。論者引歷代夷患為前車之鑒……自古禦夷之策……各夷以英國為強悍……至夷兵入城……該夷退回天津……是該夷並不我土地人民……是今日之禦夷……今該夷雖非……此次夷情猖獗……夷人乘我虛弱……英國志在通商，暴虐無人理……(Jia 1979c, 2674–2675)

I consider the aggressiveness of **barbarian affairs**...the severe **scourge caused by the barbarians**.... The commentators have taken the **harm**

inflicted by barbarians in the past as a warning example.... From ancient times, the strategy for **controlling the barbarians**.... Among **various barbarians**, the English are the most aggressive.... Until the **barbarian troops** entered the city.... **The barbarian in question** retreated to Tientsin.... While **the barbarian in question** didn't take a favorable attitude toward our land and people.... As regards the strategy to **control the barbarians** nowadays...**the barbarian in question** is not.... On this occasion, **the barbarians** are on the rampage.... **The barbarians** take advantage of our weakness.... The British purpose is to gain commercial profit... they are extremely brutal, explosive and tyrannical...³⁴

Judging from the section that Wade did not translate, it is unquestionable that Wade's statement "throughout the paper the word foreign is rendered either by ocean, or, outer nation, that is foreign nation"³⁵ exhibits a sense of self-deception. In his untranslated part, *yi* appeared twelve times, including but not limited to *yiqing* 夷情, *yihuo* 夷禍, *yihuan* 夷患, *yuyi* 禦夷, *geyi* 各夷, *yibing* 夷兵, *gaiyi* 該夷 and *yiren* 夷人. Not only was the term "barbarian" applied to the British but they were described as "extremely brutal, explosive and tyrannical."

It is strange that Wade chose to defend the Qing officials and explained that the word "barbarian" was written by mistake. This is inconsistent with his longstanding attitude towards *yi*. Ostensibly, he was trying to convince his superior James Bruce that the Qing government was no longer using the word *yi* and took a more friendly attitude towards the British. Wade was successful in convincing Bruce and, after reading Wade's translation, Bruce enclosed it with his own letter to the British Foreign Secretary, John Russell (1792–1878). In the letter, he commended that the missive was a very businesslike document and was written in good spirits. More importantly, he made the following commendation:

It proves the revolution [of the Chinese] in the manner of dealing with these questions, that is the consequence of the late extension of relations, and which will lead with patience and time to very important results which could never have been attained otherwise.³⁶

If Wade had presented a translation that had included all of the references that the British were barbarians, it would have been improbable that Bruce would have approved of what appeared to be the Qing government's determination in reforming and establishing friendly Sino-British relations.

Wade was careful in his translations when acting as a liaison between Britain and China. In addition to justifying the Qing government's use of *yi*, Wade also excused the Qing government in another translation.

The original decree and Wade's translation are as follows:

京師設立總理各國通商事務衙門，著即派恭親王奕訢、大學士桂良、戶部左侍郎文祥管理，並著禮部頒給欽命總理各國通商事務關防。(Jia 1979c, 2692)

We command Yih Sin, Prince of Kung, the Chief Secretary of State, Kweiliang and Wansiang, Vice President of the Board of Revenue, to take chief charge of **the office established in the capital for the general administration of the commercial affairs* of the different nations.** We also command the Board of Ceremonies to issue to it a seal bearing the words *kwan fang* (seal) of the office administering under imperial authority the commercial affairs of the different nations.³⁷

*The words “commercial affairs” were omitted in the Decree subsequently issued.³⁸

The original is from the imperial edicts dated 20 January 1861. Wade translated *Zongli Geguo Tongshang Shiwu Yamen* 總理各國通商事務衙門 into “the office for the general administration of the commercial affairs of the different nations.” This translation is generally consistent with his first translation of *Zongli Geguo Shiwu Yamen* 總理各國事務衙門, which he translated as “court for the general direction of the commercial business of the different nations.”³⁹ The discrepancy lies in his addition of a note after “commercial affairs.” He reminded Bruce that “the words ‘commercial affairs’ were omitted in the decree subsequently issued.”⁴⁰

