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Past and present in translation collaborative practices and cooperation

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The collaborative translation of Buddhist scriptures in China: from the second to the fifth centuries

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Abstract

The practice of Chinese Buddhist translation lasted for almost 1,000 years, from the second to the eleventh centuries. From the beginning, Chinese Buddhist translation was a collaborative effort. While drawing on various historical sources, this article aims to reflect concepts and ideas related to collaboration through the discussion and examination of collaborative Buddhist translation, particularly during its formative years from approximately the second to the fifth centuries. I show that collaboration within Chinese Buddhist translation was a linear-cyclical process, where translators (yiren) were not only confined to conventional "in-betweenness" as the connotation of "translate" is broadened. In addition, the position and dichotomy of source text (ST) and target text (TT) can also be construed differently in such context. This paper also uses a case study to demonstrate conflicts within collaboration.

Keywords: Chinese Buddhist translation, collaborative mode, linear-cyclical, ST and TT, conflicts.

1. Introduction

Many scholars have stated that the study of collaborative translation is in its initial stages (Huss 2018: 399) and is still "on the rise" (Nunes et al. 2021: 10). The high number of recently published articles on this topic reflect that there may be a "new and richer way" (Dai 2021: 610) to understand translation. Although there are studies on collaboration and translation, these terms are often used more "as buzzwords or everyday concepts", and they have not been fully investigated academically (Zwischenberger 2022: 7). This paper will take inspiration from the rich history of Chinese Buddhist translation to re-examine collaborative translation. Nearly from the beginning of disseminating Buddhism, Buddhist transmission is "in many

ways a history of collaborative translation" (Neather 2023: 138). Although the collaborative nature of Buddhist translation has many similarities with translation in the West, it is also unique and distinctive. Therefore, examining the past may shed some light on current understandings of this topic because, after all, "the translation of religious texts is […] not substantially different from" the translation of other cultural texts (Naudé 2010: 285).

Having scrutinized Western modes of collaboration, Bistué admits the difficulty (*res difficilis*) of comprehending collaborative translation (2013: 15), and the same claim can be reasonably made about collaborative translation in China. That is, it is "complex in its causality" (Marais and Meylaers 2022: 1). A collaboration-oriented standpoint can, on the one hand, investigate translators or agents/actants, which conforms with Chesterman's advocacy for a "translator study" (2009: 13). On the other hand, it can also facilitate the examination of the intricacies of the "translation process". The combination of "a translator- and process-oriented approach to translation" (Nunes et al. 2021: 7) has led to the study of the "microhistory" of translators (Munday 2014; Wakabayashi 2018; etc.). Similarly, in this paper, both the concept of "the translator" as well as translation processes in ancient China will be explored through examples and case studies.

Therefore, this paper is divided into four sections. The first section is a general overview of the collaborative history of Buddhism. The second section discusses the concept of "multiple translatorship" and reflects on the image or identity of "translator". The third section examines the translation mode in early China, with particular attention to the following three factors: the linear-circularity of collaboration, the position of the translator and the binary opposition between ST and TT. Finally, contrary to or as a part of collaboration, conflict caused by asymmetrical power balances has been the central topic. However, in the process of Buddhist translation, it is often unclear who has the "upper hand", and the conflicts that occur during the translation process may generate a back-and-forth battle, incurring a feigned concession and compromise.

By illustrating the complexities of collaborative Chinese translation, this paper seeks to enhance scholarly understanding of collaboration and related concepts, as well as reconsider and broaden understanding of the notion of translation and the translator.

2. The collaborative translation of Buddhist scriptures in early China

Although there were a few cases throughout Buddhist history in China where translations were completed by a single individual, these were "the exception rather than the rule" (Raine 2016: 10). Therefore, the collaborative mode was "central to translation" (Neather 2023: 140). This was particularly true in scriptural translation, which lasted for almost 1,000 years in China. This disrupts the long-standing image of "translation" as something completed by a single individual (St. André 2010: 77).

