

# English Translation Study of Romance of the Three Kingdoms in China in the Last Five Years

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**Abstract:** According to the research of Wen Jun and Li Peijia, this paper examines the articles and treatises regarding the English translations of Romance of the Three Kingdoms in China in the past five years. It is divided into four sections: Summary, Language, Literature and Culture. We point out the existing problems of the current studies; limited in traditional linguistic levels, leaning to the translation of Moss Roberts, neglecting the study of non-cover-to-cover translations, revelry at home and coldness abroad. Besides, we put forward the translation studies of Romance of the Three Kingdoms based on comparative literature to fill the gaps in the current research. The translation study of comparative literature pays attention to four aspects; literary translations and translated literature, cover-to-cover translations and non-cover-to-cover translations, *C.H. Brewitt-Taylor* and Moss Roberts, domestic and overseas.

**Keywords:** *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*; English translation study; comparative literature

## Introduction

In 2009, Luo Haihui published *Commentary of Romance of the Three Kingdoms' English Translation in China in Recent Ten Years* and selected ten papers written between 2000 to 2009 for discussion. The paper mainly discussed the English translation of Moss Roberts, explained the reason why Roberts' translation became the leading research text and introduced the research achievements of Zhang Haoran. Zhang Haoran and other researchers summarized the advantages of Roberts'

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translation from different aspects, such as translation strategy, chapter title translation, unique cultural word translation, honorific phrase translation and creativity of translator. They also pointed out the significance of Roberts' translation in the context of the global cultural background; cover-to-cover translation, literal translation and annotation help to keep the cultural features of Chinese language as well as spread excellent Chinese culture to the world. In 2011, Wen Jun and Li Peijia published *Romance of the Three Kingdoms' English Translation Studies: Review and Prospect*, which divided 68 articles into 7 categories. The texts were from 1982 to January 23, 2011. The seven categories include general introduction, translator research, translation strategy, translation comparative studies, culture studies, literariness studies and linguistics perspective research. Jun and Li Peijia introduced and commented on key articles and made five suggestions for the later study of English translations of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*: Multidisciplinary perspective, China and foreign exchange, translation collection, foreign derivatives of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, and acceptance and influence of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* overseas. The research trends and the direction and emphasis for future research were clearly shown. However, Wen Jun and Li Peijia's work has some shortcomings: Description is much more than commentary; the biggest problem is that they failed to analyze the problems revealed by the categories.

## 1. English Translation Research Status and Method of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*

### 1.1 Research Status

The English translation study of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* has gone from cold to fervent.

Before the 21<sup>st</sup> century, English translation studies were unpopular. But in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it turned from cold to hot and then to fiery in the recent five years. I searched 116 papers and treatises about the English translation of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* in different databases. There were 79 journal articles, 30 master's theses, one doctoral thesis and three international conference papers in the CNKI and VIP databases (without repeats). There were also three treatises in the database of the National Library of China (among which are 2 doctoral theses). According to the statistics of Wen Jun and Li Peijia, between 1982—2010, there were one doctoral thesis, 24 master's theses, four international conference papers and 39 journal articles (see table 1).

Table 1

	2011–2015	1982–2010
Journal article	79	39
Master's thesis	30	24
Doctoral thesis	1	1
Conference article	3	4
treatise	3	0
Total	116	68

By comparison, it can be seen clearly that master's thesis and journal article increase dramatically and the number in the five years exceeds the total of the past twenty years. This indicates that the English translation study of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* wins the great attention of domestic scholars. However, there is only one doctoral thesis. This indicates that high-level research is still in short supply.

