

## A Study on Qian Zhongshu's Translation: Sublimation in Translation

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**Abstract:** Qian Zhongshu was a master of Chinese belles letters and an influential translator in China. This thesis discusses Qian Zhongshu's role as an important translator and focuses on reviewing both his translation theory and practice. This thesis consists of five parts. The first part introduces the subject. The second part presents Qian Zhongshu's translation theory. The third part presents his translated works and analyses with examples of his translations. The fourth part discusses the influence of Qian Zhongshu's translation. The last part concludes this paper. Qian Zhongshu's study of translation began early and was a life-long occupation. The development of his translation theory can be divided chronologically into four periods: the thirties, the forties, the late sixties and the seventies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This paper presents Qian's different ideas on advancing translation theory at different periods of time. His translated works, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, *Mao Zedong's Poems*, and countless quotations from the literatures of foreign languages, will all be reviewed. His theory regarding faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance and his theory of sublimation is below analyzed in detail with examples of his translations. His translations show his outstanding translating strategies and skills. Qian Zhongshu's sublimation theory settles the long lived argument between literal translation and liberal translation, foreignization and domestication. In short, Qian's translation theory and practice are indispensable parts of a Chinese translation system, which deserves study.

**Keywords:** Qian Zhongshu; translation theory; translation practices; sublimation

### 1. INTRODUCTION

When Qian Zhongshu is mentioned, the first impression appearing in minds are usually his distinguish achievements in Chinese classical literature writing and criticism. There is no doubt that Qian Zhongshu was a cultural master. He gained his universal reputation by his all- round and all-through study on both

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Chinese literature and western literatures. His study areas were very broad, ranging from philosophy, anthropology, psychology, religion, aesthetics, poetics, history, linguistics, rhetoric, and literary criticism and so on. Most people know Qian Zhongshu through his interpretation of Chinese classical culture; however, Qian Zhongshu differed from traditional Chinese scholars. He developed his research and studies in China while still remaining conscious of scholastic developments abroad. He knew much about western culture, which provided him with the necessary background to translate and make a study of translation. How did Qian Zhongshu become a translator and translation critic? The following information on Qian Zhongshu will present the answer.

Qian Zhongshu was born in a well-educated family in 1910 in Wuxi. His father, Qian Jibo(錢基博), was a conservative Confucian scholar. Qian's initial name was Yangxian(仰先), however, when he was one year old, according to Chinese tradition, he was given many different objects, which contained different life styles of a child's future, laid out in front of him for his "grabbing". He finally grabbed a book, so Zhongshu(鐘書) was immediately given as his new name, which literally means "being fond of books" (Wikipedia).

Qian Zhongshu did not fail to live up to his family expectation. He was very fond of reading since he was a little child. His uncle began to teach him study Chinese characters when he was two years old. Qian Zhongshu later entered Donglin primary school(東林小學) to begin his student's life at a school. His father also supervised him to read Chinese classical essays or even novels, such as *Journey to the West* (《西遊記》). During his primary school time, he began to get approach of western literature. He read *Fifteen Litter Heroes* (《十五小豪傑》) which was translated by Liang Qichao(梁啟超) and some detective novels translated by Zhou Guisheng(周桂笙), but he found them very boring and dull. However, when accidentally found two boxes of *Novels Translated by Lin Shu*(《林譯小說叢書》) which were published by the Commercial Press, he was very excited and was led to a totally new world, which differed from those Chinese novels he once read. This experience advocated his interest to learn foreign languages. At that time, he began to think that if he could learn English well, he would read many interesting English novels.

In 1924, Qian attended an English-speaking missionary school in Suzhou, Taowu Middle School(桃塢中學), where he made huge progress in English learning because the daily language used in this school was English. In such a study environment, Qian manifested his language talent which also was highly praised when he got the first prize in an English competition.

Even since his early ages, there seemed no surprise that Qian Zhongshu could accomplish his later academic fame all over the world. His successful entrance to study in Tsinghua University undoubtedly provided him with a bigger stage to learn from the perspective of the whole world, but not limited only in China.

Although his mathematics was very poor, his excellent performance in Chinese and English drew the attention of Luo Jialun, the current president of Tsinghua University, and then he was accepted into the Department of Foreign Languages. At that time, the teachers of the Department of Foreign Languages were great. Wang Wenxian(王文顯) was a great English playwright; Wu Mi(吳宓) was an excellent comparative literature specialist; foreign teachers R. Winter, I. A. Richards, A.M.Bille and P.D.Jameson all had their own specialty. Under the objective to culture "learned scholars", every student in this department was required to "read up the western literature masterpieces" and "get to know the western civilization spirit" and this department brought up a group of excellent scholars, including Qian Zhongshu, Li Jianwu, Zhang Junxiang, Wu Dayuan, Yang Yezhi and Ji Xianlin and so on (Ai 30 錢鐘書傳稿, 百花文藝出版社, 1992年). Qian Zhongshu's education there was in many aspects. He came to know many prominent scholars who appreciated his talent. He also read through Tsinghua's big library and began his lifelong habit of collecting quotations and reading notes (Wikipedia).