This annotation is important because the term “commercial affairs” is significant in Sino-British negotiations. After the second Opium War, one of the biggest issues was the British Minister's residence in Peking; for the Qing, who avowed themselves as the Celestial Empire under Heaven, this was intolerable. This was because, in the emperor's perception, only dependencies paying tribute could stay in the capital, and never had envoys been allowed to reside in the capital (Jia 1979a). The Qing court therefore intended to delegate a commissioner to Tientsin to handle commercial affairs (Jia 1979c). This appointment shows that the Qing still wanted to treat diplomatic affairs as commercial affairs. Upon seeing the decree, Bruce reported it to Russell:

It induced me to look with suspicion on the proposal to name commissioners for the settlement of commercial questions, by which term your lordship is aware the Chinese government designate their relations with foreign countries.⁴¹

At this juncture, Wade was sent as a representative of the British legation to negotiate with Prince Kung 恭親王 (1833–1898) and Wensiang 文祥 (1818–1876).⁴² During their negotiations, Prince Kung petitioned the emperor to establish a *yamen* 衙門 for handling affairs with foreign countries (Jia 1979c). But the words *tongshang* 通商 were inserted into the official title of this *yamen* in the decree on 20 January 1861 (Jia 1979c).⁴³ Wade was dissatisfied and reminded Prince Kung and Wensiang “on the inexpediency of inserting the words *t’ung shang*, commercial intercourse.”⁴⁴ After several rounds of negotiations, Prince Kung agreed to petition the emperor to omit the words and the emperor finally agreed (Jia 1979c). Undoubtedly, Wade’s efforts to facilitate the omission should not be overlooked.

More importantly, he used his translations as a buffer between the two sides. For instance, when he translated the office’s name for the second time in the same decree, something changed:

The original:

著各該督撫會同崇厚、薛煥派員管理，所有各國照會及一切通商事宜，隨時奏報，並將原照會一併呈覽；一面咨行禮部，轉咨總理各國通商事務衙門。(Jia 1979c, 2692)

Wade’s translation:

Let the chief authorities of the provinces in which they lie in concert with Tsung Hau and Sieh Hwan, appoint deputies to manage [the revenue] and from time to time report the correspondence of the different nations and everything that relates to commercial intercourse, forwarding the original of the [foreign] despatches received, and at the same time communicating with the Board of Ceremonies, which will in turn communicate with **the office for the superintendence of Foreign affairs**.⁴⁵

It was apparent that *Zongli Geguo Tongshang Shiwu Yamen* was translated into “the office for the superintendence of **Foreign affairs**.” Wade removed “commercial affairs” and replaced it with “foreign affairs.” Although he did explain that the words “commercial affairs” were omitted

in the decree subsequently issued, the document he translated was not the subsequent one and the Qing government only agreed to omit *tongshang* 通商 (commercial affairs) but did not insert *waijiao* 外交 (foreign affairs).

On the other hand, Wade's translation of "the office for the superintendence of Foreign affairs" is appropriate because, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* in the mid-nineteenth century,⁴⁶ the English adjective "foreign" meant "designating a land or country other than one's own; not in one's own land or country; situated abroad or overseas," (*Oxford English Dictionary*, n.d., "foreign, adj., n.2, and adv.") and the adjective "diplomatic" meant "of, pertaining to, or concerned with the management of international relations; of or belonging to diplomacy" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, n.d., "diplomatic, adj. and n."). Wade's use of "foreign" is fitting because *geguo* 各國 refers to countries outside China, and he explained that the words "commercial affairs" were omitted in the decree subsequently issued. It is a clever translation because not only could it correspond to *geguo*, but it also created a space for building dialogue between the Qing and British governments.

Whatever the interpretation of Wade's translation, it is not difficult to find that Wade's strategy was to decouple the phrase "commercial affairs." This decoupling would contribute to a cessation of the dispute over the Qing government's use of commercial affairs to replace diplomatic affairs. As a consequence, sustaining peaceful Sino-British relations became his priority. Wade's translation suggests an attempt to open a space for peaceful negotiations between China and Britain, and he was successful. After reading Wade's translation, Bruce praised the document as written in good spirits,⁴⁷ without further complaints about the Chinese use of the term "commercial affairs."

