

A Brief Introduction to Xuanzang's View of Translation

Jiachuan He

School of Foreign Language, Southwest Petroleum University, Chengdu 10500, China

Abstract: The translation of Buddhist scriptures was the first translation climax in Chinese history, and Xuanzang is one of the representative scripture translators who cannot be left out. As a famous monk of the Tang Dynasty, Xuanzang was also one of the four major translators of Buddhist scriptures from Chinese Buddhism in China. His life was full of legends, and he left a colorful stroke in the history of Buddhist scripture translation, and made a significant contribution to the translation of Buddhist scriptures in China. The quality and quantity of his translation achievements are rare in ancient and modern times, and his translation views in the process of translation of Buddhist scriptures have also deeply influenced modern translation theories. This paper gives a brief introduction of the translation theory and Xuanzang's life.

Keywords: Xuanzang, Translation theory, Buddhist scripture translation.

1. Introduction

Buddhism is one of the three major religions in the world, which was founded by Sakyamuni in ancient India from the 6th century to the 5th century BC. As a teenager, Sakyamuni had his own views on the world, felt that the world was full of changes, and thought about how to get rid of the misery. He became a monk at the age of 29. After becoming a Buddha, he constantly preached and publicized the truth he realized. With his efforts, the believers around Sakyamuni gathered more and more, and then he organized a religious order to form Buddhism. Buddhism was introduced into China in the Han Dynasty, and its doctrine was highly respected by the ruling class at that time because it was conducive to consolidating the political power of the ruling class at that time, and Buddhist translation activities also arose. Buddhist translation activities benefit not only the spread and development of Buddhism, but also further promote the progress of translation theory in China. According to Ma Zuyi's A Brief Introduction to the History of Translation in China, the translation history of Buddhist scriptures in China can be roughly divided into four stages. The first stage, from the end of Emperor Huan in the Eastern Han Dynasty to the Western Jin Dynasty, is the initial stage; The second stage, from the Eastern Jin Dynasty to Sui Dynasty, is the development stage; The third stage, Tang Dynasty, is the heyday stage; The fourth stage, Northern Song Dynasty, is the stage of decline. Xuan Zang is one of the best translators. His translation achievements and translation thoughts have deeply influenced the translation field, not only promoting the spread and development of Buddhism in China, but also making commendable contributions to the translation cause.

2. Xuanzang's Translation Theory

Xuanzang (600-664) is one of the most famous " Sanzang Masters. " His original name is Chen Yi. Since childhood, he has been familiar with the Buddhist scriptures, and is an outstanding writer with a high level of Chinese language attainment. At the age of 15, he became a monk and traveled around the world, visiting famous teachers. In the process of seeking Buddhism, he felt deeply confused by the divergent views of various schools and the difficulty of reaching a definitive conclusion. So he decided to go to India to study.

He spent tremendous time and energy studying Buddhism, and his own achievements in Buddhism reached a level that was beyond the reach of ordinary people. After his return to China, he politely refused the request of Emperor Taizong of Tang to return to politics. Instead, he devoted himself to the translation of scriptures, creating a praiseworthy story in the history of Chinese Buddhism translation. Xuanzang himself was proficient in Sanskrit, and had a deep understanding of Buddhist doctrine and Chinese language, so the quality of his translation was surprisingly high. He was able to integrate the doctrines of various schools of thought and to use Chinese syntax and style of expression to form his own words. Xuanzang traveled around India, visited all the great masters, became familiar with different kinds of Buddhist texts, and mastered the Sanskrit syntax, so that he could understand even the subtleties thoroughly. It is thanks to Xuanzang's profound attainment in both Sanskrit and Chinese languages and his deep understanding of the original texts of the Buddha that he was able to translate with ease and comfort, and his translations were all of the highest quality. In the process of translation, Xuanzang put forward the five principles of transliteration.

