



Canonization of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world: Construction, restrictions and measures

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Аннотация

Researches on the canonization of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world focus on the canonization of a very limited sum of works such as Waley's translation of Chinese poems, English translation of Han Shan poems and Liao Zhai Zhi Yi, etc. Till now, there have been no macro-researches on the canonization of Chinese translated literature in the English-speaking world. This paper explores the construction, restrictions and measures of canonization of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world. The research finds that there are two models of canonization of Chinese translated literature, static canonization and dynamic canonization. The internal and external factors together function in the construction of canonization of Chinese translated literature, namely, artistic values and rich meanings of the translated works, interactions between the selection of Chinese literature and the socio-cultural contexts, reviews and promotions of the translated works, and patrons in the translation activities. Measures should be made to promote the canonization of Chinese translated literature, such as strengthening the art of Chinese literature, closer interaction between the selection of Chinese literature and the socio-cultural contexts, reviews and promotions of the translated works, and optimizing the national and international environments of the English translation of Chinese literature.

Ключевые слова: English translation, Chinese Literature, canonization



INTRODUCTION

As “the Chinese culture going global” has become one of the national strategies, English translations, spread and acceptance of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world are much more concern. Scholars in China and other countries discussed the acceptance of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world from multiple perspectives. Ma (2013) and Eoyang (1993; 2003) explore the acceptance of Chinese literature focusing on the roles of readers, writers, and translators. Jiang (2007) and Ma (2006) make empirical researches on the acceptance of Chinese translated literature in the English-speaking world by collecting and analyzing reader surveys, lending volume of library books, and book reviews on Amazon.net. The important point for researches on the acceptance of Chinese translated literature is the canonization of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world. Cheng (2007) and Hu (2006) respectively explore Waley’s translation of Chinese poems, English translations of Han Shan poems, etc. Till now, the canonization of Chinese translated literature in the English-speaking world almost remains virtually unnoticed. This paper will explore the construction, restrictions and measures of canonization of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world.

Construction of canonization of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world

Canon and canonization

The term “canon” comes from the ancient Greek word “kanon” (meaning “scale”), which was used to refer to the contents in the Bible recognized by the authority of the Church belonging to the “Scriptures”, otherwise they would belong to “Pseudo-scriptures”. Later, the term extended to the field of literary studies, referring to the talented and original creative works regarded as such by authoritative experts (Wolfreys and Robins 2002: 15). Even-Zohar



defines 'canonized' forms as "those literary norms and works... which are accepted as legitimate by the dominant circles within a culture and whose conspicuous products are preserved by the community to become part of its historical heritage" (1990: 15). Chen holds that literary canons include at least the following: "Firstly, literary canons should be selected by the authority and be in common use by the common people. Secondly, literary canons should be the outstanding works which are worth reading a hundred times and there will be new artistic charm whenever they are read. Thirdly, literary canons can transcend ethnic and national boundaries to produce a worldwide impact. Fourthly, literary canons refer to the works which can withstand the test of time. Fifthly, literary canons are immortal because of the circulation of interpretations and re-interpretations of the works" (Chen, 2008: 42-43).

This is the definition of "canon" in the literature of a single language; then how about the definition of "canon" in the translated literature? Cha thinks that "canon" in the translated literature has three meanings. Firstly, it refers to the outstanding translations in the history of translated literature, such as Yang Bi's translation of *Vanity Fair* and so on. Secondly, it refers to the translations of world literature. Thirdly, it refers to the foreign literature (translated literature) which is canonized in the specific cultural context of the target language (Cha, 2004: 87). According to the above mentioned, the connotation of "canon" in the literature of single language applies to "canon" in translated literature. The difference is that the latter experiences the transfer from one language and culture to another language and culture, and whose readers become the ones of another language and culture.

Based on the above definitions of "canon", the "canons" of English translations of Chinese literature can be defined as "the literary works which become the outstanding works worth reading a hundred times by readers in the English-speaking world, transcend the impact of ethnic and national boundaries, experience continuous reprints and retranslations, thus being immortal in the English-speaking world".

