

The Chinese History of Translation in the Framework of Cultural Communication

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Abstract: Understandings and beliefs about translation activities related to a culture constitute the "translation view" of the culture in a specific historical period. And the history of translation is the intercultural practice of culture and the history of intercultural human communication. In the early history of translation, the translation view of the mainstream culture strengthened the image of the cultural center of the Han group including Confucius' canons. By the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty, due to political corruption, people felt disappointed, depressed and helpless in real life and turned to Buddhism for spiritual shelter. Since then, the translation of Buddhist scriptures has been popular. At the end of Ming Dynasty and the beginning of Qing Dynasty, western translation of science and technology emerged, and introduced western spiritual and institutional culture, and new vitality into the development of Han culture.

Keywords: Chinese History of Translation; Framework of Cultural Communication; Translation of Confucian Canons; Translation of Buddhist Scriptures; Translation of Western Science and Technology.

1. Introduction to the Framework of Cultural Communication

Translation inevitably involves cultural communication, which reflect not only how the two cultures view themselves and others, but also how the two cultures view translation. What is translation? Why do you need a translator? How to translate it? What role does translation play in the interaction between culture itself and the other? The answers to these questions reflect a series of understandings and beliefs about translation activities related to a culture, which constitute the "translation view" of the culture in a specific historical period.

The history of translation is the intercultural practice of culture and the history of intercultural human communication. The history of translation tells a story of the struggle between cultures (Peiyao Zhang, 2012:22). Wang Hongzhi (2014:8-10) advocated descriptive discourse mode and the study of cultural history, and he believed that the case should be placed back in the historical background, otherwise it would be impossible to explain why there are such similarities and differences between the original text and the translation.

After the cultural shift, historical studies are keen on cultural narrative, commonly known as "storytelling", ignoring grand narrative and emphasizing micro-history. Scholars of this school are anti-traditional. They are trying to find a balance between "elite and mass, whole and region, center and edge, grand narrative and microscopic deep description" (Xingtao Huang, 2009:2).

Cultural communication refers to the exchange of scientific information between people through the medium of language, writing and technology. Translation involves the collision between the two cultures. Perhaps more key is not to "faithfulness" "smooth" "spirit likeness" and "likeness" but "the original" should be regarded as the target language culture an integral part of the integration of literature, the translator in literary translation is to the specific culture system is a part of literature embodied in another culture system, thus becoming an integral part of the cultural and literary system "(Xingtao Huang, 2009:3).

The possibility of cultural communication or dialogue

depends to a large extent on the effectiveness of translation. Only an ideal "dialogue language" can be constructed, that is, a language that connects "rational cognition" and "aesthetic cognition", so that the East and the West can carry out real cultural communication or dialogues. western language attaches great importance to the "entity", the "process" of Chinese language depending on the "generate", in the translation of Chinese philosophy, "language string" and "multiple definition method" is used in ancient China to the process of interpretation, they overcame the target language well (foreign language) and mismatch between translated language (Chinese).

Chinese translation has a long history and is dependent on its unique social and cultural system. At present, the study of translation history is "undergoing a shift from the recompilation of old texts to the exploration and innovation, from the grand history to the micro-narrative, and from the history of literary translation to the history of cultural communication" (Wensheng Qu, 2018B: 22), which coincides with some viewpoints in sociology and social history.

2. The Chinese History of Translation in the Framework of Cultural Communication

2.1. The Ancient Chinese History of Translation

2.1.1. Translation of Confucian Canons

There are early references to translators in the Confucian Canon *Rites of Zhou · Qiuguan Sikou* (《周礼·秋官司寇》) records: "Xiang Xu is the envoy of barbarians, Rong Di, conveying and interpreting the king's words, in order to make peace with rulers of minorities by marriage ". This is the earliest record of the translator in the Zhou Dynasty. It shows that "Xiang Xu" was the language link between the Son of Heaven and the surrounding nations. Their task was to convey the will and maintain peace, so as to consolidate the rule of the Zhou Dynasty.

