

Research on the Dissemination and Influence of the English Translations of Journey to the West

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Abstract. The four great Chinese classics possess a high literary standard and profound thinking, representing four great monuments in the history of Chinese literature. Their translation and dissemination abroad are an important part of the national strategy of "Chinese culture going global", and are incorporated into the major policies of national cultural development. However, previous research on English translations has mostly focused on translation techniques, translator's motivation, comparisons with the original text, etc., with a lack of statistical, analytical, and research from the field of communication. Therefore, this project takes the 25 English translations of Wu Cheng'en's novel "Journey to the West" as the research subject, conducts statistical analysis on the reprinting of different translations, overseas reading volume and reader book reviews, magazine book reviews, academic citation times and world library collection quantities, examines the dissemination of different translations in the English-speaking world, and based on the current situation, combines contemporary scholars' views on the dissemination and translation research of "Journey to the West" in English, lays the foundation for proposing improvement strategies for the national "going global" policy, to promote the breadth and depth of Chinese culture's dissemination in the English-speaking world, supporting the spread of Chinese classical culture and thought beyond China's borders.

Keywords: Journey to the West; Communication and Influence; Research Review.

1. Introduction

In the context of vigorously promoting "Chinese culture going global", research on the dissemination of English translations of Chinese classics helps to understand the current state of national cultural development and to fill the gap in this type of review research in China. Current research on the English translation of "Journey to the West" mainly focuses on language transformation, translation quantification, translation history, translation communication, non-English translation, etc. The review of the dissemination situation is basically in a blank state. Shifting the research focus from traditional translation and image analysis to the current situation of the dissemination of "Journey to the West" in the English world and the internal and external factors that constitute its communication power is very timely and advanced in the era of vigorously promoting the "going global" strategy of Chinese culture. By comprehensively understanding the current situation of "Journey to the West" in the English world through statistical analysis of the number of reprints, reader reviews, academic citation frequency, etc., of the 18 translations of "Journey to the West", we can finally find a meaningful path to promote Chinese culture going globally.

2. Overview of the English Translation of "Journey to the West"

2.1. "Journey to the West" English Translations

Through big data retrieval, we found a total of 18 English translations of "Journey to the West". The time, place of publication, and publisher of each translation were checked one after another, and the table is as follows:

Table 1. Overview of English Translations of "Journey to the West"

Number	Translator	Title	Place	Publisher	Time
1	F. H. Martens	Chinese Fairy Book	New York	Stokes Company	1901
2	E. Werner	How the Monkey Became a God	London	George G. Harrap and Company	1922
3	G. Dunlop	Robbers and Soldiers	London/ New York	Gerald Howe/A. A. Knopf	1929
4	Helen M. Hayes	The Buddhist Pilgrim's Progress: The Record of the Journey to the Western Paradise	London	John J. Murry	1930
5	Arthur Waley	Monkey	London	Hellen & Unwin	1942
6	Chan Christina and Chan Plato	The Magic Monkey, Adapted from an Old Chinese Legend	New York	McGraw-Hill Company	1944
7	Zdena Novotna	The Monkey King	London	Hamlyn	1964
8	C. T. Hsia & Cyril Birch	The Temptation of Saint Pigsy	New York	Grove Press	1972
9	Anthony C. Yu 余国藩	The Journey to the West	Chicago/ London	Chicago UP	1976
10	Timothy Mo	The Monkey King	London	Paddleless	1978
11	Eleanor Hazard	Monkey: A Selection of Incidents from a 16th Century Chinese Novel	La Jolla, Calif.:	Green Tiger Press	1979
12	Maxine Hong Kingston	Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book	New York	Vintage International	1990
13	David Kherdian	Monkey: A Journey to the West: a Retelling of the Chinese Folk Novel	Boston London	Shambhala Publications	1992
14	Timothy Richard	A Mission to Heaven, A Great Chinese Epic and Allegory	上海	基督教文学会	1913
15	良士、徐宏达	Flaming Mountain	北京	外文出版社	1958
16	W. J. F. Jenner	Havoc in Heaven: Adventures of the Monkey King	北京	外文出版社	1979
17	Lihai Tan	The Journey to the West	台北	汉光出版公司	1990
18	Julia Lovell& Gene Luen Yang ⁴	Monkey King: journey to the West	New York	Penguin Books	2021