Initially, only two "Mittelpersonen [lit. middle persons]" engaged in Buddhist collaborative translation (Fuchs 1930: 86). In such cases, a foreign monk – usually one with limited Chinese proficiency – recited the original text from his memory or held the substantial text by hand, rendering it into passable Chinese. After which, a scribe would "take (the translation) down with a brush". There was a variation of this practice that involved three collaborators, with one holding the text, one interpreting it into Chinese and a third who would transcribe the oral interpretation. The number of contributors and the positions of each (e.g., reciter, interpreter, scribe, etc.) varied greatly between translation forums (*yichang* 譯場). During the early formative stages of collaborative translation in China, typically two to five individuals participated in the process, with many audience members present physically. Since the beginning of the fifth century, royal families showed a strong interest in Buddhism, and translation was greatly influenced by political support. Buddhist translation gradually evolved into a state-sponsored profession under the patronage of the ruling class. As a result, translation practices thrived, and according to Zanning 贊寧 (920-1001 AD)'s account, the number of translation positions increased to twelve.

Summarizing existing information contained in colophons and prefaces from the second to the fifth centuries regarding the translation process results in a seemingly unidirectional linage, where "participants are often confined to their own roles" and could only start their own work after the previous procedure is finished (Yu 2022: 86). This could be illustrated in the graphic in Figure 1:

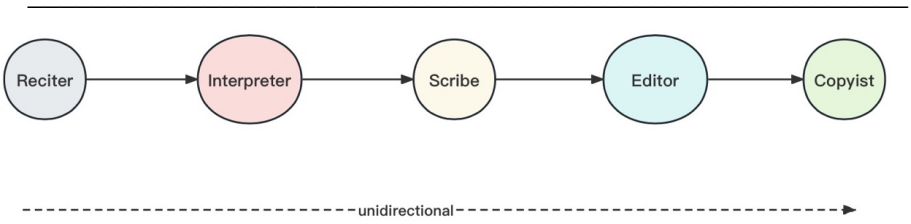

Figure 1: The lineal collaborative process

This figure shows a step-by-step process in a chronological order. In principle, the reciter was always the person who brought a scripture to China and was someone who could recite Buddhist texts. Due to their limited Chinese ability, their job was generally to recite or read the text in front of many participants at a translation forum. The interpreter was bilingual, and modern scholars consider interpreters to have been the "real translator". There were also cases where the reciter was also the interpreter, i.e., they were conversant in both Indian languages and Chinese (Wang 1984: 180). The scribe was generally a Chinese person responsible for a variety of tasks, including simple tasks, such as transcribing the words of an interpreter, as well as skilled tasks, such as improving the poor Chinese of an unsatisfactory interpretation. The editor, who was occasionally responsible for proofreading, would check the overall quality of the translation. Subsequently, a copyist would hand-copy the translated and corrected text for circulation.

Having provided a broad overview of collaborative translation in China, it is now pertinent to undertake a more detailed examination of this practice. I will examine the concept of multiple translatorship within a Chinese context as a starting point.

3. Multiple translators

The concept of "multiple translatorship" takes all translation agents into account, including publishers, critics and readers (Taivalkoski-Shilov 2019: 44). Scholars have become interested in the multiple voices in translatorship, which are believed to be the intrinsic nature of translation (Alvstad 2013; Taivalkoski-Shilov and Suchet 2013). Translators and other agents, as well as even readers, are considered to be able to shape and influence a translation to a certain degree (Alvstad et al. 2017). Although

scholars have clarified that translators are no longer the "lone originators of translations" (Alvstad et al. 2017: 4), the image of the singular translator persists in the popular concept "multiple translatorship" which implies that all agents related to the translation have "a finger in the pie", and therefore, they all should be seen as influencing both the translation process and the final product (Jansen and Wegener 2013). This concept has undoubtedly taken translation studies to a new level, as it recognizes the contribution of various agents to the translation process. However, the term "translator" is still typically viewed as a singular component within the collaboration. Although the range of "translatorship" has expanded, the scope of the term "translator" itself has not.

When discussing the collaborative mode of translation, most, if not all Buddhist scholars seek to identify the "real" translator and determine who was responsible for the bilingual translation (Nattier 2023: 218, fn. 18; Boucher 2008: 94). In addition to those seeking to ascertain the identity of the "real" translator, there are also scholars who assert that the "so-called 'translator'" was only one of the many contributors and was "certainly an important one but by no means the main one" (Baggio 2019: 1, fn. 1). In contrast, Radich and Anālayo (2017: 216-217) states that the treatment of translators' stylistic evidence for translatorship must recognize that texts were often "produced by groups" and that they may "bear the imprint of the style or verbal habits of more than one individual" (ibid). Therefore, when discussing translatorship, he usually refers not to a singular translator but to a "team" (Radich 2017: 3, 6, 26). Nevertheless, in order to attribute translations to a certain "single" translator based on stylistic evidence, he also seeks to identify the "actual translator" (Radich and Anālayo 2017: 217).