"Canonization" refers to the way and the process in which literary works become canons, that is to say, literary works will experience the repeated reading by readers, long-term studies by critics and scholars, thus eventually being accepted and recognized as talented and original creative works by the authorities. According to Zhu, Waley's translated poems are regarded as an important symbol of the canonization of classical Chinese poetry in the English-speaking



world. From Waley on, more and more translations of Chinese poems were collected into important or authoritative Western literary anthologies or reference books. The Oxford companion of modern poetry, *Selected Poems* by Penguin Books includes Waley's translated poems. The authoritative literature anthology *Norton Anthology of the World Literature Masterpieces* collects Waley's translation of 16 poems from *Book of Songs* and ranks excellent classical Chinese literature as masterpieces of world literature. A variety of authoritative Chinese literature anthologies in the English-speaking world, such as *Chinese Literature Anthology* edited by Bai Zhi and *Translations of Classical Chinese Literature Vol. I* selected and edited by the British sinologist Minford all collected Waley's translated Chinese poems (Zhu, 2009: 127-128).

Two models of canonization of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world

Evan-Zohar clearly points out that:

As a system, translated literature is itself stratified, and from the point of view of polysystemic analysis it is often from the vantage point of the central stratum that all relations within the system are observed. This translated literature may assume a central position, another may remain quite peripheral. (1990: 19)

Evan-Zohar has made a distinction between two different uses of the term "canonicity,"

"one referring to the level of texts, the other to the level of models. For it is one thing to introduce a text into the literary canon, and another to introduce it through its model into some repertoire. In the first case, which may be called static canonicity, a certain text is accepted as a finalized product and inserted into a set of sanctified texts literature (culture) wants to preserve. In the second case, which may be called dynamic canonicity, a certain literary model manages to establish itself as a productive principle in the system through the latter's repertoire. It is this latter kind of canonization which is the most crucial for the system's dynamics. Moreover, it is this kind of canonization that actually generates the canon, which may thus be viewed as the group of survivors of canonization struggles, probably the most conspicuous products of a certain successfully established models. Naturally, any canonical text can be recycled at any given moment into the repertoire in order to become a canonized model again. But once it is recycled, it is no longer in its capacity of a finalized product that it plays a role, but as a potential



set of instructions, i.e., a model. The fact that it had once been canonized and become canonical, i.e., sanctified, may or may not be advantageous for it vis-à-vis non-canonical products that have as yet no position at all." (ibid)

In the history of English translations of Chinese literature, these two models of canons appear. The English translations of classical Chinese fictions such as *Journey to the West* (???), *Outlaws of the Marsh* (???), *Three Kingdoms* (????) and *Golden Lotus* (???) experienced constant reprints and retranslations, promoting the prosperity of the English translations of classical Chinese fictions. Some Chinese fictions in the English-speaking world became canons. Take the English translation of *Xi You Ji* (???) for example. Though there were three English versions of *Xi You Ji* (???) before the Anti-Japanese War, Waley translated it into *Monkey* in 1942. And his version was reprinted in November 1942, 1943, 1944 and 1945, and was translated into many languages, becoming the most influential version of *Xi You Ji* (???) among the English translations. In 1944, in order to attract children readers, Waley made his *Monkey* into the adaptation *The Adventures of Monkey*. As a result, Waley's English translation of *Xi You Ji* (???) belongs to the first case, static canonicity, defined by Evan-Zohar, for it is accepted as a finalized product and inserted into a set of sanctified texts literature (culture) wants to preserve.

Also during this period, sinologists translated a large number of supernatural fictions in pamphlets, anthologies, and the English magazines, such as *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi* (????), *Sou Shen Ji* (???), *Zhong guo Shenhua Gushiji* (???????), *Tangxieben Sou Shen Ji* (??????), *Jin Gu Qi Guan* (????), and so on. The English translations of these novels were very popular in this period and even throughout the whole period of the Republic of China, became a productive principle in the translation system, which belongs to the second case, dynamic canonicity.

