

Missionary Translator Robert Morrison

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Abstract: Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary coming to China in the 19th century, has translated a large number of works in China for 25 years and made remarkable achievements in Sino-west cultural communication. This paper analyzes his specific translation methods adopted in his various translation works, such as literal translation, free translation, literal translation in combination with free translation, and the combination of translation and interpretation, and studies the cultural influence of his translation works. Morrison is indeed a representative figure in the cultural exchange between China and the West.

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of science and technology in the 19th century, the cultural exchanges between China and the West had become increasingly active in that period. Europeans came to China for different purposes. Some western works have been translated into Chinese, and some Chinese classics also began to be translated into English. The main translators are missionaries. They have made great contributions to the cultural exchanges between China and the West. Among them, Morrison is the first missionary to spread Protestantism in China in the 19th century. His translation achievements are particularly outstanding, eye-catching and noteworthy, becoming the link between the past and the future between China and the west, which is worthy of in-depth study.

2. Morrison's Translation Achievements

Morrison's cultural influence penetrates through the layers of history and lasts for a long time. He produced the first Chinese version of English Bible, spreading the Gospel of Christ in China. He founded Anglo-Chinese College, compiled magazines, and published an important Chinese-English dictionary, "A Dictionary of the Chinese Language". Mr. Morrison's translation career and his missionary work complement each other and interweave his rich life history.

Morrison was not only a British missionary who first set foot on Chinese soil in the 19th century, but also a knowledgeable translator. He has made great achievements in the translation of Chinese classics. Morrison's translation works cover a wide range of subjects. First, according to the content, his translated texts can be divided into Chinese classics, such as "The Three-Character Classic", "The Great Science", "Account of the Sect TAO-SZU", etc. , reports about the current affairs published in newspapers and magazines, and all kinds of folk popular works.

2.1 Translation Achievements in Western Culture

Morrison was the first person to translate the Bible into Chinese. Shortly after he came to Guangzhou City, China, he began to translate the Bible, which took him 12 years to translate into Chinese all the Bibles of the New Testament and the Old Testament. From 1810 to 1812, he spent only three years translating "Acts", "Luke and John". The completion of the Chinese translation of the Bible has greatly promoted the spread of Christianity in China, which serves as a bridge between Chinese and western languages and cultures, and stimulates the growth of China's modern publishing industry.

When it comes to Morrison, "A Dictionary of the Chinese Language" is unavoidable. This is a set of three six-volume masterpieces compiled by Morrison in 13 years. It is the first

Chinese-English dictionary in Chinese history. It was published in Macao and London from 1815 to 1823. Dictionaries are rich in content, including Chinese-English dictionaries arranged according to radicals and Chinese-English homophones arranged according to alphabetical phonetic order. This dictionary makes it convenient for missionaries from other countries to learn Chinese language and culture. At the same time, the Chinese language learning skills not only provide a method for westerners to learn Chinese, which has been praised by all circles in Europe, but also bring new enlightenment for teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

2.2 Achievements in Foreign Translation of Chinese Classics

In addition to his translation achievements in Western learning, Morrison has also made outstanding contributions to the translation of Chinese classics. His works include the "Translations from the Popular Literature of the Chinese", which was published in London in 1812. This work introduces Chinese education, religion and culture, and reflects Morrison's initial views and feelings on Chinese culture. The translation collection includes eight excerpts from "*The Three-Character Classic*", "*The Great Science*", "*Account of FOE: Buddhism*", "*Exhortation to eat Beef*", "Excerpts from the Four Books", and so on. Morrison's translation is very meticulous. He not only added footnotes to help readers understand the common sense of Chinese traditional culture, but also wrote a little text to introduce the general content of the translated text. From the selected collection of translated works, "*The Three-Character Classic*" is a classic of children's books, and "The Great Science" is the first of the four books, which can be said to be the necessary contents of Confucian education and classic works. The classic works can also best reflect the mainstream thoughts of traditional Chinese culture [1]. The Buddhist and Taoist culture introduced in his translation is also an integral part of Chinese culture and can also reflect the religious beliefs of the Chinese people at that time. Besides, there are some Chinese folk stories and letters. On the whole, "Translations from the Popular Literature of the Chinese" by Morrison is diverse and involves a wide range of aspects, including education, classical culture, popular stories and religious ideas.

A Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect, published in Macao in 1828, is also a great treasure in the history of Morrison's translation. The book is divided into three parts. The first and second parts are English-Chinese and Chinese-English words in alphabetical order [2]. The third part is the common words "miscellaneous words, such as color, disease and so on, which are classified according to the categories of things, and the main ones involved in Chinese-English translation are two and three parts. The translation of these two parts satisfies the needs of people communication in daily life and brings convenience to people's daily life.