Collaborative Chinese translation is also a *generis sui* entity because it is difficult to determine who was the "one and only" translator when rendering scriptures. By examining paratexts – that is, extra-textual and contextual resources, such as biographies and prefaces – it is possible to reveal how past translators viewed themselves and how they were viewed by others. Who could be addressed as a "translator" in a Buddhist translation forum is very different from modern criteria: scribes, proof-readers, and even participants could all be categorized as translators. This compliments Cordingley and Manning's observation that "participants in collaborative processes may understand their roles differently from those who observe them" (2016: 22). The Bakhtinian polyphony embodied in this collaborative translating process involves the constant interplay of mutual influence between these "translators", which affects the dynamic translation

mode as well as its ultimate outcome: the translation proper. This suggests that there were "multiple translators" who were all responsible for collective "translatorship". As Pym says, the idea of translators' "long-term mono professionalism" is indeed misleading (2014: 163).

The central rationale for assuming the existence of multiple translators derives from the blur of word connotations that connect with the act of "translat[ing]" in Chinese. Similar to Bistué's observation that many Latin terms can mean "to translate",[1] there are many Chinese words that also mean "to translate", thus blurring the boundaries of translation and other translation-related actives. Meanwhile, however, the territory of "translation" has also expanded greatly by intermingling with other relevant terms.

One example of this is the term "*yi* 譯" and its derivative "*yiren* 譯人". *Yi* is often used to refer to the bilingual translation activity or product, or a person who interprets between two languages. Therefore, it is often equated with the terms "interpret/interpretation/interpreter" in English (Tao 2020: 21-29). Consequently, "*yiren*" frequently refers to a person who transfers language A into language B.

For example, Monk Sengyou 僧祐 (445-518 AD), who complied *Chu Sanzang Jiji* 出三藏記集 (*Compilation of Notes on the Translation of the Tripiṭaka*), stated that the term "*yi* means to interchangeably explain two nations".[2] Dao'an 道安 (312/314-385 AD) described An Shigao 安世高 (fl. 148-170 AD) as someone who "*yi* [interpreted/translated] Sanskrit into Chinese". In these cases, "*yi*" univocally indicates bilingual transmission and roughly corresponds to "interpret" in English. Consequently, "*yiren*" often refers to an interpreter who orally "exchange[s][3]" the SL with the TL. For example, the preface to T224 *Daoxing Bore Jing* (*Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*) mentions that *yiren* "orally transmitted (the text)". In the preface to T1505 *Siahan Muchao Jie* (*Commentary on a Digest of the Four Āgamas*), Dao'an requested the *yiren* to transfer the Indic language into Chinese. In these examples, the image of the *yiren* is, to some extent, similar to that of a modern interpreter.

[1] For example, apart from *interpretare*, there are similar terms such as *verere*, *reddere*, *transferre*, etc. See Bistué 2013: 22.

[2] The original words are "譯者釋也。交釋兩國". I will translate these historical materials literally throughout this paper.

[3] Behr (2004: 195-197) demonstrates the inner relationship between the paronomastic glosses "*yi* 譯 [interpret]" and "*yi* 易 [(ex)change]".