In 1930, the situation in China was very unsteady. Qian Zhongshu paid his attention on his own reading and writing and then formed his first writing climax. He published many poems in Tsinghua Weekly. He also published an English book critical review on Le Gros Clark's translation of Su Shi's poetry and essays.

In 1935, Qian received government sponsorship to further his studies abroad. Together with his wife Yang Jiang, a famous playwright and translator, Qian head for the University of Oxford. He received a bachelor degree of literature after two years. Shortly after his daughter Qian Yuan was born, he went to France to study for a year in the University of Paris.

From his study experience, it is easy to find that he had studied very well and he read up almost the eastern and western masterpiece, which provided him with the fundamental background for his later translation career.

In 1938 he returned to China and was invited to teach in South-West Union University(西南聯大). In 1939 he was invited to established Foreign Languages Department in National Normal College(國立師範學院) in Lantian, Hunan province. In such a hard situation, he insisted in his academic studies and wrote the draft of *On the Art of Poetry*(《談藝錄》). He left for Shanghai in 1941, and he did not have a long-term job because of the unsteady situation. during this period of time, he had a big harvest in his literary creation. *Marginalias of Life*(《寫在人生邊上》), a collection of his short essays, was published in 1941. *Men, Beasts and Ghosts*(《人獸鬼》), a collection of his short stories , was published in 1946. His most celebrated work *Fortress Besieged*(《圍城》) was published in 1947. *On the Art of Poetry* was published in 1948, which was written in classical Chinese.

In 1949, Qian was appointed as a professor in Tsinghua University. four years later, Tsinghua's arts branches was merged into Peking University and then Qian worked entirely in the Institute of Literary Studies under Peking University. He also worked in a commission in charge of the translation of Mao Zedong's works for a time. Qian suffered a lot during the Cultural Revolution and he began to form his new book *Guan Zhui Bian*(《管錐編》). After the Cultural Revolution, Qian returned to research. From 1978 to 1980, he visited many universities in Italy, the United States and Japan. In 1982, he was appointed as the deputy director of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. He then began working on *Guan Zhui Bian*, which brought him worldly wide fame in the academic field. During his later life, he was still devoted to his studies, keeping a distance from mass media. In 1994 he entered hospital and never came out. On December 19, 1998, he died in Beijing. the Xinhua News Agency called him "an immortal"—a term usually reserved for revolutionary martyrs (Li 15 談錢鐘書化境說的科學性，湖南師範大學碩士學位論文).

Currently, there are no studies of Qian Zhongshu's translations and translation theory abroad, but in our country, both his translation theory and practice have been and still are very influential. His most important translation work, such as *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, *Mao Zedong's Poems* and innumerable translated quotations in *On the Art of Poetry* (《談藝錄》) and *Guan Zhui Bian* (《管錐編》), and his famous essay "Lin Shu's Translation" revealed his thoughts on translation and won great renown among Chinese scholars. *Selected Works of Qian Zhongshu* and *A Collection of Qian Zhongshu's English Essays* also provide valuable information for this thesis. All these works are important materials for studying Qian Zhongshu's translation. *A Study on Qian Zhongshu* (《錢鐘書研究》) introduces systematically Qian Zhongshu's works and his achievements in every areas, and it also contains critical reviews on his works. There are a few articles that discuss his translations. Zhang Deshao once wrote a quite long paper published in *Languages and Translation* (《語言與翻譯》) in 1995, which divided Qian Zhongshu's thoughts on translation into six parts and analyzed every part clearly. It is of great value for the study of Qian Zhongshu's translations. Dr. Yang Quanhong of the Shanghai Foreign Languages Studies wrote his PhD thesis on Qian Zhongshu's translation theory. There are two theses by two postgraduate students, Zhang Liping in University at the Heilongjiang and Li Xiaofei at Hunan Normal University, on Qian Zhongshu's sublimation theory. Nie Youjun wrote his master's thesis on Qian Zhongshu's translation theory and practice when he studied at Suzhou University. He produced recently a useful thesis paper discussing Qian's translation practices, which was published in *Comparative Literature in China* (《中國比較文學》). In many journals and magazines, there have been many articles that analyze Qian Zhongshu's translation theory and practice. All these materials must necessarily be reviewed and their significance considered for this thesis.

Although Qian Zhongshu only translated a few crucial texts from Chinese to English and vice versa, his translation theory continues to be very influential among translators in China. In his famous essay

“Lin Shu’s Translation”, he proposed his “Sublimation Theory” of translation, which later gained great prestige among Chinese translators. The quotations he translated in *On the Art of Poetry* and *Guan Zhui Bian* reward deep study as well. Translation and his theories about the art and science of translation remained a serious area of exploration throughout his life.

At present there are some studies on Qian Zhongshu’s translation; however, most of them discuss only his theory of translation and pay little attention to the work he actually translated. Some people have even said that Qian Zhongshu was only able to talk about translation in the abstract but rarely ever dared to translate anything himself. Anyone who has a sense of Qian Zhongshu and his works can judge that this saying is not true. This thesis will connect Qian’s translation theory and practice together to provide a fuller understanding of this translator and his accomplishments. This thesis will also attempt to promote Qian’s translation theory as a model for translation methodology in the future.