Another example is the *Book of Rites · The System of Kings* (《礼记·王制》), which says: "China, Yi, Man, Rong and Di, the people of the five places have different languages and different desires. In order to exchange their ideals, share their appetites, translators emerged. The east is Ji, the south Xiang, the west De Di, the north Yi ". "Ji" " Xiang"" De Di" and " Yi" are the bases for connecting four states set up specifically responsible for the translation work of the staff name. Its purpose is to strengthen the control of the four nations, to consolidate the right power.

It can be seen that translation activities have a strong national will from the very beginning. The translator is the product of the social structure at that time, restricted by the national ideology, and serves to maintain the social system. In this way, translation activities are not only inter-lingual contacts between different ethnic groups, but also involve complex social power relations, which are carried out under the social network restricted by multiple factors. It can be seen that translation is directly involved in the construction of official ideology.

Confucius believed that the gentleman does not have to bow down to the humble occupations such as craft. Translation should be done by the translator. Translation at the level of language conversion is the "last skill" of tools, a craftsman's skill that is not enough to carry Taoism. It is inconsistent with the Confucian value of "the gentleman will be versatile", so it does not have the value of the historical record. This translation view of the mainstream ideology has established the cultural centralism of the Han group and put forward the rationality of the translation practice.

In the early history of translation, the translation view of the mainstream culture made the translators retranslate many subsets of the classics and history, which strengthened the image of the cultural center of the Han group. The translator, as a record of official position, can "appear relatively" because he constructs the image of the other, which is subordinate to the culture. The value of the translator is attached to his official position. In historical events, translators are recorded out of the requirement of narrative integrity, and the value of translators and their translation activities is attached to the historical events in which they participate.

2.1.2. Translation of Buddhist Scriptures

The translation of Buddhist scriptures has a long history and far-reaching influence. At the beginning of the Eastern Han Dynasty, Buddhism was introduced into China. By the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty, the whole society was in turmoil due to political corruption, continuous peasant uprisings and frequent natural disasters. People felt disappointed, depressed and helpless in real life and turned to Buddhism for spiritual shelter. The rulers promoted Buddhism to paralyze the working people and maintain their dominance.

These constitute the social background of the translation of Buddhist scriptures. At that time, the main Buddhist scriptures translators were Dao An, Kumarash, Yanzong, Xuanzang, Sangrui, Huiyuan, Zanning and others. The translation of Buddhist scriptures promotes the translator to make a deep understanding and theoretical summary of translation activities, such as Dao An's "Five loss of origin and three difficulties", Zhi Qian's "Debate on literary and quality", Yanzong's "Eight preparation theory", Xuan Zang's "both the need for truth and the necessity of reflecting the world", and so on. The translation of Buddhist scriptures, a

great event, promoted the development of Taoism, Neo-Confucianism and idealism in the Song Dynasty. In terms of language, it also imported a large number of Buddhist words to China, which provided inspiration and reference for Chinese classical style and literary creation.

In the process of Buddhism development in China, there are both comparison and integration, as well as conflict and rivalry. These indicate that Buddhist culture is not inferior to others in this cultural communication, but has a dialogue with the mainstream Confucian culture in a relatively equal framework. On the surface, the translation of Buddhist scriptures challenges the cultural centralism of the Han people, but in fact, there is no continuous fundamental conflict between the translation of Buddhist scriptures and the mainstream ideology, and Buddhist teachings and translation activities are often used by the mainstream ideology (Lixiang Hou,2016:15).

2.1.3. Translation of Western Science and Technology

Evaluation of science research, including social science and natural science, should be placed in the equally important position, and literature evaluation research of literary evaluation, legal evaluation, foreign evaluation, Marxist literature evaluation, evaluation of natural science and history of translation are a branch of evaluation research.

At the end of Ming Dynasty and the beginning of Qing Dynasty, western translation of science and technology began to be introduced from the West. During the Emperor Wanli period of the Ming Dynasty, with the expansion of European culture, Jesuits on missions came to China, bringing with them western modern scientific knowledge. The mastery of scientific knowledge in China at that time lagged far behind that in the West. Matteo Ricci, a missionary, worked with patriotic scholar officials represented by Xu Guangqi to translate western scientific books on astronomy and calendar, maps of all nations, the theory of ancient objects and geometric knowledge into China, so as to develop science and technology to open up the wisdom of the people, enrich the country and strengthen the people. This tentative cooperative translation, to a certain extent, realized the "understanding" of western science and technology, but failed to achieve the "strong victory".