Wade's changing stance on the translations of *yi* and *tongshang* coincides with improvements in Sino-British relations. With the end of the war and the signing of the Convention of Peking, China and Britain were able to get back to a long-lost period of peace. As Bruce argued, "Our objects in China are best promoted by peace; we don't want territory."⁴⁸ In other words, the British authorities desired to live on good terms with the Qing government, acting as friends instead of enemies.⁴⁹ The British motivation behind this is clear: at this stage, the British priority was to supervise the Qing government's fulfillment of the treaty; just as Bruce noted, "Now treaties will only work smoothly when friendly relations exist...."⁵⁰ Wade was therefore sent to Peking in 1861 to negotiate with

Prince Kung and other high-ranking officials. He was responsible for letting the Qing officials know that:

We (the British) are not the fierce and violent barbarians, that we have been represented as being, and that the residence of minister and amicable intercourse with him, are the “*sine qua non*” of friendly relations.⁵¹

Apart from that, Wade was also told:

It is a great point to produce a belief in the Peking mind, of our being reasonable beings, and desirous of acting in a spirit of moderation and courtesy....When we have a point to carry, we should be impressively firm and earnest, not violent.⁵²

Wade's statements were reflected in Bruce's decision to make his journey to Peking with as few military personnel as possible. Bruce intended to only take a limited number of men to protect his baggage while on the road,⁵³ because he believed that the Chinese ought to gladly avail themselves of his plan of going as a civilian.⁵⁴ A series of Bruce's actions were in stark contrast to when he was unruly and explosive during the war (Jia 1979b).

Wade's attitude during the negotiations with Prince Kung was also different from the arrogance he displayed during the war. Instead, Wade used his knowledge of the Chinese language to establish good relations with Qing officials. When Prince Kung expressed a desire to understand English poetry, Wade undertook to write a Chinese version of “Auld Lang Syne” and “Childe Harold's Farewell to His Page” for him (Rennie 1865, 223). Wade also struck up conversations that surrounded the usual Mandarin small talk about foreign people, foreign countries, and foreign languages.⁵⁵ He also spoke with the officials about worshipping Confucius,⁵⁶ the difference between Confucianism and Christianity,⁵⁷ and even quoted aphorisms in the *Book of Changes* (*Yi Jing* 易經)⁵⁸ and *The Analects of Confucius* (*Lun Yu* 論語).⁵⁹ Because of the close rapport, he even played a critical role in the establishment of the *Tongwen Guan* 同文館 (The School of Combined Learning). To a certain extent, he encouraged the Qing government to give up the idea of employing Chinese as foreign language teachers because he helped the *Tongwen*

Guan solve the teaching problem by recommending J. S. Burdon (1826–1907) to be the first teacher (Wong 2011a).

It should be noted that the attitude of some Chinese officials also changed during the negotiations; even Prince Kung became relatively open. For example, when Baron de Méritens, a French diplomat residing in Peking, jokingly asked him if he considered the French to be barbarous, he replied, “I never thought so, because, having no acquaintance with your true character, I had no fixed opinion; but now, most certainly, I do not” (Rennie 1865, 182). Apart from being more moderate to Westerners, Prince Kung was committed to improving Sino-British relations. He petitioned the emperor to establish the *Zongli Geguo Tongshang Shiwu Yamen* and encouraged the Chinese to learn foreign languages (Jia 1979c).

Wade’s translation strategy matched these friendly exchanges between China and Britain. After all, as a negotiator, it was his priority to ensure that Sino-British relations were stable. Wade was, officially, an interpreter of the British legation; however, in practice, he shouldered the responsibility of a diplomat as he was a representative of the British government and responsible for negotiating post-war Sino-British relations. In other words, he was an interpreter as well as a diplomat at this stage in his career.⁶⁰

Whether for *yi* or *tongshang*, Wade adjusted his translation strategy in order to encourage the friendly development of Sino-British relations. In terms of his personal interests, he was protecting the fruits of his negotiations in Peking, because this diplomatic achievement was conducive to his promotion. As a result, Wade’s aptitude and abilities in his interactions with Chinese authorities earned him a promotion when John Russell paid a well-deserved compliment to Wade by promoting him to the second post in Her Majesty’s mission.⁶¹

4. Using *Yi* as a Bargaining Chip in Diplomatic Negotiations

In 1872, Wade became the British Minister to China and his stance towards *yi* changed yet again (Cooley 1981). After a brief period of peaceful diplomacy, Sino-British relations were deteriorating (Cooley 1981). Faced with negotiating revisions for the treaty, tariffs, and with an audience with the emperor, Wade was frequently stuck in a diplomatic crisis.