### 1.2 Research Method

According to the research of Wen Jun and Li Peijia, this paper can be divided into seven categories (see table 2), but I have divided it into only four: Summary, language, literature, and culture (see table 3). The general introduction

Table 2

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
General introduction	1	1	0	2	1
Translator research	1	1	2	2	0
Translation strategy	7	5	6	3	6
Translation comparative research	5	10	9	9	4
Culture research	5	5	3	3	6
Literariness research	0	1	3	2	4
Linguistics perspective research	2	2	3	2	0
Total	21	25	26	23	21

Table 3

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Proportion
General introduction	2	2	2	4	1	0.09
Language	14	17	18	14	10	62.9
Literature	0	1	3	2	4	0.08
Culture	5	5	3	3	6	18.9
Total	21	25	26	23	21	

research and translator research can be classified as general research; the translation strategy, translation comparison and linguistic perspective research can be categorized as linguistic research; the literariness research and cultural research remain unchanged. Therefore, there can be a mutual comparison and we can see the problems found through a comparative literature perspective, which cannot be seen in the categories made by Wen Jun.

### 1.2.1 General Study

In 2011, except for the general introduction made by Wen Jun and Li Peijia, there was only one paper about translator research—*On Translator's Qualities for Translating Chinese Classics into English: A Case Study of Moss Roberts*. Based on analyzing the cover-to-cover translation of Moss Roberts, Haihui (2011) summarized the basic qualities of excellent translators; rich Sinology knowledge, solid

translation capacity and adept translation skills. Luo illustrated these three qualities in his translation. "Shandong" was translated into the area to the east of Huashan Mountain. "Tian" in "yingtianshunren" (acting according to the heaven and the desire of people) and "huangtianbuyou" (without the blessing of the heaven) was translated into "heaven," which shows the Sinology knowledge of Moss Roberts. Besides, four to five translation versions of "growl," precise word selection of "judging from your complexion" and supplementary translation of "tearing a person asunder by five carts" reflect the solid translation ability and originality of the translator. As for Chinese hour, terms of the *Book of Changes* and other characteristic cultural vocabulary, Roberts' adept translation skills are shown in his creative treatment in such areas as literal translation, free translation, amplification, and annotation.

Luo Haihui and Wang Haiyan (2012) commented on *Romance of the Three Kingdoms and Chinese Culture* and said it was the first English treatise based on *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. The article first introduced the main content of the book, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and Chinese ethic, Chinese history, Chinese drama and the propagation of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* in East Asia, as well as made detailed introduction to the articles of Jin Baoli, Hai Dan, Pan Kailin, Jin Zhenxi and Shen Bojun and the foreword by Moss Roberts. The book concentrated on the research achievements of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, proved the research possibility of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* from different disciplinary perspectives and constructed a cross-regional communication platform for Chinese and overseas scholars. Finally, the book stated the deficiency in that it neglected translation research. The book indicated the research direction for *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, for the first time systematically introducing overseas research conditions to provide reference points for domestic

and overseas researches and facilitate academic communication.

In 2014, two master's theses, *Translator's Subjectivity from the Perspective of the Skopos Theory* written by Zhang Pingyue and *A Study of the Intersubjectivity in Classical Chinese Novel Translation in Light of Reception Aesthetics* written by Zhangfei studied translator's subjectivity and intersubjectivity respectively. The former discussed translator's subjectivity based on skopos theory and believed that the "self-benefiting" of translator's subjectivity chose the text and translation strategy suitable for its purpose driven by subjective initiative after the influence of translation purpose. The latter studied intersubjectivity from the perspective of reception aesthetics and thought that a patron, as one of the translation subjects, played a decisive role in the selection of translation strategy. It was the relationship between the translator and the author as well as readers that chose different translation strategies.

*The Model of Academic Translation—Formation and Acceptance of Romance of the Three Kingdoms by Moss Roberts* written by Guo Yu and Luo Xuanmin (2015) selectively analyzed the technicality of Roberts' translation and believed there were two aspects: The technicality of English translation activity and the technicality of translation. The former involved the purpose and environment of translation, as well as translating in an academic environment serving academic purpose and ideal. The latter was reflected in postscript and annotation. The technicality of Moss's translation helped the translation win wide acclaim in overseas Sinology.