Then, how did the English translations of Chinese literature become these two models of canonization in the English-speaking world? We can find the answer in the following part.



CONDITIONS FOR THE CANONIZATION OF CHINESE LITERATURE IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING WORLD

Internal and external factors of constructing literary canons

Which factors function in constructing literary canons? Currently, there are two kinds of views in the Western literary and art circles. One is the theory of Essentialism Canonization, which holds that factors functioning in constructing literary canons should be found inside literary works. The other one is the theory of Constructivism Canonization, which holds that factors functioning in constructing literary canons should be found outside literary works rather than within its inherent aesthetic conditions. The Chinese literary and art circles argue for the combination of these two kinds of views, which can be proved by Tong's opinions of six factors constructing literary canons. These six factors are: artistic values of literary works, space available for literary interpretations, changes in the ideological and cultural powers, literary theory and value orientations of criticism, readers' expectations, and value orientations of patrons. It can be seen that the first two factors belong to the internal factors of literary canons, the third and fourth belong to the external factors of literary canons; the last two factors on readers and patrons belong to the combination of internal and external factors of literary canons (Tong, 2005: 71). Liu also explains that factors functioning in constructing literary canons can be divided into internal and external factors. The external factors include some scholars of classic or guru status, or affirmations of critics, or reading and judgment of readers. The internal factors refer to the essential characteristics of literary canons, that is, canonicity. Canonicity can refer to the rich connotation, creativity, span of time and space and unlimited readability (Liu, 2006: 51-54).



Combining Tong's and Liu's views, we can conclude that there are internal and external factors functioning in constructing literary canons.

Internal and external factors of constructing Chinese literary canons in the English-speaking world

Tong's and Liu's views on factors function in constructing literary canons apply to the construction of Chinese literary canons in the English-speaking world. Internally, English translations of Chinese literature should possess the characteristics of canonicity, the rich connotation, and creativity, span of time and space and unlimited readability. Externally, English translations of Chinese literature should experience affirmations by some scholars of classic or guru status and critics, or reading and judgment of readers. Practice has proved that on the way to the canonization of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world, the combined effect of these two factors have supported the canonization of Chinese translated literature.

The canonization of *Xi You Ji* (???), one of the four Chinese Classical Novels, proves that a literary work which becomes a literary canon must possess these two factors in constructing literary canons. In 1877, Giles translated and published its English translation *A Record of the Buddhistic Kingdoms*, which contains two parts, translation and notes. In 1913, Timothy again translated it into *A Mission to Heaven*, with the translation strategy of "Using Jesus Christ to illustrate Confucianism" as a flexible way of preach. At the end of July 1923, Giles retranslated it and published its new translation *The Travels of Fa-hsien (399-414 A. D.) or Record of the Buddhistic Kingdoms*. Giles in his new translation pointed out that the first use of the Buddhist concept of "Trinity" is earlier than the Christian concept of "Trinity". He also made the assertion that the trip of Sao Paulo appears to be negligible in the light of Xuanzang's journey for Buddhist sutras. In 1930, Helen M. Hayes retranslated it into *The Buddhist Pilgrim's Progress: The Record of the Journey to the Western Paradise*, translating one hundred chapters and made religious interpretations. In July 1942, Arthur Waley's English translation of ??? (*Xi You Ji*), *Monkey*, was published by Allen and Angwen Publishing Company. It was reprinted several times, in November 1942, 1943, 1944, and 1945 respectively. And it was translated into many languages and is regarded as the most



influential English translation of *Xi You Ji* (???). In 1944, in order to attract children readers, Wiley made his *Monkey* into an adaptation, *The Adventures of Monkey*, published by John Day Company in New York in 1943 and 1944. According to Waley, the first seven chapters are the most attractive parts for Chinese children, which is why he only translated the first seven chapters. Meanwhile, the famous illustration master Kurt Wiese made the illustrations in the English adaptation. Therefore, *Xi You Ji* (???) is constantly interpreted as a religious reading, a children readers' book, a flexible way of preach, tools for foreigners to learn Chinese or for readers' entertainment. The literariness and the characteristic are being constantly expounded by the canonization of *Xi You Ji* (???) in the English-speaking world.