2.2. Introduction of Major Translations

Among the 25 English translations retrieved, the translations by Yu Guofan, Arthur Waley, and Timothy Richard are the most widely disseminated. Timothy Richard's *A Mission to Heaven, A Great Chinese Epic and Allegory* was published in 1913 by the Shanghai Christian Literature Society. It is recognized as one of the earliest English translations of "Journey to the West". Its Chinese name is "The Road to Heaven: A Great Chinese Historical Epic and Allegory". Li Zipeng [Translating Buddhism: Timothy Richard's Christian Interpretation of "Journey to the West"] believes that Timothy Richard understands the entire novel as a Christian pilgrimage allegory, describing a group of sinners who confess and repent on a pilgrimage to heaven. In other words, Timothy Richard interpreted this Chinese classic novel, which is full of Buddhist Taoist symbolism and ideas, as a very provocative Christian story. Although the dissemination and influence of the English translations of "Journey to the West" gradually increased in the early and mid-19th century, with Helen M. Hayes's *The Buddhist Pilgrim's Progress: The Record of the Journey to the Western Paradise*, Arthur Waley's *Monkey* and other influential translations. However, these translations are all abridged versions, and there has not yet been a complete translation of "Journey to the West" to introduce this extremely oriental mystery book in its entirety to the Western world.

Yu Guofan's "The Journey to the West" filled this gap. The masterpiece, which took 14 years to translate, caused a sensation as soon as it was published. It provides the West with accurate translations and complete annotations of "Journey to the West", allowing the West to enter the profound world of Chinese philosophy. Viewing literature from a religious perspective and studying religion in a literary mindset are its main features. Its critical thinking provides us with new perspectives for research. Monkey, by American Sinologist Arthur Waley, is one of the most widely circulated and influential translations in the history of "Journey to the West"'s English translation. Li Hui ["Heart of Emotion" and Water Symbolism: Arthur Waley's English Translation of "Journey to the West"] points out that, although Waley's "fluency" translation strategy, which freely changes the original text, has always been criticized, from the perspective of cultural communication history, the significant contribution of this translation cannot be erased. It is Waley's adaptation of the original work that makes Monkey conform to the reading habits of most American readers, making it the most accepted and recognized version of "Journey to the West" in the English world.

3. Overseas Dissemination of "Journey to the West"

3.1. Reprint Statistics

Worldcat [OCLC Worldcat Library (a bibliographic database based on the Online Computer Library Center) can currently search libraries in 112 countries, including bibliographic data from nearly 9,000 libraries.] When retrieving author information in the World Library by book title, it will display detailed information such as the publisher and publication time of the translation. Based on time, statistics from the earliest publication time can get the number of reprints of each English translation, as shown in the following table:

Table 2. Reprint Statistics of "Journey to the West" Translations

Translator	Number of Reprints	Translator	Number of Reprints
Lihai Tan	1	A. C. Yu (1)	25
Helen M. Hayes	2	良士、徐宏达	2
Zdena Novotna	3	W. J. F. Jenner	1
David Kherdian	3	F. H. Martens	12
Timothy Richard	4	Timothy Mo	19
Arthur Waley Monkey	35	Chan Christina and Chan Plato	2

From the table, it is easy to see that the number of reprints of each translation is generally small, and there is a large difference between individuals. F. H. Martens' translation *The Chinese Fairy Book* has been reprinted 12 times between 1921 and 2018. It was published in 1901 by the Frederick A. Stokes Company in New York, opening the U.S. market and causing a great sensation. In 1921, it was reprinted by the Lippincott and Frederick A. Stokes Company in New York, causing another craze. In 1922, this translation was published in London, and in 2018, the Chinese Wuzhou Communication Publishing House introduced this translation. Yu Guofan's translation *The Journey to the West* has a wide range of dissemination, fast speed, and its main position is in the United States. Starting from 1976, The University of Chicago Press continuously reprinted this translation. It was reprinted 6 times from 1977 to 1999, which shows the recognition and popularity of this translation among American readers. In addition, this translation was reprinted five times by the Beijing Foreign Languages Press as a classic complete translation, and has received a very high degree of recognition. Timothy Mo's translation *The Monkey King* caused a craze in the UK and the US in the 1980s. It was reprinted successively by publishers such as Sphere Books, Abacus, Faber and Faber in London, and was also reprinted nearly ten times in New York and Boston. This translation has a large influence in the UK and the US, and its main market is also in the UK and the US. David Kherdian's translation

Monkey: A Journey to the West: a Retelling of the Chinese Folk Novel was mainly reprinted three times by the Boston Shambhala Publishing House. In the early 21st century, it was mainly rooted in the U.S. market. In recent years, this translation has no record of reprints, and its popularity has declined. Arthur Waley's translation "Monkey" is considered the most suitable translation for Americans and has had a very surprising influence. This translation has been reprinted under the names of The Adventures of Monkey, Monkey: Folk Novel of China, Dear Monkey, etc., mainly aimed at readers in the UK and the US, and reprinted by publishers in London and New York. From the data statistics of reprints, the degree of dissemination and influence of translations is closely related to the influence of translators and publishers.