## 2. QIAN ZHONGSHU’S TRANSLATION THEORY

### 2.1 The first period: in the thirties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

#### 2.1.1 Qian Zhongshu expressed the difficulties of poem translation

In 1932 when Qian was still a student at Tsinghua University, he commented on *Chinese Poems in English Rhyme* (《英譯千家詩》) translated by Cai Tinggan. The comments he made in this critical review are considered the first major step in Qian’s translation studies (Zhang Liping 1). In his review, Qian thought that Cai’s translation of poems retained the form of Chinese poetry, but lost its verve (神韻), because “his (Cai Tinggan’s) translating examples in the preface of the book took one character in Chinese as one foot or two syllables in English, so pentameter equals Chinese five-character poems and hexameter equals Chinese seven-character poems” (“Essays of Qian Zhongshu” 115). This simplistic approach fails to take into account the syllabic variation allowed in iambic pentameter and hexameter and that cannot be used as a direct equivalent of the far more strict rules of verse that apply to Chinese five and seven character poems. The prosaic meaning of the poem is conveyed into English, but the beauty of intrinsic to its form is lost. Let’s see how Cai Tinggan translated Wang Zhihuan’s poem “Mounting Guanque Building” (《登鶴雀樓》).

白日依山盡，	The sun behind the western hills glows,
黃河入海流。	And toward the sea the Yellow River flows.
欲窮千里目，	Wish you an endless view to cheer your eyes?
更上一層樓。	Then one more story mount and higher rise.

The original Chinese poem is full of power and grandeur, with vivid images and artistic perspective. It brims with the poet’s lofty sentiments and aspirations when he mounted the building and enjoyed a distant beautiful view of his beloved country. However, the translation seems random and insipid, losing the power of the original poem. The last two lines were translated into a rhetorical question and response. It can be re-translated into “你想一睹無限風光、一飽眼福嗎？那就再登一層樓、再爬高些吧！”，which sounds like something from a casual essay or even an oral conversation. Zhuo Zhenying commented that it “seems it’s coming from a tour guide and fails to recreate the classic style of the original poem and reflect the personal consciousness of the poet” (55). Zhuo Zhenying happened to have the same view towards Cai’s translation that Qian Zhongshu had. This demonstrates that Qian’s view of poem translation is reasonable and influential.

In his comment, Qian also pointed out that “translation is a difficult task, especially poetry translation” (譯事之難，於詩為甚) (“Selected Works of Qian Zhongshu” 412). It is because of his sense of the difficulty of translating that he always took translations seriously and always avoided any mistake in translation.

### 2.1.2 Qian critically reviewed on Yan Fu's translation

In 1934, Qian published an article in the seventh issue in *The Chinese Critic* (《中國評論家》), called “A Chapter in the History of Chinese Translation”. In this article, Qian talked about Yan Fu, the most important translator and translation critic of the Chinese intellectual liberalization movement of the late Qing Dynasty. Yan Fu translated works with his own purpose, i.e. to bring new thoughts and knowledge into China. Therefore his translation was influenced by his own political agendum. Qian did not think Yan Fu's style of translating was “our idea of good translation”, but he praised Yan Fu for “the standards he (Yan Fu) himself aimed at reaching” (“Collection of Qian Zhongshu's English Essays” 39). In all case, Qian's fundamental opinions on Yan Fu's translation theory and practice were developed on similar lines in his later work, *Guan Zhui Bian*, in which he held the same view on Yan Fu's translation, but also developed his own translation theory. For instance, Qian wrote the article “Three Difficulties in Translation” to talk about Yan Fu's translation standards “faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance”. Besides representing Yan Fu's translation theory, Qian also commented on them and raised his own opinion: faithfulness in translation should contain expressiveness and elegance.

### 2.1.3 Qian expressed his primary theory of translation standards

In 1934, Qian published the essay “On Non-estrangement”(《論不隔》) in *Study Literature* (《學文》). In this essay, Qian quoted Arnold's *On Translating Homer*, in which Arnold asserted that the “mist, which stands between God and thee” is the biggest obstacle in translation. Later in this article, Qian also borrowed the literary concept “non-estrangement”(不隔) from one of the most important masters of Chinese “New Knowledge”(新學), Wang Guowei(王國維), as a standard to appreciate “good translations”. In Qian's view, in translation as an art (藝術化的翻譯), “non-estrangement” means no estrangement between the styles of the text and the relative translation. Similarly, in art as a translation (翻譯化的藝術), “non-estrangement” needs to hypothesize a thing similar to the text of the translation. This thing is exactly the feeling or realm or object which the writer wants to deliver to the reader. According to the “non-estrangement” theory, if the author's art can give the reader a clear, correct and unambiguous image of the feeling, realm and object, the author's art meets the requirement of “non-estrangement”: just as Wang Guowei's saying “if every words was in front of eyes, that was non-estrangement”. Therefore, Wang rejected vague and general rhetoric. However, if “non-estrangement” only means not to use rhetoric or verbalism or hackneyed allusion, the complete theory soon becomes narrow, never reaching new creative point. Non-estrangement is not an object, nor a realm, but a state, a transparent and clear state, under which the object and realm the author wrote are clearly represented in front of the reader (Qian “Selected Works” 185-7).