The external factors in the canonization of Chinese translated literature in the English-speaking world are far more complex than what Tong and Liu had interpreted. Its canonization first involves problems of translation. So we can say the factors influencing the English translations of Chinese literature should be considered in constructing Chinese literary canons in the English-speaking world, which can be regarded as external factors. Moreover, when Chinese literature is translated and entered into the literature system of the target culture and language, it will be influenced by external factors of the canonization of translated literature in the target language and culture.

However, the internal and external factors of constructing Chinese literary canons in the English-speaking world are a double-edged sword. They can be a pushing hand and an obstacle. How to deal with this double-edged sword concerns the restrictions and measures of constructing the Chinese literary canons in the English-speaking world.



RESTRICTIONS AND MEASURES OF CONSTRUCTING THE CHINESE LITERARY CANONS IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING WORLD

Despite the ever increasing number of Chinese literary canons in the English-speaking world, it is undeniable that there are a considerable number of Chinese literary works unsatisfactorily accepted in the English-speaking world, whose canonization is bound to be a bumpy road. We might explore restrictions and measures of constructing the Chinese translated literary canons from the perspective of internal and external factors.

Creation problems in Chinese literature

In the canonizations of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world, classical Chinese literature is favored by the English readers and thus becomes the earliest literary canons. The early period of English translations of Chinese literature, especially during the Republic of China, witnessed a golden age of English translations of classical Chinese fictions. According to our statistics, there are 48 foreign translators translating Chinese fictions during that period. They translated *Xi You Ji* (???), *San Guo Yan Yi* (????) , *Hong Lou Meng* (???), *Chin P'ing Mei* (???), *Shui Hu Zhuan* (???), *Jin Gu Chuan Qi* (????) and other classical Chinese fictions and anthologies of Chinese folk tales, myths, etc. From the advent of the first English translation of Chinese fiction in 1913, that is, Timothy Richard's *A Mission to Heaven* (???), to Harold Acton and Lee Yi-hsieh's reprints of *Glue and Lacquer* (???) in 1948, we can see that the English translations of Chinese classical fictions take place throughout the whole period of the Republic of China. Most English translations of Chinese literature, through continuous reprints and retranslations, gained the status of literary canons in the English-speaking countries.



By the year 1930, there began the English translation of modern Chinese literature. Y. Y. Kyn and E. H. F. Mills's translated Jing Yinyu's French translation *The Tragedy of Ah Qui, and Other Modern Chinese Stories*, collected Mao Dun's *Huan Mie* (?), Bin Xin's *Fan Men* (??), Yu Dafu's *Chen Lun* (??) and other modern short stories, thus pulling the curtain of modern Chinese literature translated by foreign translators into English in the Republic of China. However, till today, many Chinese canons are not well received in the English-speaking world. Although some translated literary works have become literary canons, like Lu Xun's *Diary of a Madman*, most of the contemporary Chinese literary works do not have an ideal situation to be well received. To our Chinese, some masterpieces or classics may not be welcomed by English readers. This phenomenon is determined by many factors such as the selection of Chinese literature to translate or the influence of ideology. We cannot deny that some creation problems of Chinese literature become the barriers inhibiting the canonization of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world.

Goldblatt (2000: 26-27) who translated four dozen contemporary Chinese fictions holds that many Chinese writers have no international perspectives for three reasons. The first one is that for a long time, Chinese writers wrote with a principle of serving the politics. The second one is that the Great Cultural Revolution still had its impact on the writers. The third one is that some modern Chinese novelists did not know foreign languages. In addition, their writings have some common problems. First and foremost, their literary works lack creative skills. Secondly, their literary creations do not carry on and grasp the tradition of Chinese writing and literary creation well. Moreover, many modern Chinese writers' works have the problem of being loose in structure, excessively bureaucratic in style, and rough in the quality of their creation (Ma, 2013: 69).