### 1.2.2 Linguistic Study

Linguistic level research mainly contains translation strategy, comparison of translations, and linguistics. We mainly introduce four treatises, among which two monographs were written by Liu

Keqiang, one by Feng Lei and one by Wang Shirong.

*Translations of the Rhymed Verses in Romance of the Three Kingdoms* took 204 verses in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* as original text basis, regarded two translation versions of English translator C.H. Brewitt-Taylor, the translation of American sinologist Moss Roberts and the translation of Chinese translator Yu Sumei as translation basis. Through establishing parallel corpus of one to four Chinese-English translation, the book obtained the translation of verses in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. In order to keep the integrity of verses, the original texts and English translations were listed separately.

Corpus Lexicography and Parallel Corpus-Based Compilation of Idiom Translation Dictionary of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* contains 6 chapters: Chapter One reviewed and introduced the history of corpus lexicography; Chapter Two mainly analyzed the features of using corpus to compile the dictionary and discussed the application of corpus in specific areas of dictionary compilation; Chapter Three made a brief introduction to the function of parallel corpus in bilingual dictionary compilation; Chapter Four presented the construction and annotation process of Chinese-English parallel corpus system of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*; Chapter Five systematically analyzed and discussed idioms of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* in the translations of Robert and Taylor; Chapter Six was the body part of idiom translation of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

Two English Translations of the Chinese Epic Novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms: A Descriptive Study* written by Feng Lei made a comparative study of two English cover-to-cover translations of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. The research methods first described the relevant factors formed by translations then summarize the methods and strategies used in translation through analysis. The research purpose was to describe and analyze the

generation process of two English translations of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* as objectively as possible to give an insight into the literary translation of English and Chinese languages.

*A Multi-perspective English Translation Study on the Traditional Cultural Items in Romance of the Three Kingdoms* written by Wang Shirong presented a comparative study of the military culture, folk culture, language culture and different cultural items with profound cultural connotations and abundant social function in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* from the theoretical perspectives of descriptive translatology and eco-translatology.

### 1.2.3 Literary Study

*Analysis of the Implied Author and Implied Reader in Novel Translation From Narrative Perspective – A Case Study of Romance of the Three Kingdoms Translated by Moss Roberts* written by Ao Xuan (2012) explored the different roles of the two translators in translation as well as the differences of translation purposes, motives and strategies through the contrastive analysis of English translations of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* translated by Roberts and Taylor. Roberts' translation is closer to the "implied author" of original text, while Taylor's translation approaches closely to the "implied reader." Both of their translations have their own advantages and draw the conclusion that translation studies and criticism cannot be limited at the linguistic level and translation studies should be done at the text level.

Li Penghui and Jia Dejiang (2013) discussed the representation of dialogues of characters in Roberts' translation from four aspects; representation of classical Chinese and writings in the vernacular dialogues of characters, representation of rhetorical devices in context, representation of character personality in dialogues, and representation of character status in epithet. For example, classical Chinese and writings in the vernacular include "one

cannot move a single step without honesty," "this," "prevaricate," and others. Rhetorical devices contain metaphor and split-up, such as "kuo" (meaning the door is too wide) and "一盒酥" (referring to eating the shortbread one bite per person). Character personality can take Guan Yu and Liu Bei as an example. Epithet includes "that guy" (a disparaging appellation), "a person with three names" (satirizing injustice and disloyal people), and "old guy without virtue." It is a rare article that discusses translation from a literature perspective. The analysis of dialogue style of character is of great significance to character remolding and the aesthetic feelings of readers. However, it is a pity that the article focuses on the dialogue style of character in the original Chinese and just puts translation behind the original text without analysis or representation of style. Instead, we should analyze the translation, studying the character remolding as well as the style and language features in the translation.