Qian's translation studies during this period of time show frequently his great interest in exploring historical materials on translation and employing a wide range of literary theories into essays of the art of translation.

## 2.2 The second period: in the forties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

### 2.2.1 Qian discussed the problems in poetry translation again

At the end of the 1940s, Qian published a series of English articles in *Philobiblon* (《書林季刊》), one of which was “An Early Chinese Version of Longfellow's ‘Psalm of Life’”. This article mainly talked about the communication between China and western counties. Meanwhile, it in some way touched problems in poem translation again. It was very influential to improve the study of poem translation. Later, at the suggestion of Zhang Longxi, Qian amended this article and translated it into Chinese.

In this article, Qian commented on Thomas Francis Wade's translation and Dong Xun's translation of the same poem and discussed different views on poem translation.

Wade's translation, as an American saying says, is only a “pony”, by which students deal with foreign language translation tests—translating the text word by word. However, Dong

Xun's translating version accidentally applies to Johnn Gottfried Herder's view: referring to the original poem, the translator can create his own poem. Unfortunately, what Dong Xun consulted is not Longfellow's original text, but the ambiguous translation of Wade's. In this case, media becomes barrier. On poem translation, two modern poets made it straight and clear. Robert Frost defined poem as follows: poem is what gets lost in translation. Christian Morgenstern thought poem translation contained only two kinds, bad and worse, i.e. if it is not worse, it is bad. A translation version might be a good "poem", regarding as the form of poem, but as the reproduce of the original poem, it is difficult to escape from bad "translation". (Qian "Selected Works" 330)

From the above quotation, Qian's view on poem translation was clearly presented. Qian's criticism was that Thomas Francis Wade's translation was too stiff, but he held a positive attitude to Dong Xun's translation. He said "the bad poem should be the responsibility of Dong Xun, while Thomas Francis Wade should be blamed for bad translation" (Qian "Selected Works" 330).

Qian had also planned to write a book to present and comment on those western books which were brought into China during the late Qing Dynasty, according to this article's footnotes, and this article would have formed part of the book. However, his plan was never realized.

### **2.2.2 *On the Art of Poetry* was published, containing Qian's understanding on the translation of literature, especially that of poetry**

In 1948, Qian's first academic work, *On the Art of Poetry*, was published. In this book, Qian asserted that poetry was the highest form of literary effort (藝之極致，必歸道原，上訴真宰，而與造物者遊；聲詩也而通於宗教矣) ("On the Art of Poetry" 269). Qian took poem's function such high, which is also the reason of his peak demand for poem translating. *On the Art of Poetry* can be considered as notes on classical poets and poetry, a book about the history of poetry, and appreciating of poems (Huang 45-6). It mainly focuses on commenting poems of Tang and Song dynasties, and at the same time it mentions western poem and then talks about the communication between eastern and western cultures. The book itself contains many quotations from western culture (Zhang Wenjiang 50) and Qian translated them into Chinese. Poem translation was only randomly mentioned in different places in this book, but it shows Qian's deepened understanding of literary translation, especially of poem, which are very crucial for Qian Zhongshu to develop standards of poetry translation and to posit his own theory of poetry translation.

### **2.3 The late sixties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Qian's third period of notable activity**

During this period of time, Qian published his famous essay, "Lin Shu's Translation," and it established the foundation of his translation theory.

His most representative commentary on translation was presented in his famous essay, "Lin Shu's Translation." This essay was written in 1963 and was published in *Collection of Belletristic Papers* (《文学研究集刊》) next year. It presented Qian's opinions on Lin Shu's translation, and at the same time advanced his own theory of translation: the function of translation is to transform (诱); an almost unavoidable problem in translation is error or distortion (讹) and the highest level of translation is sublimation (化). This article formed the foundation of Qian's translation theory, and it is also a very important Chinese essay in modern translation history. The sublimation theory has become the representative of Qian Zhongshu's translation theory and this thesis will discuss it in detail in part 3.

### **2.4 The fourth period of Qian's career: in the seventies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

After the Cultural Revolution, Chinese culture welcomed an important historic moment. In 1979, Qian's *Guan Zhui Bian* was published. This work of over 130 million words resolved outstanding academic problems in ten Chinese classical works, and expanded upon his translation theories and the history of

translation. Qian's articles about translation, such as "Three Difficulties in Translation" (《譯事三難》), "Straight to the Point of Translation" (《翻譯術開宗明義》) and "Implausible Transliteration" (《譯音字望文穿鑿》), can be found in *Guan Zhui Bian*. After this book, Qian published few works. In the preface of *Guan Zhui Bian*, Qian suggested that this book was not finished and could only be complete after adding at least five classical works to it. He also planned to write a book, *Sensations, Conceptions and Thought*, in which he planned to record his research and comments on western classical works. If this plan was realized, he would have discussed translation problems in the next book of *Guan Zhui Bian* (Zhang Liping 9). Anyway, his published articles and books, speeches, notes and letters have left a huge heritage for later generations engaged in the field of translation, and have inspired generations of scholars to explore the mysteries and challenges of translation.