Take the beginning of some Chinese literary works for example. Specific plots and characters usually do not appear at the very beginning of modern Chinese literary works. Usually, the very beginning of them is full of descriptions of the story background, setting the tone for the whole story. This seemingly tedious writing style in the Western readers' eyes, however, is a writing art for the Chinese writers. This type of beginning of the story is very different from the reading habits of readers in the English-speaking world, often causing readers' antipathy and publishers' cold reception. Li holds that usually the Anglo-American readers decide whether it is



worthwhile to buy a novel home when they look at the first page of the novel. Chinese writers choose not to attach importance to the first sentence of the novel, they still very tolerantly and patiently read on. Foreign editors think that a good fiction needs a good beginning to attract the readers' attention (Li, 2012: 59). The problem of the beginning of works in Chinese Literature will be found in its English translation, for example in Luotuo Xiangzi (????), Rickshaw Boy, translated by Evan King. He just gives a very brief account of the nickname of the main character and then he deletes 6 paragraphs on the description of Beijing rickshaw boys from paragraph 2 to paragraph 7. After his deletion, the beginning of the English translation is very concise and easy to read on.

PROBLEMS IN THE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF CHINESE LITERATURE

Language problems in English translations

Translation is like an engine helping Chinese literary works to enter into the world. However, English translation of Chinese literary works has become a bottleneck in the exportation of Chinese culture. Translation problems are extremely complex, both in terms of language, culture and tradition. Translation problems have been serious in the hundreds of years of cultural exchange between China and the Western countries.

Translation problems involve the obstacles of understanding Chinese for foreign translators and the obstacles of expressing themselves in English for the Chinese translators. For foreign translators, the profound Chinese words are seemingly simple, but it is difficult to grasp their cultural implications. Chen Feng, an editor of Chinese Literature Series published by French Philippe Picquier Publishing House, holds that if a good literary work encounters a good translator, then it will be probably well received. Because sometimes some foreign translators have only limited understanding of Chinese, they may regard the most wonderful places as nonsense or even misunderstand them, thus deleting them. As a result, the language style of the translations will be greatly reduced, leaving only a story. Again, even those Anglo-American translators who lived in China and have a good understanding of Chinese culture may also



face language barriers in their translations. Chinese names, places and other culture-loaded words often contain a rich meaning. How to convey these culture-loaded words and make their translations “be perfectly justifiable” in order to convey the character, the Chinese people’s thoughts and feelings to English readers is actually a problem which the foreign translators commonly encounter in the English translations of Chinese fictions. In the English translation of *Luotuo Xiangzi* (????) by Evan King, Rickshaw Boy, the translator chose to translate names, places, proverbs and dialects literally. Lao She first questioned his translation method in translating names. In the letter “to Lloyd” on October 21, 1948, he wrote: “In Chinese the ‘Xiang’ in the name of ‘Xiangzi’ can be interpreted as ‘faithfulness’, ‘good luck’, ‘a good omen’, ‘success’ and so on” (Shu, 1992: 182). The English equivalent “Happy Boy” is obviously not very appropriate; it can be said that a translator advocating translation of names, places, etc. should “be perfectly justifiable” did not really make it in his translation.

Chinese translators face the same problem as foreign translators, that is, they also have some difficulty in translating some culture-loaded words. In Wang Jizhen’s translation *Stories of China at War* in 1947, when he translated Tuanmu Kangliang’s “Beyond the Willow Wall”, he transliterated the character Shi Tou (??, meaning “stone”) into “Shih Tou”, Er Huzi (???) into “Erh Hu-tzu”, Gao Liang (??) into “Gaoliang”, Die Die (??) into “dieh-dieh”. He also transliterated some interjections, such as “Ai-yo-o” (???), “Ai” (?), “Fangpi” (??). These two extremes of translational phenomena of the English translation of culture-loaded words are unfavorable to China’s cultural acceptance in the English-speaking world. How to reflect the true colors of Chinese culture and also make translations in line with the features of the target language, thus being easily accepted by the English readers? In order to solve the problem, the dialogue between theory and practice of the translation community should be strengthened and an effective way should be found. The solution to this problem is the premise for Chinese literature to be among the literary canons in English-speaking countries.