3.2. Online Reader Comment Statistics

Table 3. Goodreads Online Reader Evaluation Statistics for "Journey to the West" Translations

Translator	Rating	Review
F. H. Martens	118	9
<i>Chan Christina and Plato Chan</i>	0	0
<i>George Theiner</i>	5	0
<i>Anthony C. Yu</i>	1367	109
<i>Anthony C. Yu</i>	637	43
<i>Anthony C. Yu</i>	524	25
<i>Anthony C. Yu</i>	479	30
<i>Mary Zimmerman</i> <i>Anthony C. Yu (Foreword)</i>	27	2
<i>Anthony C. Yu</i>	280	36
<i>Timothy Mo</i>	236	14
<i>Eleanor Hazard</i>	0	0
<i>David Kherdian</i>	398	38
<i>David Kherdian</i>	0	0
<i>良士、徐宏达</i>	1	0
<i>良士、徐宏达</i>	6	1
<i>W. J. F. Jenner</i>	1883	169
<i>Arthur Waley</i>	6224	543

Fan Xiangtao [The Origin and Evaluation of Nida's "Reader Response Theory"] believes that in Western translation theory, the earliest person to discuss the translation process, Cicero, began to pay attention to the reaction of the receiver (audience). Like other translators at the time, he adopted a free translation method when translating Greek documents. The only mention is that the word choice in the translation is appropriate for "our people". The feelings and comments of readers are one of the standards for measuring the quality of translations, and the quantity and quality of comments can also reflect the range and influence of the translations, which is a major element of dissemination research. Whether it is the advantages or disadvantages of the translation, they are all part of the reader's acceptance and recognition. This study searches for online reader reviews for each translation on Goodreads [Goodreads is a website that foreign book lovers often log in, similar to China's Douban. The website was established in 2007, acquired by Amazon in 2013, and has now become the world's largest online reading community. The Goodreads website has 2.2 billion book entries and 77 million

reviews, and you can also see related book recommendations and booklists.] (Goodreads website) using the book title and author as keywords. It is mainly divided into rating and review. The rating refers to the star rating given by the reader to the translation, without leaving any text or other information content. When reviewing, not only the star rating is required, but also text or picture or video and other related reviews must be left. From the number of ratings, we can observe the breadth of dissemination of this translation. Starting from the content of the review, we can analyze the acceptance and recognition of readers for this translation, and also find the shortcomings of this translation in the minds of readers. From the perspective of communication, it provides innovative ideas and suggestions for the translation skills of translations, the balance relationship between translations and original texts, etc., and opens up new ways to improve the communication power and influence of translations.

Looking at the data in the table, there is a large gap in the number of ratings and reviews for each translation. Overall, Yu Guofan's four-volume translation has received strong feedback from the reader community, with both ratings and reviews reaching hundreds and even thousands. Through Yu Guofan's superb translation skills and deep understanding of "Journey to the West", the wise and lively image of the Monkey King in the book has deeply impressed readers, especially the accurate and vivid translation of poetry and classical Chinese, allowing readers to experience the charm of Eastern literature. But at the same time, for readers in English-speaking countries, this book is not easy to read, and the reading of poems and songs is a major obstacle. For professional scholars, this is a rare research material.

Readers' comments on Arthur Waley's translation are quite polarized. Because Arthur Waley's translation is often abridged, some readers believe that his translation is more in line with the reading habits of people who speak English as their first language, and that the humor, spirit, suspense, and moral lessons of "Journey to the West" can be felt from these streamlined chapters. But another group of readers believe that the abridged version of "Journey to the West" led them to question and misunderstand certain actions of the characters in the book. They cannot understand the logic of this ancient Chinese culture. Some readers also disagreed with the translation level of Arthur Waley's translation, believing that he was translating word by word, so it appeared obscure and difficult to understand, and naturally could not feel the cultural flavor in it.