### 3. QIAN ZHONGSHU'S TRANSLATION PRACTICE

#### 3.1 Qian Zhongshu's translation works

##### 3.1.1 Qian spent almost seven years translating *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*

Between 1950 and 1956, Qian published virtually nothing, because during this period of time, Qian was a member of the English Translation Committee for *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*. *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* is the concentrated reflection of Mao Zedong's thoughts. Besides, Mao Zedong's works have been praised throughout home and abroad. Translating them into English accurately is an extremely serious political task. Qian Zhongshu was one of those who were able to take on this responsibility. He was invited to take part in the translation work. After serious consideration, he accepted this difficult task. It was not because he was very arrogant; rather, it was the difficulty and the magnitude of the task that made him hesitate. It related to transforming the thoughts of Mao Zedong into another language and thus allowed for no mistake. Once he accepted the task, Qian worked very hard and carefully. He devoted himself to this task. He was in charge creating the English translation, as well as the editing and final layout down to the last detail. With his broad and profound knowledge and outstanding ability, Qian finished his task excellently. However, because the work was done in secrecy, few people knew it of Qian's achievements, but the translation of *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* did contain much of Qian Zhongshu's work.

*Selected Works of Mao Zedong* is one of the most important translation works of Qian Zhongshu and it is a part of Qian Zhongshu's life, and is exemplary of his achievements in translation.

##### 3.1.2 Qian translated Mao Zedong's poems

In 1960, Qian accepted the responsibility of the English translation of Mao Zedong's poems. In this poem translation group, Qian Zhongshu and Ye Junjian were the major translators and they also took in charge of the polishing of the translation. "The Warlords Clash" (《清平樂·蔣桂戰爭》), "The Double Ninth" (《採桑子·重陽》) and "On the Kuangchang Road" (《減字木蘭花·廣昌路上》) were translated and polished by Qian Zhongshu and Ye Junjian.

As more and more Mao Zedong's poems were published and the time span was large among those poem, to understand them accurately became more difficult. As the requirement of the translators, Mao Zedong answered their questions on understanding some arguable lines in person (Yang 34).

This work was temporarily suspended during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and it was resumed in 1974. Poems, especially verse in classical forms, contain few words but the meaning is various, therefore, it is not easy to understand. In addition, the political atmosphere was very tense at that time. The translation of Mao Zedong's poems could easily be judged as a political problem, so members of the committee in charge were extremely careful. In 1976, the English version of Mao Zedong's poems was published by the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing. It was a labor of love that took a long time to

produce, with many scholars' wisdom; therefore it drew attention both at home and abroad. Some foreign countries took this version as the official English version of Mao Zedong's poems (Yang 35-6). The finalization of the translation of Mao Zedong's poems also showed Qian Zhongshu's lofty position in Chinese translation circles.

### 3.1.3 Qian's other translation works

Besides *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* and *Mao Zedong's Poems*, Qian did not translate other lengthy works. However, he translated many quotations from other texts in his works, which are also highly regarded.

In *Guan Zhui Bian*, Qian translated many quotations from other languages into Chinese. For example, when he talked about the relationship between eyes and smiles in poems, besides many quotations from Chinese poems, he also quoted many interesting sentences from foreign languages and translated them into Chinese. San Marino's poem "Fanno ufficio di la labra/le palpebre loquaci, e sguardi e cenni/son parolette e voci, /e son tacite lingue, /la cui facondia muta io ben intend; facondia muta e silenzio loquace" was translated into "目瞋即唇物, 盼睐亦語言, 默默無聲而喁喁不止". Ben Jonson's sentence "You shall see sweet silent rhetoric, and dumb eloquence speaking in her eyes" was translated into "雙目含情, 悄無言而工詞令, 瘖無聲而具辯才". Troilus and Cressida's short poem in *Ulysses*: "Fie, fie upon her! /There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip; /Nay her foot speaks" was translated into "咄咄! 若人眼中、頰上、唇上莫不有話言, 即其足亦解語". Henry Vaughan's poem "Then peep for babies, a new Puppetplay, /And riddle what their prattling Eyes would say" was translated into "諸女郎美目呢喃, 做謎語待人猜度" (Qian "Guan Zhui Bian" 1222).

In *On the Art of Poetry*, Qian also quoted many interesting materials and translated them into Chinese to support his statements. He quoted Martin Luther King's saying "When I am assailed with heavy tribulations, I rush out among my pigs, rather than remain alone by myself. The human heart is like a millstone in a mill: when you put wheat under it, it turns and grinds and bruises the wheat to flour; if you put no wheat, it still grinds on, but then 'tis itself it grinds and wears away. So the human heart, unless it be occupied with some employment, leaves space for the devil, who wriggles himself in, and brings with him a whole host of evil thoughts, temptations and tribulations, which grind our the heart" and translated his words into "吾遭逢大不如意事, 急往飼牧吾豬, 不欲閒居獨處。人心猶磨坊石礮, 苟中實以麥, 則碾而成面; 中虛無物, 石仍轉轉無已, 徒自研損耳。人心倘無專務, 魔鬼乘虛潛入, 挾惡念邪思及諸煩惱以俱來, 此心遂為所耗蝕矣" ("On the Art of Poetry" 599).