On 22 February 1872, during a meeting with Prince Kung, Wade protested that, in the latest edition of the *Code of the Board of Revenue*,

the term “barbarian” was still used and all of the old laws affecting barbarians remained in place.⁶² To that effect, he demanded that a decree be issued to prohibit Chinese subjects from insulting foreigners and published in the *Peking Gazette*. To implement his plan, Wade even composed a draft of the decree in advance and handed it over to Prince Kung and the ministers for inspection. In regard to Wade’s protest, Prince Kung argued that the error was due to the carelessness of the Board of Revenue and that the relevant expression was altered.⁶³

To substantiate his claims, Wade handed over a document to Prince Kung that Wade had had in his possession for seven years; it was a decree issued by the late reigning Hsien Feng 咸豐⁶⁴ in 1860. Wade had obtained the decree from a copyist in 1864 and translated it himself.⁶⁵ Although he had already served as *chargé d’affaires* in 1864, he still translated the decree. It proved that he valued the role that he played by being a translator for Sino-British diplomacy. The original in the decree and his translation are as follows:⁶⁶

Table 1. Original Segments Relating to 夷 夷 in the Decree Issued by Hsien Feng in 1860 and Wade’s Corresponding Translation

Original Segments	Wade’s Translation
……夷人送到刊刻條約，通行各省……	... the barbarians have sent in printed copies of the treaties for circulation in the provinces...
嘆、佛兩夷業經換約退兵……	The English and French barbarians having exchanged treaties and withdrawn their troops.
該夷酋送到刊刻通行各省條約告示……	They, the barbarians in question, have sent in printed copies of the treaties and of a notification for circulation in the provinces...
此次該夷稱兵犯順，擾及京師……	The very capital has been in this instance troubled by these barbarians’ acts of war and rebellion...
全在各省封疆大吏，設法羈縻，於條約外，不得任令另生枝節。	Everything [therefore] will depend upon the ability of the high officers in charge of provincial governments to keep [the barbarians] within bounds.
如該酋等在各省請議詳細章程，仍可於權宜之中，寓限制之意……	...and if the [barbarian] chiefs in the different provinces propose the consideration of more detailed rules, they (the high officers) must still act a spirit of restriction abide in their compromises.

In contrast to defending the official establishment's usage of *yi* as in 1862, Wade translated all the noted *yi* into “barbarian” and no longer gave an explanation. Instead, he accused the official establishment of being in breach of the *Treaty of Tientsin* by continuing to use *yi* to refer to foreigners.⁶⁷ Prince Kung reminded Wade that ten years had passed since that document appeared and that other officers were in power at that time, not the present members of the *yamen*. However, Wade insisted that if his proposal were to be made public, foreigners would not be induced to distrust the Chinese government. As a result of Wade's insistence, Prince Kung agreed to make some concessions.⁶⁸

Both in 1862 and in 1864, Wade either defended the Qing officials' use of *yi* in his translations or chose not to bring attention to the word; however, in 1872, with the deterioration of Sino-British relations, Wade brought the documents containing *yi* that he had collected over a seven-year period and accused the Chinese of not fulfilling their responsibilities under the terms of the *Treaty of Tientsin*. His strategy was using *yi* to gain political leverage at the negotiating table.

5. Conclusion

The development of Sino-British relations reflects the series of choices that were made by Wade during his translations of *yi*. On the surface, his points of view and strategies seem to be contradictory during the three stages that he was acting as an interpreter, an interpreter as a diplomat, and, finally, as a diplomat. However, his goal was the same for the entirety of his service and it was only the application of his translation that changed. His strategies were flexible and pragmatic, and he was quick to adjust to the changes that occurred in Sino-British relations. As mentioned, he utilized his translations to shape friendly Sino-British relations after the war but later used his translations as a weapon to ensure his political leverage at the negotiating table.

Wade, as a case study, shows that each individual translator developed translation strategies based on his or her goals, political standpoint, and historical conditions in which he or she was situated. At each stage of Sino-British exchanges, Wade's translations were affected by politics; Wade had his own political stance and took advantage of his various translations to make a point. Overall, he was successful in meeting his goal by variously applying his translations.