*"A Study on Character Remolding in Two English Versions of Romance of the Three Kingdoms: from the Perspective of Descriptive Translation Studies"* written by Wei Lianzhi (2014) analyzed the translations of Moss Roberts and Taylor and pointed out that in character molding, Taylor adopted target language standards to realize higher acceptability of readers, while Moss Roberts used source language standards. Although the two translations are widely accepted, the characters of Moss Roberts' translation are more faithful to the original text and more beneficial to spreading traditional Chinese culture. Therefore, during the translation of Chinese classical novels, if a translator wants to represent the Chinese elements contained in characters to the greatest extent, it is proper to adopt adequacy principles, namely sacrificing target language standards to obey source language standards.

In the *Poem Translation Study in Romance of the Three Kingdoms from the Perspective of Hermeneutics*,

Shi Chengrong and Luo Haihui (2014) compared and analyzed two poems in the translations of *Taylor* and Moss Roberts, pointing out their advantages and disadvantages and reflected on the fusion of the horizon of hermeneutics. *Taylor* focused on domestication and *Roberts* on foreignization.

In *English Translation of Poems in Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Chen Jianghong (2015) analyzed the reasons for differences in sentence translations in English translations and the influence of translation differences on novel dissemination and finally raised corresponding translation strategies to solve the problems in poem translations. Translation strategies included comprehending contents, analyzing functions, supplementing context, and seeking common ground while preserving differences.

*On Reproducing Tone and Mien of Characters in Literary Translation: With Examples from Moss Roberts English Version of Romance of the Three Kingdoms* written by Huang Fenbao (2015) listed the translation of three scenes: “Liu Bei flung Edou to the ground,” “The power of Zhang Fei’s voice unnerved Cao Cao’s men in Changban Bridge,” and “Zhuge Liang aroused verbal fight with scholars” to analyze Moss Roberts’ care and precision in word selection. He employed flexible rhetoric devices, skillful translation strategies and skills to represent the character personality commendably and translated their tone and mien.

#### 1.2.4 Culture study

Master’s theses focused on culture study, such as “*A Comparative Study on Cultural Misreading in the two English Versions of Romance of the Three Kingdoms*” written by Xu Chongyu (2011) and *Translating Cultural-specific Items: A Case Study of Roberts’ Translation of Romance of the Three Kingdoms* written by Sun Huanjing.

In *Comment through Reception Theory on the Transmission of Chinese Culture in Two Translated*

*Texts of Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Zhang Yanming (2011) compared and analyzed the translations of Zhang Yiwen and Moss Roberts, as well as analyzed their different translation strategies in concept, image, allusion, person name and place name. Zhang mainly used domestication as the approach to translation culture, while Moss mainly employed foreignization to keep close to the source culture. From the perspective of reception theory, the paper pointed out that the differences in translation strategy have a great relationship to readers. The readers of Zhang’s translation mainly lived in the 1970s when China was not totally opened and readers knew little about China; while the readers of *Roberts’* translation were the “scholars” who could fully understand China. Different translation strategies satisfied different readers and realized the fusion of horizons. In another article, *Enlightenment of the Translation of Religious Words in the Translated Text of Romance of the Three Kingdoms* by Moss Roberts, Zhang Yanming praised that *Roberts’* translation not only delivered the content of original text in vocabulary, sentence and textual level, but also conveyed the form of the original text.

In *Taylor’s Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Gender Appellation System of Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Chen Deyong and Zhang Rui’e (2012) analyzed the translations of “married woman” and “husband” in *Taylor’s* translation and thought *Taylor* deconstructed sexual discrimination through the meaning of “married woman” in the source text. The dilution and de-sexualization of “married woman” and “husband” reflected *Taylor’s* pioneer consciousness of gender, surpassed mainstream culture, handled the text and reconstructed gender relations. He had superior consciousness and practical advanced strategy. The article offered a novel selection perspective but whether the conclusion was reliable needed further study. Did *Taylor* make dilution and de-sexualization

intentionally? Or did *Taylor* fail to notice the gender discrimination existing in Chinese? Or was the simplified treatment the result of *Taylor's* translation purpose?