There are many such examples of Qian's translation like the ones above. Qian's language and translation skills made all those translated quotations become indispensable parts of his books and all the translated quotations perfectly correspond to the whole style of his books. All those translated quotations are Qian's translation achievements. They are significant and indispensable to Qian's translation system.

## 3.2 Faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance in Qian's translations

In his great work *Guan Zhui Bian*, there is an article, "Three Difficulties in Translation". This article came from Qian's reading of "the Preface of Dhammapada Sutra" (《法句經序》) written by Zhi Qian. He argued persuasively that Yan Fu's good translation standards, faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance, all originated from "the Preface of Dhammapada Sutra" and meanwhile expressed his understanding of the relationship among the three words:

The faithfulness in translation should contain expressiveness and elegance. The aim of expressiveness is to be completely faithful, and elegance is not used to conceal expressiveness. Faithfulness means translating the meaning and meanwhile preserving the style. Zhi Qian and Yan Fu only discussed faithfulness, and did not research deeper. Elegance does not mean to add flowery words, but to convey information; faithfulness requires "meaning grasped, words forgotten" (得意忘言) and then it helps readers to understand the text. There are expressive but



not faithful translations, but unexpressive translations cannot be faithful. (Qian "Three Difficulties in Translation" 23)

As Qian said, few people know that faithfulness has a kind of relation with "meaning grasped words forgotten". Translation theories before Qian Zhongshu's always interpreted literally the word "faithfulness" and they overly stressed the importance of this word. Some translators take faithfulness to mean remaining absolutely constituent to the original contents and forms and take "meaning grasped, words forgotten" as a betrayal of the text. On the one hand, this implies that some translators do not understand the word faithfulness correctly; on the other hand, it also implies that some translators misunderstand the phrase "meaning grasped, words forgotten". Qian Zhongshu's interpretation of faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance is more dialectical and complete and when he translated works, Qian could always translate wonderfully those sentences which were hard to translate beautifully:

One two three four, we don't want the war! Five six seven eight, we don't want the state!

一三四，戰爭停止！五六七八，政府倒塌！

Tomorrow come never.

明日遙無日。

Two distinct, division none.

可判可別，難解難分。

The smyler with the knyf under the cloke.

面上笑，衣下刀。(qtd. in Nie Youjun "On Qian Zhongshu's Translation Practice" 37)

The examples above show faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance in Qian's translation. He would not sacrifice a faithful translation for the merely literal. All the translations convey the original meaning of the text, and at the same time they are full of beauty, accuracy and vividness.

"Meaning grasped, words forgotten" in translation is not meant to be a means of inserting the ulterior opinions of the translator; it happens only when a translator has no other recourse. Qian illuminated this thought in the article "Straight to the Point of Translation" (翻譯術開宗明義):

One of the "five foundation-losses"("五失本") says: "Sanskrit was totally changed (in translation) and then it followed the language of the Qin Dynasty. However, Jin Dao'an in his "Preface of Bi Po Sha" said: "Passing on books according to the translation of original texts must have some changes. Sometimes words and sentences have to be changed a little (in translation), and the rest are all literal translation of the texts. Also, "Preface of Bi Qiu Da Jie" says: "Translation of Sanskrit books are expressive only when words and sentences are changed. Therefore, some "foundations" have to "lose". If they are not lost, it cannot be translated. (Qian "Straight to the Point of Translation" 28)

Qian Zhongshu's above expression is the theoretic basis of "meaning grasped, words forgotten". "Grasping" and "losing" are opposite and yet are complementary in translation. Losing is not a betrayal of "faithfulness" to the text. Usually what is lost in translation is the sense of literary form because of the different characteristics of the two languages (Zheng Hailing 75).

There is a household Chinese saying "三個臭皮匠，頂個諸葛亮". If we translate it as "even three common cobblers can surpass Zhuge Liang", we can deliver the surface literal meaning, but its true meaning is unmanifested. Besides, few western readers know Zhuge Liang. Even if a reader happens to know who Zhuge Liang is, he might not be able to figure out why Zhuge Liang is connected to cobblers. If we translate it like English proverb, "many heads are better than one" or "collective wisdom is greater than a single wit", the meaning is correct, but the two particular Chinese images of "Zhuge Liang" and "cobblers" are lost. In *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Qian translated it into "three cobblers with their wits combined equal Chukeh Liang, the master mind". This translation avoided the loss of meaning or images in translation (qtd. in Nie Youjun 42). Thus, we can learn from Qian Zhongshu's creative translation ways.

When translating Mao Zedong's works, translators ought to pay more attention to the choice between grasping and losing. Because of the special characteristics of China's society, some Chinese characters have no corresponding words in English; what's more, Mao Zedong's articles or essays were quite colloquial, mixed with dialect and slang. Therefore, the translation of Mao Zedong's works is especially difficult. However, all the translators in translation committee were not average. They were masters in Chinese-English translation. It was the same with Qian Zhongshu. His profound language grounding in basic skills provided him the foundation to finish this task excellently.