The selection of literary works translated

Is the selection of Chinese literary works translated into English to take care of the Chinese people’s favors, or to cater to the tastes of foreign readers? We hold that it is not a simple problem of choosing the former or the latter. In 1981, the Chinese Literature magazine, a



subordinate of China Foreign Languages Publishing and Distribution Administration (Beijing Foreign Language Bureau), was responsible for the translation and publication of "Panda Books", hoping to introduce Chinese literature and culture (emphasis on contemporary literature) to major Western countries with the aid of translations to expand the impact of Chinese literature in the world. However, the acceptance of these translated Chinese literary works is unsatisfactory. Geng argues, "The emphasis on the theme of realism to some extent limits "Panda Books" in the choices of other subjects. It can be said that the "Panda Books" to some extent did not adequately reflect the actual state of development of contemporary Chinese literature" (2012: 5). If some Chinese literary works which reflect the actual development of contemporary Chinese literature are selected to translate, will the acceptance of the translated Chinese literary works be satisfactory?

Take foreign translators' activity in translating Chinese fictions during the Republic of China for example. During the Republic of China, foreign translators were engaged in English translations of Chinese fictions, despite their complex social roles. However, we still divide them into missionary translators, scholar translators, teacher and writer translators, and other foreign reporter translators according to their major social roles. They have different translation purposes in the translations of Chinese literature. The missionary translator, Timothy Richard translated *Xi You Ji* (???), George Soulie translated *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi* (????), making contributions to the mutual exchange between China and the Western countries. But their main purpose is to find the flexible missionary tool under the condition of constant rising spirits and movements against imperialism and feudalism. The sinologist Richard Wilhelm translated and edited *The Chinese Fairy Book*. Edward Werner translated and edited *Myths & Legends of China*. I. Brandt translated and edited *Introduction to Literary Chinese*. Admittedly, sinologists are engrossed with Chinese culture, almost translator and researcher at the same time, contributing a lot to the cultural exchange between China and the English-speaking world. They also explain in the preface of their English translations of Chinese literature for foreigners' learning Chinese and understanding China. Looking at the Republic of China, we can find that numerous foreigners went to China for officialdom, for business, language learning or teaching. And are English translations of Chinese literature not part of their needs? Some sinologist translators clearly pointed out the purpose of translating Chinese literature as a need



for their researches. Moreover, during the Anti-Japanese War, some foreign reporters like Harold R. Isaacs, Edgar Snow and Nym Wales translated modern Chinese fictions into English. Their purpose is to convey the real war situation in China to the international community, seeking sympathy from the international community. In short, in the English translations of Chinese fictions during the Republic of China, missionaries and professional sinologists favored classical Chinese fictions, foreign reporters' English translations of literature of the May-Fourth movement and the left-wing literature into English, reminding us of the selection of Chinese fictions to translate moving with the times. It manifests the features of the closer interaction between the selection and the socio-cultural environments, the needs of readers, and so on.

External reviews and promotions

Although Chinese critics, writers and Chinese or foreign translators have all made tireless efforts, the canonization of Chinese literature still has a long way to go. The recognition of Chinese literature by the publishing markets and institutions (literature reviews, agencies, awards, etc.) in the English-speaking world is also an important factor for the canonization of Chinese literature. The Sinologist Lovell pointed out that China needs more efforts in order to gain a foothold in the publishing markets in the English-speaking world. Most Chinese literary works are often published by the academic publishers in the English-speaking world, which gives Chinese literature as academic and specialized literature a more peripheral status. Therefore, Chinese literature cannot sell well on the English markets, and the common readers will not regard the English translations published by the academic publishers as literary canons (Lovell, 2005). The Sinologist Lin Ke proposes that translators engaged in the translations of Chinese literature should contact publishing houses which specially publish classic series. Though the factor of publishers has no decisive influence on the canonization of Chinese literature, it is still very important. When Lao She mentioned his translation of Li Hun (??), *Divorce*, did not sell well in America, he said, "Americans engage in cultural things just like doing business. When a book is published, it is advertised in all respects, the celebrities even can publicize for it. You can see advertisements everywhere, in cinemas, pharmacies small ads, plus radios, otherwise books cannot sell well" (Zhang, 2005: 148). Xu holds in his article "On Rickshaw Boy" that the promotion of books