However, the connotational range of *yi* or *yiren* could be further expanded to denote a *bishou* 筆受 (scribe). This is one of the most ancient positions that appeared almost together with the advent of Buddhist translation activity in China. Moreover, it later became one of the criteria to judge the authenticity of a translation.[4] *Bishou* is unanimously translated as "scribe; amanuensis" or someone who "takes [the translation] down with a brush", implying the image of an amenable co-worker who obediently writes down a Chinese translation provided by an interpreter. This may have been the case: for example, in the preface to the Mahāyānistic T374 *Daban Niepan Jing* (Skt. *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*), the scribe is said to be docile and compliant to the interpreter Dharmakṣema (Chi. 曇無讖)'s oral transmission while scribing, without adding flowery ornaments. However, some scribes were able to do more. Sengyou proffered the responsibility of a scribe that a scribe should be in charge of the quality of the wordings – *wen* 文 (refined) or *zhi* 質 (unhewn).[5] In addition, being conversant and well-read in Chinese was a prerequisite for a scribe (Cao 1990: 46). Occasionally, scribes are also requested to be proficient in the source languages such as Sanskrit (Cao 1990: 43-45; Wang 1984: 186). The flexible and diverse skill set required of a scribe added to the ambiguity of the meaning of *yi* or *yiren*, as scribes could also be addressed as *yi (ren)*. For example, when monk Sengrui 僧叡 (n.d.) assumed the role of a scribe during the translation of T223 *Dapin Jing* (*Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*) at Kumārajīva (Chi. 鳩摩羅什; 344-413 AD)'s translation forum, he delineated Kumārajīva – the presiding translator – as "took the *hu*[6] text in his hand and orally expounded into Chinese". The bilingual transmission was done by Kumārajīva, and there is no record suggesting that Sengrui knew Sanskrit or other *hu* languages. Therefore, his job was to write down translator's oral interpretation and transform it into authentic Chinese – contestably an intralingual translation.[7]

[4] See Cao Shibang's example (1990: 41). During an inquiry aimed at assessing whether a translated sūtra was a pseudo-translation (apocrypha) or not, the interrogator asked about the identity of the scribe responsible for the translation. (T50, no. 2061, p. 813c1-3)

[5] These two antonyms are translated variously. Here I adopt Cheung's translation (2006).

[6] The Chinese character is 胡. It is a polemical word, and its translation is controversial. It could refer to Sanskrit, Kharoṣṭhī, barbarian, middle Indic, or generally foreign. To avoid controversies, I shall apply the pinyin "*hu*" throughout this paper.

[7] The specific contributions of Sengrui remain somewhat unclear, but it is possible that he was involved in proofreading and improving the readability of Kūmarajīva's Chinese translations. One notable example from the *Biographies of eminent monks* demonstrates how Sengrui may have assisted in this process. When Kumārajīva revised Dharmarakṣa's earlier

But Sengrui thought himself as taking the *yi* position – he wrote in the preface that he "屬當譯任[8] (took the job as a translator/of interpreting)".

Moreover, the connotation of *yi*/*yiren* could also encompass the duty of a reciter / a presiding translator who does not know the target language – Chinese – at all. According to the biography of the Kuchean monk Śrīmitra (Chi. 帛尸梨蜜多羅; fl. 307 – ca. 350 AD), he did not learn Chinese and had to communicate with others via interpreters. Nevertheless, this biography also states that he *yichu* 譯出 (interpreted and issued) dhāraṇīs such as *Kongquewang Zhou Jing* (*Mahāmāyūrividyārājñī*).

This circle expands when almost all attendees in a translation forum can be paralleled to *yiren*. During Kumārajīva's time, hundreds or thousands of participants attended his translation forum. According to the preface to T1484 *Fanwang Jing* (*Brahmajāla-sūtra*), 3,000 scholars examined and proofread more than fifty Mahāyānist and Hīnayānist texts together with the presiding translator Kumārajīva. The numerical phrases "3,000" or "thousands of" frequently appear in descriptions of Kumārajīva's forums. These "3,000" monks and scholars are considered to have "*yi* (translated)" in collaboration with Kumārajīva and are therefore regarded as translators

translation, he encountered a sentence that read, "天見人, 人見天" (devas see the humans, humans see the devas). Although Kumārajīva believed this captured the original meaning, the wording was overly literal. Sengrui then provided his own "translation" – "人天交，兩得相見" (humans and devas connect, the two are able to see each other). Kumārajīva was pleased with this modification. (For the original story, please refer to T50, no. 2059, p. 364b2-6; also cf. P.L. Vaidya's (1960) proofreading, the Sanskrit phrase is "devā api manuṣyān drakṣyanti, manuṣyā api devān drakṣyanti," which indeed means "devas see the humans and humans see the devas"). In this context, Sengrui demonstrated excellent skills in intralingual translation. However, it is worth noting that, in the *Biographies of eminent monks*, Sengrui's intralingual translation is used as an example to illustrate his "領悟標出" (outstanding comprehension ability; for a Japanese translation, see Yoshikawa and Funayama, in Ekō 2009: 283), which is an ability required for intralingual translation. Nevertheless, the original document does not specifically mention this ability to elaborate on Sengrui's translation skills. Even in modern studies, and even after Jakobson's tripartite types of translation, scholars often discuss "translation proper" while the phenomena of intralingual or intersemiotic translation are relatively neglected (Baker and Saldanha 2020: xx). Therefore, Zethsen advocates for research on "a whole strand of translation activities" (2009: 809) and proposes to discuss the position of intralingual translation in translation studies (Zethsen and Hill-Madsen 2016). Future studies that focus on the analysis of historical materials and provide modern theoretical reflections on proofreading as intralingual translation would help to deepen our understanding of this topic.