Once when Jin Yuelin (金嶽霖) was translating "On Practice" from *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, he turned to Qian Zhongshu, asking for how to translate "吃一塹，長一智". After a few silent seconds, Qian answered "A fall into a pit, a gain in your wit". Hearing this translation, Jin Yuelin highly praised it and thought there could not be a better translation (Zheng Yanguo 42). Qian translated "打到土豪劣紳，一切權力歸農會" ("Selected Works of Mao Zedong-Chinese" 14) into "Down with the local tyrants and evil gentry! All power to the peasant associations" ("Selected Works of Mao Zedong-English" 25). In the same passage, "這個攻擊的形式，簡直是疾風暴雨，順之者存，違之者滅。其結果，把幾千年封建地主的特權，打得個落花流水" was translated into "In force and momentum the attack is tempestuous; those who bow before it survive and those who resist perish. As a result, the privileges which the feudal landlords enjoyed for thousands of years are being shattered to pieces".

The above examples show the style of Mao Zedong's works and the translation style of Qian Zhongshu. Mao's language was very vivid and interesting. Qian's translation accurately expressed the original writer's meaning and this expression was very natural, corresponding to the manner of the English language. It reads naturally and vividly, with no misunderstanding.

### 3.3 Sublimation in Qian's translation works

In Qian's famous essay "Lin Shu's Translation", he pointed out that sublimation was the highest ideal of translation for the first time.

Hsu Shen, the Han Dynasty philologist, has given us a note on an ancient character having to do with translation that is rich in connotations. In his *The Origins of Words and Characters* (《說文解字》), volume xii, under the heading 口, the entry for the 26<sup>th</sup> character reads as follows: "囹", meaning translation, with 口 as its radical, and 化 its phonetic. When the bird-catcher uses a live bird as a decoy, it is called 囹, pronounced 訛. Since Southern Tang times, the character 译 has been explicated as "to transmit the talk of the four barbarians and the birds and beasts", much in the same manner as the bird-decoy "entices" his feathered friends. The characters 滄,訛,化 and 囹 are interchangeable. The interrelated and interacting meanings in such characters as 译(translation),誘(enticement),媒(match-making),訛(misinformation), and 化(sublimation), constituting what scholars of poetic language call "manifold meaning", tend to bring out the function of translation, its unavoidable shortcomings, as well as the highest ideal that translators desire. (qtd. in Li Xiaofei 12)

In this passage, Qian proposed ideas concerning literary translation, such as the highest ideal, the inevitable shortcomings and the function of translation through the exegetical analysis and creative interpretation of a single Chinese character "囹". "囹", like many other Chinese characters, has multiple meanings which can be used simultaneously. Qian analyzed creatively this word to express his translation theory—the sublimation theory. In this essay, "Lin Shu's Translation", Qian further explained his sublimation as follows:

The highest ideal of literary translation is "sublimation", transforming a work from one language into another. If this could be done without betraying any evidence of artifice by virtue of divergences in language and speech habits, while at the same time preserving intact the flavor of the original, then we say such a performance has attained "the ultimate of sublimation". A British scholar in the 17th century, in praise of translation of this perfection,

compared it to the “transmigration of souls”, replacing the external shell and retaining the inner spirit and style without the slightest deviation. In other words, a translation should cleave to the original with such fidelity that it would not read like a translation, for a literary work in its own language will never read as though it were though a process of translation. (qtd. in Li Xiaofei 12-3)

From the above quoted explanation, it is clear that Qian’s sublimation comprises the following meanings. First, sublimation contains conversion, i.e. “transforming a work from one language to another”. Second, sublimation contains adaptation, i.e. using appropriate target language to express the source language expressively and naturally, “without betraying any evidence of artifice by virtue of divergences in language and speech habits, while at the same time preserving intact the flavor of the original” and “not reading like a translation”. Third, sublimation is a “transmigration of souls”, “replacing the external shell and retaining the inner spirit and style”, and so reaching perfection (Xu 92).

Sublimation is not a translation standard, but a goal and an ideal for literary translation. It promotes translators to improve their translation, to never stopping pursuing better translations.

In Qian’s own works, *On the Art of Poetry* and *Guan Zhui Bian*, all the quotations from foreign texts were translated into Chinese by Qian himself and all his translations were done with high proficiency and showed Qian’s incredible mastery of translation. From the following examples, we can get a better understanding of Qian’s sublimation in translation.

O! One glimpse see of the human face, and shake of the human hand, is better than whole reams of the cold, thin correspondence, etc.

得與其人一瞥面、一握手，勝於此等枯寒筆墨百函千牘也。噫！（“On the Art of Poetry” 320）

Everything is the same, but you are not here; and I still am. In separation the one who goes away suffers less than the one who stays behind.

此間百凡如故，我仍留而君已去耳。行行生別離，去者不如留者傷神之甚也。（541）

Why, at the height of desire and human pleasure-worldly, social, amorous, ambitious, or even avaricious-does there mingle a certain sense of doubt and sorrow?