2.1. Five Principles of Transliteration

Xuanzang's so-called "non-translation" does not mean directly and literally not translating some parts of the text, but rather refers to a guideline of transliteration. He believed that there was no perfect correspondence between the two languages, so he would use transliteration instead of free translations. The "five principles of transliteration" was first recorded in the Southern Song Dynasty in the first volume of Fa Yun's Fanyi Mingyixu. The original text goes like this: "Master Xuanzang applies transliteration when it comes to five situations. First situation is when some words have special meaning. Second, when some words have more than one meaning. Third, when local culture doesn't have equivalent things. Fourth, when some words have specific translations. Fifth, when some words possess extraordinary meaning. Certain words have a special mystery that is difficult to express and can use transliteration. There are many spells in the scriptures, such as "dharani", which have been passed down orally for generations, and the mystical power they embody creates a powerful psychological deterrent. If it was translated into local language, its power may fade during

the process of translation. There are many terms in Buddhism that have a special appeal to Buddhists. So Xuanzang chooses to use transliteration to maintain its power.

Transliteration will be used when encounter with words with multiple meanings, which means Sanskrit with multiple meanings. For example, "Arahant" means "beyond life and death and no longer enter the cycle of reincarnation, Shall be provided for by heaven and mundane world, kill the thief of worries". "Bhikkhu" means "beggar, scaring the demon, destroying all evil." All of these words have more than just one meaning, and whether translating only part of one meaning or all of them will lead to confusion for the reader, so only transliteration can be chosen. If you use free translation, only one of the meanings can be translated in a particular context, and the other meanings will be missing, resulting in an omission of translation. To maintain the fluency of the translation, it is better to leave it as it is and use transliteration.

If the concepts of things that do not exist in the local culture of the target language will use transliteration. For example, the origin of the tree is India, "Yanfu tree" is also known as "Shengjin tree. There is no native Chinese concept of this tree, so the transliteration is used. Similarly, "betel nut", "grape", "watermelon", "jasmine" and "The transliteration of these originally exotic species has been done in a phonetic way to maintain the spirit of the source language culture.

Some words that have been passed down should be translated according to the original custom, such as "Anuttarasamyaksambodhi", although it can be translated again, but it causes confusion and inconsistent situation. The best way is to follow the ancient translations and not to make new translations, such as "Anuttarasamyaksambodhi", which can be translated as "supreme", "righteousness", and "righteousness". "righteousness". Since the Eastern Han Dynasty, translators of Buddhist scriptures have used the transliteration of Sanskrit. Therefore, in Xuanzang's opinion, there is no need to translate such words, and it is more appropriate to keep their translations as agreed. This standard of Master Xuanzang made the translation of Buddhist scriptures more standardized and complete.

Some special words in the sutras have extraordinary meanings, and if translated phonetically can give the reader better access to the most original Buddhism and generate thoughts of reverence. This will prevent the reader of the scriptures from belittling certain words. The best example is the Sanskrit word "Prajna". The meaning of this word is close to that of the Chinese word "wisdom". However, the source word "Prajna" refers to the "great wisdom" that comes after enlightenment. If it is translated as wisdom, it loses much of its color, so Xuanzang uses the transliteration method, which seems more reasonable.

Master Xuanzang's "five non-translation" translation theory is, in principle, the principle of "transliteration". It has a history of more than 1000 years, but in the development of the translation business, it has not been worn out by time. With the development of the times and the change of language, the translation strategy of phonetic translation has also undergone great changes and become more abundant and diverse. From a general point of view, Xuanzang did not stick to free and literal translations, and his "Five Principles of Transliteration" are the most perfect examples. He had a deep knowledge of Sanskrit, and his understanding of the scriptures was one of the best in the world at the time.

However, we should also recognize that Xuanzang's view of transliteration has changed a lot due to the continuous development of the times and language. Although some translations need to be changed nowadays, Xuanzang's theory of "five non-translations" had an important historical status at that time and even now, which solved the untranslatability caused by different cultural differences at that time. It was instrumental in spreading the excellent Chinese culture, and also promoted the exchange and integration of various cultures in the world, and still has important guiding significance for our translation career today.