In view of the relatively small scope and limited influence of the translation activities, coupled with the relatively strong feudal forces, the lack of a social basis for the integration of China and the West, the impact on the social structure is also small, but these translations also guided the direction of nature research in China at that time.

2.2. The Modern Chinese History of Translation

2.2.1. Western Ware Culture

The westernization school, which advocated the "westernized Chinese style", engaged in translation practices aimed at introducing western artifacts culture. The first school of "looking at the world" including Lin Zexu and Wei Yuan, with representative of the westernization movement Hua Hengfang, Xu Shou, worked with missionaries. They translated the western "acousto-optic electrochemical aspects of scientific and technological achievements" in English into Chinese (also called interpretation and writing), in order to learn the advanced western science and technology, represented by gunboats. It was intended to deal with the survival crisis brought by western capitalist powers in the late Qing Dynasty.

Because the western material civilization achievements introduced through translation failed to solve the root cause of the crisis, that is, the backward social structure's containment of advanced productive forces, the crisis of national survival has not been lifted, but also tends to deteriorate.

According to Holloway and Anloger, when translating Chinese texts, one must try to avoid what Whitehead called "the Fallacy of the Perfect Dictionary", namely, the belief that there exists a perfect semantic base, based on which one can find word-to-word correspondence between words and meanings, and describe the diversity and depth of our experience. In the sense of cross-cultural communication, it is believed that those major terms that dominate western culture are not sufficient to translate philosophical texts belonging to another cultural tradition.

This "fallacy of the perfect dictionary" is the product of an analytical bias aimed at singularity. In fact, the translation of various Chinese terms into western languages is rarely a simple word-to-word correspondence, nor is the translation of western terms into Chinese. The vocabulary established earlier to translate ancient Chinese texts into western languages is now in dire need. western substance-oriented languages cannot be translated for description and interpretation like Chinese process-oriented languages. It can be concluded that the study of translation history should abandon the dualistic opposition of structuralism and no longer separate concepts such as people and things, famous and nameless, Chinese and foreign languages, time and space (Dengshan Xia, 2017:185)

2.2.2. Western Institutional Culture

Wang Hongzhi (2014:7) believes that "the scope of translation history research can cover a wide range, which should not only be limited to literary translation, but also conclude individual cases of scientific translation history, including religion, politics, law, education, ideology, economy and other aspects". Translation and politics, especially translation and institutional transplantation, is a fascinating field of study. Translation is considered to be a very political activity (Hongzhi Wang, 2000:1).

The translation practice of the reformists, represented by Yan Fu, a modern ideologist, aims to introduce western institutional culture. The disastrous defeat in the Sino-Japanese Naval Battle of 1894-1895 declared the complete failure of the westernization movement, further deepening the national crisis and further aggravating the degree of semi-colonial and semi-feudalism. This national crisis of "subjugation and extinction" made the overseas intellectuals represented by Yan Fu realize that the reason why the West advanced was not only in science and technology, but also in the construction of their social system.

To awaken the upper intellectuals and the feudal bureaucratic, and also change a corrupt political system, Yan Fu translated *Evolution and Ethics and other Essays* into *theory of natural selection* (《天演论》). He publicly promoted the social evolution theory of "survival of the fittest" and advocated top-down reform of the feudal system. Together with other western works of social science and law translated later, including *Original Wealth* (《原富》), etc., they constitute the famous "Eight Great Works of Yan Fu's Translation".

Represented by the *theory of natural selection*, Yan Fu's translation had a great impact on the social consciousness at that time and for a long time afterwards, forcing the Qing

government to launch a self-saving reform movement, which in a certain sense played an important role in actively reforming the feudal social structure. It is worth mentioning that Yan Fu's "three difficulties in Translation: faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance", as the standard to measure the quality of translation, has been regarded as the standard, which has won a lot of social capital for Yan Fu and established his important position in the history of Chinese translation theory.