In the framework of foreignization translation proposed by Lawrence Venuti, the master's thesis of Li Yina (2014) analyzed the English translation of Moss Roberts, discussed the cultural characteristics of Chinese allusions and the classification of allusions in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, such as legend, literature, history, character and allegory. Besides, it expounded the application, significance and enlightenment of foreignization translation in Moss Roberts' translation. Li Yina believed that the flexible use of foreignization strategy in the allusions of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* translated by Moss Roberts could make the target language readers feel the different culture more directly so as to effectively deliver Chinese connotations. The application of foreignization translation strategy in the Chinese allusions of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* translated by Moss Roberts showed the significant value of foreignization translation in cultural connotation delivery.

*English Translation of Astrology Culture in Romance of the Three Kingdoms* written by Guo Yu (2015) described the mysterious culture of China, which provided true material for the novel to represent the primitive form of the society at that time, as well as put forward problems for the translators committed to spreading the work in other languages. Taking the translation of astrology as an example and through comparison of the translations of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* made by *Taylor* and Moss Roberts, the paper systematically studied the treatment methods of the two translators in face of problems. The author found that *Taylor* and Moss Roberts chose simplification and complication respectively.

## 2. Existing Problems

From table 3 and the above-mentioned introduction, it can be seen that the most prominent problem is that the English translation studies of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* are still mostly limited to the research of the traditional linguistic level (62.9%), an overwhelming majority, while literary study accounts only for 0.08% and culture study for 16.2%. In literary study, poetry translation wins attention and character recreation researches started, as well as tone of character, and literariness of the narrative novel. But these studies research translation skills and strategies based on the above problems. Culture study also has problems and only serves as an entry point, while the main body of research lies in linguistic translation. Besides, the comparison of translations mainly focuses on the two cover-to-cover translations, while other non-cover-to-cover translations are rarely involved. Based on the translation comparison of *Taylor* and Moss Roberts, Moss Roberts' translation enjoys overwhelming superiority, while *Taylor's* translation just serves as a reference object. Finally, although there are lots of related articles in China, high-level articles are insufficient and international conference papers are rare. Consequently, we must face such a circumstance where domestic studies enjoy revelry while foreign researches are sluggish. Moreover, the author found an interesting problem that those scholars engaged in the English translation of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* mainly major in English language and literature, foreign language and English linguistics. This may explain the existing problems of the English translation study of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Based on the academic discipline, the clear majority of studies concentrate on linguistic level, text comparison and translation strategy. It is the tendency for Chinese culture to go out, which creates a broad environment

for the translation studies of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and other Chinese classics. If culture needs to go out, translation stands in the breach and literary translation should go ahead. However, the one-dimensional research may fail to reach our targets and run counter to our expectations. At present, we not only need to continue study at the linguistic level but we also need interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, cross-national and cross-state comparative literature research visions as well. Therefore, we propose the comparative literature standpoint of the English translation study of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

### 3. Translation Studies of Comparative Literature

Xie Tianzhen stated, “The nature of comparative literature standpoint translation studies is a literary study or culture study for it is not confined to the understanding and expression of some linguistic phenomena, or participates in translation quality. Instead, it takes translated text as an established historical fact for research, regards translation process and the linguistic phenomenon during translation as literary research or culture research, but not the object of foreign language teaching and research for survey and investigation. Therefore, it gets rid of value judgments in the general sense and the regulation and guidance of translation practical operations so that it enjoys more aesthetic elements.” The comparative literature standpoint translation research is literary research and culture research; any translated text can be regarded as an established historical fact with more aesthetic elements, which is what the current English translation studies of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* lack in China.