by the Americans contains "doing business" (Xu, 1948). Besides the advertisements, we can see that reviews on the translation also promoted the acceptance of Rickshaw Boy. Hence, the factors of the publishing markets and institutions (literature review agencies, awards, etc.) are very important for the canonization of Chinese literature. The English translations, dissemination and influence of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world are inseparable from the support of funding agencies and the promotion of literary works.

Moreover, translation reviews play an important role in the canonization of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world. Evan King's *Rickshaw Boy* was praised by mainstream magazines like *The New Yorker* and *Saturday Review of Literature*, giving comments such as "a modern novel about China written for the Chinese, of the Chinese, and by a Chinese" (Basso, 1945: 61). Shortly after its publication, *Rickshaw Boy* was ranked as the recommended bibliography by the famous New York Book Club "Book-of-the-Month-Club". Henry S. Canby once commented on Evan King's *Rickshaw Boy* after its publication as follows:

Indeed, this book has a quality which makes one inclined to prophesy that it is of much more than ordinary importance. It is so simply told, with such easy-running narrations as in a first-rate biography, and the character and personality of Happy Boy are so engaging that it is more like hearing a story told than reading a novel with a plot and drama or melodrama in it. This book haunts you. You think of it increasingly for days after you have read it. It leaves a strong and new impression in the mind. In short, this seems to be not only a very interesting, but a fine and memorable novel, significant of a new literature for China (The July Book-of-the-Month Club News 1945/8/1-3).

It is interesting that the public opinions can help a translation's success and can ruin it as well. Take the comments of Giles's English translation of *Xi You Ji* (???) for example. By the end of July 1923, Giles had retranslated *Xi You Ji* (???) with its new title *The Travels of Fa-hsien* (399-414 A. D.) or *Record of the Buddhistic Kingdoms*. In 1923, it won the "Exquisite Book Award" because of its fine print. According to Giles himself, among 32 articles on his translation by the Western media, 30 articles spoke highly of the Xuanzang's journey for Buddhist sutras. But also in October 1923, *The East and the West* magazine commented that Giles's translation was "worthless" and said Giles's preface "is totally not academic" and "completely fabricated". Giles found it funny that Aberdeen Press



and Journal commented his book "academic". Besides, The East and the West magazine holds that Xuanzang's journey for Buddhist sutras were "purely imagined out". Giles argued against it, arguing what would Christians think if Buddhists would regard sacred Christian objects or Christian image as a "figment of the imagination"? Giles pointed out, "no one can imagine these words come from such an educational magazine" (Zhai Li Si (???); retrieved from http://baike.baidu.com/link?url=0vfTTTySncyooHuvrq0hGIV3U3RwbnTIQ4R9Qz_p8G12RW4sW6GpSkIkmfCGKxd)

MORE ATTENTION ON THE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF CHINESE LITERATURE

The 2007 annual report of the international PEN on the situation of translations of international literature reflects the international situation of literary translation and is not optimistic when it comes to the situation of English translations of modern and contemporary Chinese literature. In July 2006, the Center for Book Culture in the United States released the data of publishing cases of English translations of literary works (especially fictions) of various countries in America between 2000 and 2006, excluding retranslation and anthologies of literary works. The report includes the statistical data about English translations of fictions in 39 countries. To our surprise, there is no data on English translations of Chinese fictions (Allen, 2007:25-26). American sinologist Sang illustrated the number of translated fictions with the data. Since the 1990s, the number of Chinese translations of foreign literature accounted for 30% of Chinese publishing markets. In 2004, China imported 10,040 copyrights, but only exported 1,314. In contrast, the translated literature published in the U.S. accounted for 3.54% of new novels. In the same year, Chinese publishers bought 3,932 American books, while the U.S. publishers only bought 16 Chinese books. (2011:121-122)