入世務俗；交遊酬應，男女愛悅，圖營勢位，乃至貪婪財貨，人生百為，於興最高，心最歡時，輒微覺樂趣中雜以疑慮與憂傷，其故何耶？（438）

Such translations only could be from the mastermind, Qian Zhongshu. If there is no original text, no one can tell they are translations.

Qian translated Meister Eckhart’s sentence “I take a basin full of water, place in it a mirror and put it below the sun’s disc. The reflection of the sun is the sun within the sun, and yet the mirror remains what it is” into “以一鏡照形，以餘鏡照影，鏡鏡相照，影影相傳；是形也、與影無殊，是影也、與形無異”（371）。Some translators might get confused by Meister’s sentence, but Qian understood its importance and profundity and chose the appropriate structure with ease, reproduced the original meaning and style properly to reach the highest ideal of translation.

“Get a livelihood, and then practice virtue” was translated into “先謀生而後修身”（qtd. in Tan Fumin 97）。Qian translated “get a livelihood” as “謀生” and “practice virtue” as “修身”，and then combined them in a progressive relationship, which conveyed the original meaning perfectly. This can be called translating a transmigration of souls.

Such is Qian’s translation. There are many examples in his translation works. He practiced his sublimation theory perfectly in his own translations.

#### 4. AN ANALYSIS OF QIAN'S TRANSLATION

Every time when one reads Qian Zhongshu's books, one cannot help gasping in admiration because the language in all of his books is so wonderful. He himself did very well in putting the sublimation theory into practice in his own translation works. Qian was able to do that because of his accomplished language talent and translating skills. It is not so easy for ordinary translators to reach the sublime in translation. Translation is a comprehensive science and craft. It requires high language and literature skills, as well as translation technique. As long as the cultivation and practice reach a certain degree, a translator can reach the realm of the sublime, and then his translation can be fundamentally true to the original text.

The sublimation theory is as important as Qian's translation works. It settles the long-lived arguments between literal translation and liberal translation, foreignization and domestication. Chinese translators have been arguing whether literal translation or liberal translation is better, whether foreignization or domestication is better. The sublimation theory settles this conflict. It focuses on the final ideal that the translated works should reach for, but does not limit the strategies one can use in translation. The most important thing in translation is to translate works accurately, appropriately and beautifully, and a translator must use any translation strategies and skills available to do so.

For example, "One two three four, we don't want the war! Five six seven eight, we don't want the state!" was liberally translated into "一二三四，戰爭停止！五六七八，政府倒塌!" If it is totally literally translated, it will become "一二三四，我們不要戰爭；五六七八，我們不要政府。" We can easily figure out which one is better. Observe the following translations by Qian Zhongshu.

If you run after two hares, you will catch either.

腳踏兩隻船。

After rain comes sunshine.

苦盡甘來。

A good conscience is a soft pillow.

白天不做虧心事，夜半敲門心不驚。(qtd. in Nie Youjun 41)

All the above translations are from Chinese proverbs mechanically and they are typical domestications in translation, but they are still good translations.

Qian translated "吃一堑，长一智" into "a fall into a pit, a gain in your wit" and "三個臭皮匠，頂個諸葛亮" into "three cobblers with their wits combined equal Chukeh Liang, the master mind". We cannot only use foreignization or domestication to judge them, but they are definitely good translations. That is the advantage of sublimation theory. Whatever methods are used in translation, a translator can manage the translation appropriately to make them sound natural and have no hint of crudity.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

Qian Zhongshu was a great translator. He enriched traditional translation theories and created new theories. The sublimation theory is the core of the Qian's translation theories and his work has drawn the attention of the translators for ages. In Qian's masterpiece, *Guan Zhui Bian*, he quoted many Western languages and translated them into classical Chinese. His translation was as natural and as agile as his original texts. If the source languages were not given, no one could tell where his translation was and where his own writing was. This was the quintessence of sublimation theory.

Qian's sublimation theory has been advanced for over two decades. During these two decades, Chinese translation theories and practices have achieved much. However, in recent years, translation

study in our country has fallen into a silent period. Although translation research contains many aspects, such as the construction of translation theory, research of translation aesthetics, translation teaching, translation critique, translation history and so on, the standards of translation has been one of the focuses of translation theory. Its importance is self-evident. Translation standards guide directly translation practice, translation quality and translation critique. It also influences the construction of a translation theory system and the development of translation science, especially the teaching of translation. For years, translation theorists have been arguing about the definition of translation and the standards of translation. However, there is no definite, unchangeable answer which is universally valid. We must put translation into a broader background of discussion. This broader background is one of cultural exchange. Qian Zhong's sublimation theory is just such a premise. In his theory, what we look for is not a common standard, but a higher realm. Therefore, after the two decades, following the dark ages of translation theory research, we must re-read deeply Qian's sublimation theory once more (Zhu 105).

Besides the sublimation theory, Qian also contributed much to the development of a translation theory system, to make complete system. His translation works encourage later generations to pursue better and better translations.

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