Notes

1. In the following text, *yi* 夷 will be represented as *yi*.
2. For detailed studies on the subject, one may consult Wong (2013); Pines (2002; 2005); Di Cosmo (2002).
3. For a detailed analysis of this argument, see Wong (2012; 2013, 366–368); Zhang (1990).
4. For “Sino-barbarian dichotomy,” see Pines (2005).
5. See Chen (2017, 83–102); Mosca (2020).
6. For a detailed study on Wade’s career development in China, see Ma (2020).
7. General correspondence, China, 12 November 1842, FO 17/58/294–295, British Foreign Office Archive, Public Record Office, London. The word in bold is my emphasis. Unless specifically noted, words or phrases in bold below are my emphasis.
8. Chinese language diplomatic correspondence and other documents, 21 November 1842, FO 682/1975/155, British Foreign Office Archive, Public Record Office, London. The communication wrote that the character “*E*” had been revised and the writers and clerks had been strictly enjoined accordingly.
9. At the time, the British used “*E*,” “*I*” or “*Y*” randomly in their writings.
10. “Elgin to Kweiliang and Hwashana,” 7 September 1858, FO 17/290/211, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London; “Elgin to Malmesbury,” 17 September 1858, FO 17/290/209–210, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
11. “Elgin to Kweiliang and Hwashana,” 7 September 1858, FO 17/290/211, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
12. Ibid.
13. For the sake of historical accuracy, Wade-Giles romanization is used for Chinese officials’ names.
14. “Kweiliang and Hwashana to Elgin,” 9 October 1858, FO 17/291/27, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
15. “Kweiliang and Hwashana to Elgin,” 9 October 1858, FO 17/291/28, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London. The same subject Wade pointed out is as follows:

In July 1845, the use of *yi* by the treasurer of Canton was represented by John Davis, the Plenipotentiary to Keying, Imperial Commissioner. The affair was at once atoned for by the instant withdrawal and cancelment of the document with an apology for the inexperience of the treasurer as to the becoming terms to be employed. On a similar occasion in November 1846, Davis called Keying's attention to the unbecoming language applied to foreigners in a Proclamation by the magistrate of Nanhae, Keying at once expressed his regret that such language should have been used and undertook to issue orders to prevent his repetition. The same course was pursued by then-Governor General and High Commissioner Seu Kwangtsin who in letters dated 6th and 12th November 1849 following acknowledged a similar error and faithfully promised that it should be prevented in future. See "Bowring to Pihkwei," FO 17/191/188–190, enclosure in "Bowring to Malmesbury," 19 July 1852, FO 17/191/156–159, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.

16. "Bowring to Pihkwei," FO 17/191/186–187, enclosure in "Bowring to Malmesbury," 19 July 1852, FO 17/191/156–159, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
17. "Bowring to Pihkwei," FO 17/191/190–191, enclosure in "Bowring to Malmesbury," 19 July 1852, FO 17/191/156–159, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
18. "Bowring to Pihkwei," FO 17/191/187, enclosure in "Bowring to Malmesbury," 19 July 1852, FO 17/191/156–159, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
19. Ibid.
20. "Bowring to Pihkwei," FO 17/191/191, enclosure in "Bowring to Malmesbury," 19 July 1852, FO 17/191/156–159, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
21. Copybooks of Chinese language documents, 27 July 1852, FO 230/75, British Foreign Office Archive, Public Record Office, London; "Seu Kwangtsin and Pihkwei to Bowring," 27 July 1852, FO 17/191/339, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London. It should be noted that *E* means the same thing as *yi*.
22. Ibid.
23. Figures like George Macartney (1737–1806), Henry Ellis (1777–1855), John Davis (1795–1890), Robert Morrison (1782–1834), etc. For their depiction of Chinese as barbarians, see Wong (2013, 366–368).