2.2. The practical significance of Five Principles of Transliteration

The practical application of Xuanzang's theory of "five principles of transliteration" ensured the accuracy of the translation and the beauty of the text, especially in the translation of the sutras, which was accurate in meaning and beautiful in diction compared with the previous translations. In the process of translating the scriptures, it is necessary to follow the principles. The "five principles of transliteration" theory avoids ambiguities in the texts. No one can guarantee that the meaning of the sutras is fully understood, so it is important to avoid ambiguities or generalizations in the translation. Words with multiple meanings in Sanskrit should not be translated, lest one-sided translations lose the meaning of Buddhist scriptures. At the same time, many religious traditions believe that scriptures' spirit can be best perceived if they are read in their own language.

The theory of "five non-reversals" guarantees the solemnity of the sutras. As a text for the instruction of the world. The sutras should be elegant, formal, and dignified, not translated into a popular text, such as the word "Shakyamuni", which can be translated into Chinese as "Neng Ren", but since there are already many "Neng Ren" in the Chinese Confucian Classics. Such a translation would lose the uniqueness and dignity of "Shakyamuni" in the sutras, so a transliteration is used to ensure the solemnity of the original text. If the word "Prajna" is translated as "wisdom", it is a little superficial and loses the elegance of the sutras. "Although Xuanzang's translation of the sutras was a great breakthrough compared to his predecessors, he was not the pioneer of sutra translation and therefore adopted the principle of "no-translation" for some existing words. The sutras are already difficult to understand, and if the vocabulary is repeatedly changed, it will only cause confusion and unclear meaning of the text, which is not conducive to the dissemination or interpretation of the sutras.

The "five principles of transliteration" theory promotes cultural exchange. The use of phonetic translation in the translation of Buddhist scriptures ensures that the meaning of the original text is accurately conveyed to the Chinese language, and that the meaning of the text is not lost due to translation. The words "Bodhi", "arhath" and "Prajna" are all foreign words in Chinese, which started from the sutras but are now well known to the Chinese and do not cause any difficulty in understanding them. This transliteration method preserves the meaning in Sanskrit to the greatest extent, so that Chinese can learn some of the Indian culture and customs of the time while reading the scriptures.

2.3. Good use of translation skills

In Xuanzang's translations, it can be seen that in the process of translation, Xuanzang used many translation techniques.

Amplification. Xuanzang often adds a few words or a sentence or two in order to make readers understand the content of the sutras. So that the reader can have a more thorough understanding of the sutras.

Omission. Xuanzang's translations actually use the treatment of omission not much, and are usually used in not very important ones.

Inversion. Xuanzang's translations sometimes change the order of Sanskrit expressions in order to better convey the message.

Division and combination. Division and combination are to change the order of words in a sentence so that the reader can better understand the connotation of the original text. Xuanzang's translations sometimes changed the order of expression in Sanskrit to better convey the message.

Borrowing. Xuanzang sometimes used another translation to adapt the commonly used specialized terminology, such method can better express the meaning of the translation, so that readers can more deeply understand the content of the original text.

Pronoun reduction method. Xuanzang often converts some pronouns that appear in the original text into the nouns they refer to. The nouns are also preceded by the words "this" and "that", and sometimes not.

2.4. Translation standard that "translation is both true to the original and easy to understand"

In the translation work of Master Xuanzang, he put forward the translation standard of "translation is both true to the original and easy to understand". To seek the truth and to explain the vulgarity is to achieve faithfulness and fluency in the process of translation. This requires, on the one hand, that the translator create a translation at will in the process of translation and detach from the text, resulting in discrepancies between the translation and the original text. On the other hand, it also requires the translator to constantly exert his ability to improve the readability of the translation in the process of translation. The translation standards proposed by Master Xuanzang, which were similar to those expressed in modern translation theories a thousand years ago. The standard is an important guide to our translation activities, and it is also an outstanding representation of theories in ancient Chinese translation history.

3. Characteristics of Xuanzang's Translations

The number of translated scriptures is huge and complete. Xuanzang translated seventy-five Buddhist sutras, with one thousand three hundred and thirty-five volumes. In terms of the total number of sutras translated, it is probably more than half of the total number of sutras translated by monks during the Sui and Tang dynasties in China. This is an unprecedented quantity. Xuan Zang is one of the most important translators of the Chinese Buddhist scriptures. In addition, Xuanzang's translations of Buddhist scriptures are complete and surprisingly informative in content. Xuanzang went to India to seek scriptures and studied under the guidance of Venerable

Shilabhadra. He also studied and integrated the various Buddhist theories. After returning to China in search of the true scriptures, he translated the scriptures of the various schools of Buddhism in India. Master Xuanzang not only brought the classical Buddhist scriptures of India to China, but also brought Indian culture to China and promoted cultural integration.