#### 3.1 Literary Translation and Translated Literature

Yang Wuneng stated, “Translated literature

is closely related to literary translation. They are often mixed but do not have the same concept. Literary translation is determined by the nature of the original work and compared to other translation categories, such as scientific translation, military translation, etc; translated literature is decided by the texture and standard of translation, that is, it is still literature... As for excellent translated literature, the significance and value is not less than creation and it constitutes the important part of world literature and national literature.” No matter *Taylor’s* translation or *Robert’s* translation or other translations, they are a part of world literature and belong to English literature. The research of comparative literature focuses on the degree of acceptance, influence and change of these translations. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* belongs to China and the world and spread widely in Japan and Korea with profound influence as well as in the English-speaking world. Moreover, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is included in British and American history of literature and the history of Chinese literature compiled by Herbert Giles, Lai Ming, Liu Wuji, Sun Kangyi and Stephen Owen. In these collections, what conditions *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* shows, whether it has changes, and the reasons of changes, are of great research value to comparative literature research and Chinese and Western cultural exchange.

#### 3.2 Cover-to-cover Translation and Non-cover-to-cover Translation

The translation studies of comparative literature do not neglect any translation. Since other translations are not easily accessible or the limited influence of these translations has no significance to foreign language teaching and translation studies, the domestic research of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* neglects the studies of other translations. According to the inspection of Zheng Jinhui, there are other translations and compiled texts as follows:

Peter Perring Thoms' *The Death of the Celebrated Minister Tung-cho* (1—9);

Sir John Francis Davis' *On the Poetry of the Chinese*;

S. W. Williams' *Oath Taken by Members of the Triad Society, and Notices of its Origin*;

X. Z.'s *San Kuo Chih* (Chapter 1—Chapter 9);

George Carter Stent's *Brief Sketches from the Life of Kung-ming*;

Herbert Allen Giles' *The Death of Ts' ao Ts' ao, Eunuchs Kidnap an Emperor and The God of War*;

Carl Arendt translated Chapter 41, 42 and 108. The translation title was *Parallels in Greek and Chinese Literature*;

C. H. Brewitt-Taylor translated Chapter 8 with the title of *A Deep-Laid Plot and a Love Scene from the San Kuo*, Chapter 29—*The Death of Sun Tse* and Chapter 68—*Conjuring*;

Francis Lister Hawks Pott translated Chapter 29, 41 and 46 with the title of *Selections from "The Three Kingdoms"*;

Rev. John Clendinning Steele translated Chapter 43 with the title of *The 43rd Chapter of the Three Kingdom Novel*, subtitle *The Logomachy*;

Frederick Herman Martens translated *Chinese Fairy Book* into German, among which, *The Fire God* and *The War God* respectively described the stories of Mi Zhu encountering Spirit of the Planet Mars and Guan Yu exercising magic power.

These translations reflect the spreading of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* in the English-speaking world with significant research value. There are coincident parts, such as *The Death of the Celebrated Minister Tung-cho*, *Plots and Loves in Romance of the Three Kingdoms* written by Thoms and Taylor, *The God of War* about Guan Yu written by Giles and Martens, *Brief Sketches from the Life of Kung Ming* and *Conjuring* about Kung Ming. These translations provide rich material for literary studies, which can research character molding, differences

between foreign translations and the Chinese version and character image acceptance, such as Guan Yu, Kung Ming and Ts'ao Ts'ao. Comparative literary research pays attention to studying whether the historical character images easily arousing aesthetic feeling in Chinese culture are deformed or distorted in English and what are the underlying reasons.