Translation plays an increasingly important role in serving society, politics and the public. With the translation and dissemination of *the Communist Manifesto*, the socialist trend of thought was introduced into China and gradually deeply rooted in the people's hearts. The official establishment of the Communist Party of China completely changed the fate of China. The early translators had rich translation practice, learned new theoretical knowledge, made great contributions to the cultural construction of new China, and promoted the comprehensive development of socialist economy, politics and culture.

2.2.3. Western Spiritual Culture

Western modern philosophical language has formed a certain spiritual connection with poetic Chinese, which indicates that the "synthesis" of the East and the West is in the process of steady and smooth realization, and is moving toward the "harmonious" state of "cultural communication" in diversified forms.

The translation of Buddhist Scriptures not only initiates the first translation climax in the history of Chinese translation, but also greatly enriches and develops the Chinese language and culture. At the time of the Han Dynasty, Buddhism was introduced into our country. At that time, the domestic environment was quite chaotic, social unrest and war and chaos, and various cultural thoughts are easy to spread. In the process of spreading Buddhism, translation plays an important role. The translation of Buddhist scriptures is an important event in Chinese history. It originated in the Han Dynasty, reached its peak in the Tang Dynasty and ended in the Song Dynasty. It has a history of more than one thousand years.

Buddhist translation has brought new culture and new thoughts to the ancient civilization of China and injected new vitality into the development of Han culture. With the promotion of the translation of Buddhist scriptures, the translation of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese has exerted a great influence on all fields of Chinese culture, literature, writing, art, medicine and other fields to varying degrees.

In the late Qing Dynasty, literary translators represented by Lin Shu engaged in translation practices aimed at introducing western spiritual culture. Considering the social background of the late Qing Dynasty, it was somewhat of a heresy for the ancient writer Lin Qinan, who did not know English, to translate a large number of western literary works, such as *The Remains of the La Traviata in Paris*, into China in cooperation with Wei Yi and others. However, it is not difficult to find Lin Shu's original insight in advance by using novels to enlighten and inspire people's minds, and to resist the pressure of western powers by transforming people's minds. This also makes him as famous as Yan Fu.

In modern China, the current situation of domestic troubles and foreign invasions forced people with vision to actively seek a way to resist foreign insults and save the country. Driven by this movement, the translators are always in the forefront of transforming backward social consciousness

through ideological guidance. Although constrained by the powerful internal feudal forces and external powers, this series of translation operations did not fundamentally change the semi-colonial and semi-feudal social structure of China at that time. However, the purpose of these translations was to "To learn the advanced military technology from the foreigners and use it to fight with them". And they introduced the achievements of western advanced science and technology, political and social systems, spiritual thoughts and other aspects into China as translation objects, making great efforts to transform and even overthrow the social structure at that time.

3. Conclusion

There were three major waves of translation in ancient China: Buddhist scriptures translation from the Eastern Han Dynasty to the Tang and Song Dynasties, missionary translation in the late Ming and early Qing Dynasties, and the translation of the eastern science and technology in the late Qing Dynasty. The translation of Buddhist scriptures not only triggered the first translation climax in the Chinese history of translation, but also greatly enriched and developed the Chinese language and culture, making positive contributions to the construction and innovation of the Chinese language and culture. At the same time, by discussing the role of Buddhist translation in Chinese language and culture, we have a clearer understanding that Buddhist translation is not only the conversion of different language symbols, but also the conversion of cultural information carried by one language into another language and culture. This activity constantly promotes the spread of culture, thus promoting the mutual integration and exchange between different cultures.

Matteo Ricci, a missionary, worked with patriotic scholar officials represented by Xu Guangqi to translate western scientific books on astronomy and calendar, maps of all nations, the theory of ancient objects, and geometric knowledge into China, so as to develop science and technology to open up the wisdom of the people and enrich the country and strengthen the people. In the late Qing Dynasty, translators of western learning introduced the achievements of advanced western science and technology, political and social systems, spiritual thoughts and other aspects into China as translation objects, and made great efforts to reform and even overthrow the social structure at

that time.

"Translation" is a creative activity in which all kinds of information expressed in one language can be completely and exactly expressed in another language. It is a bridge between two languages and a communicative behavior responsible for cultural transmission. Wang Jiankai believes that to do a good job in the study of Chinese translation history, translation studies should be "placed in the context of social processes and cultural communication" (Jiankai Wang, 2007:57).

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