The government supports the sutra translation business and opens a national translation site. The translation of Buddhist scriptures was carried out with the support of the government. After Xuanzang returned to China from his successful study of Buddhism in India, the emperor continued to provide substantial support for Venerable Xuan Zang's translation of the sutras and his activities in spreading Buddhism, including building monasteries to provide quiet and safe sites for the translation of the sutras, training and providing talents for the translation and spreading of the sutras, expanding the ranks of Buddhist translators, and creating complete sites for the translation of the sutras. After Xuanzang returned to China from India to obtain sutras, he carried out the business of sutra translation and received strong support from Emperor Taizong of Tang. The translation of scriptures was started in Hongfu Temple in Chang'an. In addition, Buddhist scholars were selected nationwide to assist Master Xuanzang in his translations, and a well-organized national translation site was formed. In 645 A.D., Xuanzang had just returned to China and presided over the translation field of Hongfu Temple. Since he was not familiar with domestic translation talents, he reported to Fang Xuanling and other officials of the court to select translation talents. A total of 23 people were selected for Xuanzang's translation field, and these 23 people came from all over the country. It can be seen that the government of the Tang Dynasty was very careful in selecting talents for Xuanzang's translation field, considering not only the knowledge of the talents, but also the different origins of the talents, and the selected translation team was full of talents, which shows that the government attached great importance to the translation work. Later, as the scale of translation continued to expand, the Tang government approved several relocations of Xuanzang's translation site, first to Hongfu Temple, then to Ci'en Temple, Ximing Temple, and finally to Yuhua Palace.

The "New Translation" was created. Xuanzang himself was proficient in both Sanskrit and Chinese, and had an extremely high level of Buddhist attainment. Xuanzang's love for Buddhism contributed to the success of his translation of Buddhist scriptures. In translating the sutras, he was often able to translate the obscure sutras into a readable text with the most appropriate method. In addition, Xuanzang combined literal and free translations, using various methods of translation as appropriate to the meaning of different scriptures, and did his best to translate the sutras into a version suitable for the Chinese. Later translators of the scriptures took Xuanzang as the boundary, and called the Buddhist classics translated before Xuanzang "old translations" and those translated afterwards "new translations". The term "new translation" is a recognition and praise of Xuanzang's translation. Xuanzang was a great translator in ancient times, who not only had high attainments in Chinese and Sanskrit, but also was proficient in Buddhism, "Xuanzang's translation not only preserved the meaning of the original work faithfully, but also did not make it difficult for people to read, in other words, Xuanzang was neither like Yijing who favored literal translation, nor like Kumarajiva who favored free translation,

but was good at combining literal and free translation, thus Xuanzang's translation was known at that time as "New Translation". Different translation methods are used depending on the Buddhist scriptures. The combination of literal and free translations allows the meaning and profound connotation of the sutras to be expressed in a manner that can be easily understood and accepted by the Chinese, facilitating the spread of Buddhism. This also supports Xuanzang's position and achievements in the history of Chinese sutra translation from another perspective.