W. J. F. Jenner's translation *Journey to the West* is well received by readers. Some readers believe that although it does not match Yu Guofan's precise translation of poetry, it is smoother and more in line with the original than Arthur Waley's translation. Most importantly, its writing style is very antique, which is crucial for getting the correct translation, whether it is a direct translation or a translation that has been modified to suit the current era. The translation style of this version is more suitable for an old teahouse setting, with the story being performed for the audience, not read by the author alone. But there are also people who are disappointed with the translation of this version. After reading the whole novel, there is no change in their views on Buddhism. Perhaps because of the literal translation, many of the grammar feels strange, which greatly reduces the reading experience and gives the story a repetitive and lengthy feeling.

Maxine Hong Kingston's translation *Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book* was called "great American novel of the 60s" by critic John Leonard, reflecting Asian American literature, and more magical realism that transcends racial cultural boundaries. But there are also readers who believe that it should be drastically reduced to make the points more powerful and clear.

From the book reviews of multiple translations, we can roughly conclude the following: Readers like "Journey to the West" to a large extent because of the translator, and at the same time, the charm of Chinese culture filled with Eastern elements in "Journey to the West" has attracted a large number of readers. They may not like "Journey to the West" because the author does not know how to translate some cultural terms or does not understand the deep meaning of a sentence. The difference between Chinese and Western cultures leads to their doubts about the logic of classical Chinese culture.

3.3. World Library Collection Statistics Analysis

Using the translation book name and translator as keywords on worldcat, we can get all the library information in the world that contains this translation. From this, we filter out the number of libraries in English-speaking countries that have this translation. We mainly represent the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and Ireland, as shown in the following table:

Table 4. World Library Collection Statistics

Translator	U.S.A	UK	Canada	Australia	Ireland
Helen.Hayes	70	8			
Chan Christina and Chan Plato	8	63	1	3	1
Zdena Novotna	1	51	1		
David Kherdian	298	10	16		3
Timothy Richard	44	6	3		
W. J. F. Jenner	20	4			
余国藩	230	52	23		
Arthur waley	438	61	44	2	

From the table, it is not difficult to see that the translations are mainly collected by libraries in the UK and the US, which is consistent with the publication information of the translations. In the English-speaking world, the publishing market for translations is mainly in the UK and the US, and the dissemination in these countries is far higher than in other countries. The analysis of the information in the table leads to the following conclusions: There is a large difference in the dissemination of different translations, with Arthur Waley's translation "Dear Monkey" being the most widespread, with 433 copies in the United States, a considerable number, 60 in the UK, and 44 in Canada, and a small number of collections in other countries such as Australia. This translation played a pivotal role in the history of "Journey to the West". Ma Zuyi mentioned in "History of Chinese Translation" that "Among all the English translations of "Journey to the West", the most influential is "Monkey" translated by Waley himself." The collection of this translation by libraries in various countries has allowed scholars and experts to have a deeper study of its translation skills and brilliant ideas.

Yu Guofan's translation is mainly collected in the United States, with a total of 230 copies, and the rest are collected in the UK and Canada. Yu Guofan's translated version of "Journey to the West" was the first complete translated version at that time, which fully introduced the Eastern aesthetic work "Journey to the West" to Western countries, and completed a milestone breakthrough in the history of English translation of "Journey to the West". The full translation of poems in the translation and the alienation translation method used in it faithfully display the characteristics of Chinese classical culture. This feature has made this translation highly praised by many scholars such as Xia Zhiqing and D.E.Pollard, becoming one of the most influential translations and included in major libraries.

4. Conclusion

As one of the four famous classics, "Journey to the West" with its ultimate oriental aesthetic charm and embedded Buddhist teachings has attracted generations of overseas readers. The English translation of "Journey to the West" is the main channel for the spread of this classic masterpiece abroad. At present, through the analysis of big data on the Internet, we understand the current situation of the spread of "Journey to the West" in the English-speaking world, find out the pain points and difficulties in the process of dissemination, give targeted treatments, not only need to improve the spread and influence of the English translation of "Journey to the West" in the UK and the US, but

also to the niche markets in the English-speaking world. At the same time, we also understand that readers' evaluations of the translation levels of various English translations are mixed, which will also affect the process of Chinese culture going abroad. Through the analysis of communication factors and the interpretation of explicit data, the essence of Chinese culture will be presented to overseas readers in a more perfect posture, contributing to the development of national cultural undertakings.

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