24. For a detailed study on “gunboat diplomacy,” see Wong (2000).
25. “The Consul will not on any account correspond with private persons on public affairs,” see “Clarendon to Bowring,” 6 March 1857, FO 17/261/161–162, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
26. He was a British army officer and military strategist.
27. “Bowring to Clarendon,” 12 January 1857, FO 17/263/107, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
28. He was then appointed as Chinese Secretary by Elgin.
29. The quotation is directly taken from Cooley’s translation. The original is as follows, see Jia (1979b, 2346):

其發難首禍夷酋中之最刁黠最桀驁者，莫如吧嘎嚙、喊唛嗎二人，其反覆詭詐，陰賊險狠，久已著名……亦必留嚙喇唛等為質，而斬吧嘎嚙、喊唛嗎以絕將來反覆尋釁之根，儻或縱虎還山，為禍無已……
30. “Bruce to Russell,” 23 May 1861, FO 17/352/8, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
31. “Bruce to Russell,” 23 May 1861, FO 17/352/22–23, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
32. “Bruce to Russell,” 23 May 1861, FO 17/352/43, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
33. Ibid.
34. This rough translation is provided by the author.
35. “Bruce to Russell,” 23 May 1861, FO 17/352/43, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
36. “Bruce to Russell,” 23 May 1861, FO 17/352/8–9, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
37. “Bruce to Russell,” 23 May 1861, FO 17/352/11–12, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
38. “Bruce to Russell,” 23 May 1861, FO 17/352/42, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
39. “Wade to Bruce,” 26 January 1861, FO 17/350/264, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London. Wade put “*Tsung-li ko kuo t’ung-shang shih-wu ya-men*” in front of his translation.
40. “Bruce to Russell,” 23 May 1861, FO 17/352/42, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.

41. “Bruce to Russell,” 12 March 1861, FO 17/350/121, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
42. “Bruce to Prince Kung,” 2 January 1861, FO 17/350/138, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London. The given name of Prince Kung was Yixin 奕訢.
43. The *yamen* was officially titled *Zongli Geguo Tongshang Shiwu Yamen* 總理各國通商事務衙門; see Jia (1979c, 2692).
44. “Wade to Bruce,” 26 January 1861, FO 17/350/266, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London. “*T’ung shang*” means the same thing as “*tongshang*.”
45. “Bruce to Russell,” 23 May 1861, FO 17/352/14, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
46. This dictionary’s compiling work began in 1857.
47. “Bruce to Russell,” 23 May 1861, FO 17/352/8, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
48. “Bruce to Wade,” 26 January 1861, FO 17/350/154–155, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
49. Ibid.
50. “Bruce to Wade,” 17 January 1861, FO 17/350/150, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
51. Ibid.
52. “Bruce to Wade,” 17 January 1861, FO 17/350/141, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
53. “Bruce to Wade,” 17 January 1861, FO 17/350/142, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
54. “Bruce to Wade,” 17 January 1861, FO 17/350/143, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
55. “Wade to Bruce,” 11 January 1861, FO 17/350/177, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
56. “Wade to Bruce,” 11 January 1861, FO 17/350/196–197, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
57. “Wade to Bruce,” 23 January 1861, FO 17/350/257–258, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
58. “Wade to Bruce,” 20 January 1861, FO 17/350/228, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.

59. “Wade to Bruce,” 13 January 1861, FO 17/350/257–258, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
60. For more cases of interpreters as diplomats in politics, see Roland (1999).
61. “Russell to Bruce,” 27 January 1862, FO 17/368/17–18, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
62. Chinese Secretary’s Office: Volume H. Chinese Secretary’s Reports, 22 February 1872, FO 233/62, British Foreign Office Archive: Public Record Office, London.
63. Ibid. Prince Kung finally agreed to make some revisions in the *Code of the Board of Revenue*. “Anti-foreign Laws in Penal and Revenue Codes,” 9 March 1872, FO 230/89, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London; “Penal and Revenue Codes Are Being Altered,” 25 March 1872, FO 230/90, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
64. The given name of the Emperor Hsien Feng is Yizhu 奕訢 (1831–1861) and he reigned from 1850 to 1861.
65. Chinese Secretary’s Office: Volume 16. Miscellaneous Papers And Translations. English And Chinese, 12 November 1860, FO 233/88, British Foreign Office Archive: Public Record Office, London.
66. For the original, see Jia (1979b, 2579); for Wade’s translation, see FO 233/88, Translation, 12 November 1860, British Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London.
67. Chinese Secretary’s Office: Volume H. Chinese Secretary’s Reports, 22 February 1872, FO 233/62, British Foreign Office Archive: Public Record Office, London.
68. Ibid.

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