Adequate knowledge reserve was made before translating the sutras. To translate the sutras, it is necessary not only to have a thorough knowledge and mastery of Indian Sanskrit, but also to have a very deep understanding and thorough knowledge of Buddhist theoretical knowledge and ideological essentials. In order to translate the sutras, Xuanzang made a full preparation of knowledge in all aspects. According to research, Xuanzang began his study and research of Buddhist scriptures by entering a temple at the age of eight, and was formally accepted into the monastery as a full monk at the age of thirteen. At the age of twenty, Xuanzang was admitted to the monastery and became a full-fledged monk. At the age of twenty, Xuanzang was ordained, and at the age of twenty-five, he made a vow to travel to the West to seek scriptures and worship Buddha, and spent nineteen years to realize this idea. He returned to Chang'an at the age of forty-four to translate Buddhist scriptures and at the age of sixty-three, he passed away. Throughout his life, Xuanzang devoted himself to the serious study of Buddhist scriptures and to the translation and promotion of Buddhist scriptures and teachings. He continued to study and master the knowledge of Buddhism, Chinese and Sanskrit, and applied this knowledge to the translation and recitation of the sutras and their promotion throughout the process. Before translating the sutras, not only did he prepare himself with all the required knowledge, but his team of translators also needed to have enough knowledge to be able to translate the sutras. For very specialized knowledge and books, he also hires the most proficient professionals to translate them to ensure the accuracy of the scripture translation.

4. The Modern Significance of Xuanzang's Translation Theory

Chinese translation theories began with the translation of Buddhist scriptures, and in the long history of scripture translation for hundreds of years, the rich experience of translators condensed into a trickle of various theories eventually merged into a great river, which laid a decisive foundation for the creation of modern translation theories. Traditional translation theories are the cornerstone of modern translation theories, so we must construct a treasury of modern translation theories by profound reflections on traditional translation theories. Among the masters of translation, Xuanzang is as brilliant as a star, especially in terms of methodology, which has influenced the later generations extremely far-reachingly. If the principles of his translation theory are placed in modern times, their brilliance can still be seen. The modern translator Yan Fu's principle of "faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance" is a summary and sublimation of the traditional translation theory, and Xuanzang's theory of "true and relevant to the original text, but also needs to be easy to understand" and the "five principles of transliteration" are both ancient and simple in

the modern perspective. It emphasizes both the original meaning of the original text and the effect of the translation. Although Xuanzang's translations are not comparable to the great works of present-day translators, their theoretical essence and intellectual soul have laid a profound foundation for future generations to follow and explore. Throughout his life, his strong will, profound knowledge, and rigorous learning style were the keys to his success, and they are also the key to our remembrance of our ancestors and the benefit of the past.

5. Theoretical Insights from Xuanzang's Translation

The first lesson is that a successful translator must be well prepared with knowledge. At the age of 8, Xuanzang entered a monastery to study Buddhist scriptures, was formally accepted as a monk at the age of 13, received the full ordination at the age of 20, and at the age of 25, vowed to venture into the West to visit the Buddha and seek scriptures. At the age of 44, 19 years after his journey to the West, he returned to Chang'an and translated the sutras for another 19 years before he passed away at the age of 63. He devoted his entire life to studying the sutras and translating and promoting them; thus his entire being was immersed in the Dharma without any worldly distractions. Thus, it was by far the most responsible arrangement for him to preside over the translation field and to translate some of the sutras himself. Xuanzang's 19-year-long journey to the west to seek the Dharma at the risk of his own death was a thorough intellectual preparation for a successful translator. He chose the most proficient person in his field to translate his books, and he persisted for a long time with silent dedication, but never with the participation of laymen. To be "most proficient" means to be as proficient in a particular specialty and in Chinese and foreign languages as Xuanzang was in Buddhism. For example, by translating literature on the basis of proficiency in literature, the translator can avoid mistranslations, omissions, and distortions. The second lesson is that the translation is done in groups to ensure quality. A total of 600 monks were divided into many translation groups, each of which was responsible for the translation of a certain volume of scriptures. Each group first studied the meaning of Sanskrit and then discussed how to express it in Chinese, and the discussion was certainly free and lively. Although the speed of translation was not fast, the quality was absolutely reliable. They would make every effort to understand the meaning of the original text and to express it in the most appropriate Chinese, never changing it because of religious sectarian views or political needs. Many of their translations are made in the form of imitations of Chinese metrical poetry, and they are so well phrased and concise that it is clear that they cannot be successfully translated by one person. By "imitating Chinese metrical poetry," we mean adopting some, but not all, of the rules of Chinese metrical poetry. This is a very important translation inspiration and demonstration. Nan Huaijin said, "The famous Chinese translators of Buddhist scriptures in the past, such as the Indian Kumarajiva and the Chinese Xuanzang, were gifted linguists with profound knowledge of Buddhist practice. However, they had to rely on the full support of the state to set up a translation site where thousands of people gathered to concentrate on translation. The translation was deliberated word by word, and often debated for months before it was finalized. And if, after a

certain period of time, there were still people who thought that the translation was not right, they would translate it again... (Nan Huaijin, 2000) Thus, we can see the way of working and the rigorous attitude of the group translators.