Though the international situation of literary translation is so frustrating, the solution to the problem can be found. In China, the



government and scholars have attached great importance to the English translations of Chinese literature, which is conducive to the canonization of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world. On the national level, in order to enhance the country's soft power and the positive construction of China's image, the government spares no efforts to support the English translations of Chinese literature. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the government has made efforts to spread the translations of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world. For example, shortly after the founding of the People's Republic of China, the People's Government Information Agency International Press Office (in 1963, it changed its name into "China Foreign Languages Publishing and Distribution Administration") specializing in the external publicity of the books published by China publishers, put the translations of Chinese literature as their focus. It received strong support from the then secretary Hung Chen working for the Foreign Cultural Relations Affairs and Deputy Minister of Culture Zhou Yang. They appointed Ye Junjian who had just returned from the United Kingdom as the person in charge. As a result, Chinese Literature magazine was founded in October 1951. The magazine was devoted to introducing outstanding literary works to the world, providing a window for the world to know new China better. Ye Junjian served as the associate editor, presiding over the translations and compilation of the magazine. Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang took a lot of translation tasks. The Chinese Literature magazine even became the only window for the Western world to understand China's most important literature during 30 years after the founding of the People's Republic of China. (Wu, 1999). In 1981, China Foreign Languages Publishing and Distribution Administration (Beijing Foreign Language Bureau) released "Panda Books", translated first in English, French, and then in German and Japanese, hoping to introduce Chinese literature and culture (focusing on Contemporary Chinese Literature) into the major Western countries to expand the influence of Chinese literature in the world. However, "Panda Books" is almost closed and the Chinese Literature magazine ceased its publication for nearly half a century, showing a setback suffered by national institutions as a translation patron. But it attracted the attention of the media, which is good for Chinese scholars and translation practitioners to reflect on English translations of Chinese literature.

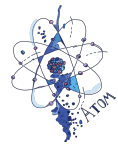
In recent years, our state introduced "The Chinese culture going global" as a national strategy, which shows the national efforts to



promote Chinese culture abroad. This can be reflected upon in a lot of research projects, books and articles in the field of history, literature, translation, politics and other fields on the English translations of Chinese literature. We can say that the emphasis on Chinese literature will be good for the canonization of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world. To conclude this part with Wang's words, "The focus of our translation should transfer from Chinese translations of foreign literature to English translations of Chinese literature. In other words, we should translate the fine Chinese culture and Chinese literature into the major language of the world—English, making Chinese literature having a wider audience in the world, making the peripheral Chinese literature gradually enter into the world literature which has been dominated by the 'Western-centrism', thus eventually completing the reconstruction of new literary canons by making it 'mixed' and 'non-Westernized'" (2005: 99).

CONCLUSION

The canonization of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world is important for China's cultural heritage and the cultural exchange between China and other countries. Regrettably, there are no systematic researches on the canonization of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world. This paper has explored the construction, restrictions and measures of canonization of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world. The research finds that there are two models of canonization of translated Chinese literature, static canonization and dynamic canonization. The internal and external factors together function in the construction of canonization of translated Chinese literature, namely, artistic values and interpretable meanings of the translated works, interactions between the selection of Chinese literature and the socio-cultural contexts, reviews and promotions of the translated works, and patrons in the translation activities. Measures should be made to promote the canonization of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world, such as strengthening the art of Chinese literature, interactions between the selection of Chinese literature and the social and cultural context, reviews and promotions of the translated



works, and optimizing the national and international environments of the English translation of Chinese literature.

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