### 3.3 C. H. Brewitt-Taylor and Moss Roberts

Although there are related introductions and research about C. H. Brewitt-Taylor (Guo Yu 2011, Chen Tian 2013), the domestic studies of Moss Roberts enjoy an overwhelming majority. The retrieved results of "Moss Roberts" and "Taylor" in CNKI are as plain as print. More importantly, most translations are comparative studies and Moss Roberts' translation wins overwhelming superiority. His translation is believed to be closer to the source culture and can spread Chinese culture better. Although some people raised the advantages of Taylor's translation, they didn't give proper remarks on the contribution of his translation. Culture communication is a process. Moss Roberts' translation can make achievements only based on Taylor's work. Roberts also stated the influence of Taylor's translation on him and improved the improper parts. The biggest contribution of Taylor's translation is that it first translated *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* comprehensively as a cover-to-cover translation spreading throughout the English-speaking world, which should be given credit. The application of domestication to the approach to a target language and the misunderstandings and mistranslations of Chinese culture must be considered to be beyond reproach. We should restore the translation into the given historical and cultural environment or give "sympathized understanding".

According to the hermeneutics theory, everyone has his own acceptance screen of understanding, existing knowledge structure and understanding

is the integration of vision. If we confine ourselves to guaranteeing the flavor of the original text, we may fail to realize the communication and transmission purpose. Literary translation and cultural communication experience collision, misunderstanding, mistranslation and mutual complementation. Later improvements and corrections are based on former misunderstandings and mistranslations. We cannot deny predecessors' achievements for just seeing descendants' performance, but should give proper evaluation and status to the predecessors. Besides, we don't know the acceptance condition of the two translations in the English-speaking world. We just make subjective judgments based on our own cultural position. Since *Roberts'* translation is closer to Chinese culture, we consider his translation is better and more popular than *Taylor's* translation in the English-speaking world. However, the fact may be another story. Just take an example. As for the aspect of approaching and representing Chinese culture, the translation of *A Dream of the Red Chamber* of Yang Xianyi and his wife Glaydis far surpasses the translation of David Hawkes, but their translation communication and influence in western countries lags behind Hawkes' work. *Taylor's* translation of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* has been published for 90 years. Many researches of the history of Chinese literature and sinologists in the English-speaking world adopt *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, which is the translation title of Taylor. Therefore, we can speculate that Taylor's translation is spread wider than *Roberts'* translation. If it is the fact, it may be an alarm bell to domestic researchers.

### 3.4 Domestic and Overseas Research

The revelry of domestic research is a normal response in the context of Chinese culture "going out," while the standoff of overseas studies is a normalcy. Chinese culture "going out" has been

raised to the level of national strategy and reflects the self-confidence of Chinese culture. China proposed the slogan of "Down with Confucianism" and completely denied Chinese culture at the beginning. But after the exploration and development of several decades, China returns to traditional culture. With the development of Chinese economic and political strength, China urgently needs to have a voice in the international platform. Since cultural soft power is an important guarantee, the English translations of Chinese classics become the focus of research and discussion in China. However, at the same time, we must face the overseas standoff of sinology study. Sinology study is an interdisciplinary subject in the English-speaking world. It is difficult for the study to enter the mainstream subject in the English-speaking world, get attention and exert great influence. Among the old generations of sinologists, such as Hsia Chihtsing, Patrick Hanan, Anthony C. Yu, Robert E. Hegel and David Tod Roy, some have passed away and some retired. The academic interest of new generations of sinologists has turned to modern and contemporary research. After the research peak of the Chinese traditional novel in the 1960s and 1970s, the present overseas study of Sinology and classical novels is bleak. Compared to *A Dream of the Red Chamber*, *Journey to the West*, *The Golden Lotus*, *Heroes of the Marsh* and other Chinese classic studies in the English-speaking world, the study of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is lackluster. Through email communication with me, Robert Hegel believed there were two reasons that *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* has encountered the cold shoulder in America. First, America does not want to talk about the civil war or reflect on any miserable memory about the war; second, America upholds individualism and runs counter to the collectivism, loyalty and filial piety advocated by *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

Chinese are eager to realize "going out" of Chinese culture. But there is still a long way to go

and it will require the arduous efforts of several generations. As Qian Zhongshu predicted, the development of comparative literature is conducive

to solving the problems of Chinese translation. The scholars of comparative literature should undertake the historical mission and step forward firmly.

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