In addition to the above-mentioned Chinese-English translation, the Chinese texts translated by Morrison are also scattered in other books, letters and newspapers, such as in Chinese grammar books "*A Grammar of the Chinese Language*", "*A View of China*", "*The Chinese Repository*", "*Guangzhou Chronicle*", "*Chinese Monthly Magazine*", "*Indochina News*" and so on.

3. Morrison's Translation Methods

Translation is the transformation of two languages; it is like a bridge, so that various countries have a way to communicate. It requires that translators must master certain translation methods such as literal translation and free translation. Both literal translation and free translation are generally used in both lexical phrases and textual structures. The use of the translation methods is slightly different to some extent because of the different types of texts. Literal translation is a direct translation which focuses upon conveying the exact meaning of the original, but if necessary, it can change the sentence structure of the original text, or even ignore some unimportant implied meaning. Free translation emphasizes the general meaning of the original text, and the style and form of the original text can be changed. Generally speaking, literal translation tends to maintain the structural elements of the original text, such as syntactic norms, while free translation tends to express the implied elements. [3] Morrison uses translation methods according to the discourse, applies literal translation and free translation flexibly.

Morrison who engaged in a lot of English-Chinese translation studies accumulated rich translation experience, sticking to his own set of theories and methods in translation. He believed that "the most important thing in translation is to be faithful to the original text, to seek truth from facts, and to express the meaning of the original text in easy-to-understand language." It doesn't matter if the words of his translation are not so elegant. The principle of "literal translation" followed in Morrison's translation activities can be regarded as an expression at the strategic level. As for specific translation methods, he believed that "translation based upon literal translation cannot be understood sometimes because not every word has a fixed meaning. Even so, the translation should be close to the meaning of the original ". From the translation works of Morrison, it can be found that under the general strategy of "literal translation", he uses a variety of translation methods according to the circumstances.

4. The Cultural Influence of Morrison's Translation

During his 25 years in China, Morrison's first translation of the Bible and some west works promoted the spread of Christianity in China, broadened the horizons of the Chinese people, and exposed the Chinese people to some advanced ideas and theories in the West. Thus, the idea of learning from the West has sprouted, which is conducive to cultural exchanges between China and the West. Meanwhile, the translation of Chinese classics has deepened Westerners' understanding of China's economy, culture, politics, religious beliefs and customs, which is conducive to the introduction of Chinese culture into the West and to the world. It has further promoted the development of Chinese cultural undertakings. "A Dictionary of the Chinese Language" compiled by Morrison and his published books and teaching materials are deeply loved by west learners. As soon as they are published, they are well received by the translation and Sinology circles, and their sales are amazing.

"Anglo-Chinese College" is a foreign school founded by Morrison. It aims to educate Chinese youth and children. The school teaches in both Chinese and English. Its main purpose is to promote religious teachings through theology, mathematics, history and other courses offered by the academy. The establishment of "Anglo-Chinese College" has accumulated valuable teaching experience for the establishment of Christian universities, objectively trained the first batch of bilingual talents in modern China, and made a contribution to the talent reserve of translation in modern China. Both the "Anglo-Chinese College" founded by Morrison and the translated Western books have expanded the space for the spread of western religious teachings and promoted the spread of western learning to the east. Although Morrison's real purpose of establishing foreign school "Anglo-Chinese College" is to train Chinese pastoral talents and spread teachings, it has also objectively trained some translators.

The classics translated by Morrison may not be regarded as a masterpiece in the society at that time. They were mainly used as Chinese auxiliary materials for the dissemination of doctrines, not merely for the translation service. However, his translation set off an upsurge for western missionaries to learn Chinese. "A Dictionary of the Chinese Language" compiled by him is regarded as the "standard", which has played a great role for western missionaries in learning Chinese, deepened their understanding of Chinese culture, and made them interested in Chinese characters and Chinese culture. It has enhanced the enthusiasm of western scholars for the Chinese classics translation, study of Chinese classics, and opened a new historical chapter for the training of western Chinese talents.

5. Conclusion

This paper studies Morrison's translation achievements, translation strategies and methods as well as translation influence. Morrison's translation works are of great historical significance. Morrison came to China to spread the Gospel of Christ and did not specialize in translation, but his translation achievements were fruitful. When translating Chinese classics, he has a distinct translation purpose and adopts corresponding translation methods and techniques. To a certain

extent, his translation opens a window for Westerners to understand Chinese culture and promotes Chinese culture to the west world.

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