The third lesson is that these monks are saintly monks who are willing to devote themselves to the cause of Buddhism and do not value fame and fortune. Their dedication is more importantly for the sake of leaving a proper path for the transmission of Buddhism to future generations in the right way. The translators do not translate for personal gain, nor do they keep the name of translator, but for the sake of future generations, so that the Dharma can stand the test of history. But how can translators who put fame and fortune above all else have the will to translate the books correctly? In the history of translation of Buddhist scriptures in China, there are many translators, but very few of them are honored as "Tripitaka masters". Among them, the most famous ones are Kumarajiva, Juexian, Xuanzang, and Bukong, who are called the Four Great Translators by historians. Among the four great translators, Kumarajiva and Xuanzang are the most prominent ones. The titles of all the sutras translated by Kumarajiva and Xuanzang are always titled with the words "Tripitaka Dharma Master". These two translators are two of the brightest stars in the world of Chinese sutra translation; first there was Kumarajiva and then there was Xuanzang. Kumarajiva was the leading figure of the old translation era, while Xuanzang was the authority of the new translation era. In contrast, Xuanzang's translation was richer and more profound, while the scope of his translation was wider than that of Xuanzang. It is interesting to note that Kumarajiva's translation was a little more comprehensibly than Xuanzang's. Zhang Peiji says that there are only three great translators in the Buddhist world: Hatamurash, Zenith, and Xuanzang. (Zhang Peiji, 2009) In any case, there are many Chinese monks, but only one famous Chinese translator of Buddhist scriptures, Xuan Zang, which is a shame for the Chinese. However, without master Xuanzang, the Chinese would be even more ashamed. It is worth mentioning that the Sanskrit sutras were written on a long leaves of a tree in India, which is very difficult to preserve. According to Jingkong, after the translations were completed, the Bodhisattva-level translators were so confident that their translations were so precise that they could fully express the Buddha's thoughts that they simply kept the Chinese translations and abandoned the preservation of the original Sanskrit works. This kind of confidence is far from that of modern translators, who are very greedy and have no bodhisattva's mind. Therefore, the quality of the translations in the field of thought and literature and art really depends on the translator's spirituality and academic attainment rather than on his social status and title. From the perspective of translation alone, this long-lasting, 19-year-long translation campaign organized by Xuanzang in Chang'an is the only one in the long history of China and the

world that was so grand, so serious, so important, and so creative. It was clearly the largest, truly world-class, and highest-level dissemination and propagation of the Buddha's teachings that people intoxicated by scientific religious beliefs could not understand, comprehend, believe, or accept.

6. Conclusion

Xuanzang's life was full of legends, his love for Buddhism, and his achievements in the translation of Buddhist scriptures speak for himself. As a monk, he was well versed in the Buddhist dharma and universal understanding of all beings; as a translator, he worked diligently to deliver masterpieces for the ages; as a scholar, his attitude of examining and seeking knowledge was marvelous. What Xuanzang has left us is not only the huge number of volumes of scriptures, but also the courage to seek truth in the face of the unknown and the seriousness and prudence of his work in translating the scriptures. These treasures are spiritual sustenance and nourishment for all of us language learners. Xuanzang's thoughtfulness in the translation business is also admirable. Xuanzang has left a strong and colorful legacy on the translation business in China, and his ideas have not faded and still shine in the flood of time. Xuanzang's deeds and ideas still have far-reaching significance for guiding the practitioners of translation today. As an epoch-making figure in the history of Chinese sutra translation, Xuanzang's contribution to translation has been outstanding and famous for thousands of years, both from the perspective of translation practice and translation theory. With the combined effect of internal and external factors, his translation career is of profound significance to the inheritance and promotion of traditional Chinese and Buddhist culture.

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