[8] T55, no. 2145, p. 53a28-29.

or, in the least, individuals who took part in the act of translating. It is difficult to imagine 3,000 attendees all engaged in translation. A more feasible explanation is that, while Kumārajīva expounded on the content of the source text, he received direct assistance from scribes, such as the abovementioned Sengrui; most attendees would question his interpretations and renditions while presenting him with hermeneutical questions and discussing how to digest the content correctly by comparing his new translation with former versions, just as the later institutionalized *sengjiang* 僧講 (monk's explication) did. Despite the likelihood that all 3,000 attendees did not participate directly in the translation, they nevertheless still were perceived as *yiren*, to a certain degree.

In *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan* 續高僧傳 (*The continued biographies of eminent monks*), an interesting comparison is made:

> 符姚兩代。翻經學士乃有三千。今大唐譯人不過二十[9]。
> There were three thousand scholars who translated scriptures under Fu Jian's and Yao Xing's reigns; in our great Tang Dynasty, there are no more than twenty *yiren*.

Here, the 3,000 "翻經學士 (scholars who translated scriptures)" are compared with the less than twenty "*yiren*". The approximately twenty *yiren* mentioned in this passage refer to the assistants in Prabhākaramitra (Chi. 波羅頗蜜多羅; 564-633 AD)'s translation forum, where T1604 *Dacheng Zhuangyanjing Lun* (Skt. *Mahāyāna-sūtrâlaṃkāra*) was rendered. From the description of its preface and records in *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan*, it can be discerned that there were at least three positions – *zhengyi* 證義[10] (proofread the meaning), *yiyu* 譯語 (interpret) and *zhuiwen* 綴文[11] (scribe to make readable Chinese) at the forum, and the responsibilities of each position were carried out by multiple contributors, forming a sub-collaboration as part of a broader collaborative endeavour. The people who engaged in this collaboration, including the person who checked to ensure the content of the translated text aligned with the ST, were addressed as *yiren*. Along the

[9] T50, no. 2060, p. 440b14-15.

[10] This position's duty is to make sure the translated content does not deviate from the original meaning (see Wang 1984: 194).

[11] *Zhuiwen* and *bishou* share many similarities and are sometimes even considered synonyms. Both involve transcribing translations with a brush. However, according to later materials, while *bishou* transcribes the oral interpretation verbatim, *zhuiwen* changes the word order to create preliminary passable Chinese (Cao 1990: 46-48; Wang 1984: 190).

same line, by comparing Kumārajīva's collaborators with these *yiren*, the 3,000 contributors of Kumārajīva who helped to collate the meaning could also be referred to as *yiren*.

Therefore, these multiple contributors could all be categorized as "translators", as they either conducted bilingual transition, or aided in the creation of the translation. Since they are considered *yiren* or participated in the activity of *yi*, they are clearly multiple translators who share translatorship among them, thus expanding the meaning of both "translate" and "translator".

4. The collaborative mode

This section discusses the detailed collaborative mode as well as the reflection of three adjacent and closely connected concepts: unidirectional linear translation, the position of the translator/translators and the binaries of ST and TT.

4.1. The linear-cyclical translation mode

When discussing collaborative translation modes, Zielinska-Elliott and Kaminka (Zielinska-Elliott and Kaminka 2017: 169) present three general types. The last type – which involves two or more translators working on the same text while translating into the same language – is more pertinent to this paper's discussion. The very act of "translating into" a certain target language suggests that, ultimately, there should be an end text.[12] Nevertheless, before reaching this final goal, there are many procedures that must first occur. These procedures, in contrast to the representation in Figure 1 (depicting one-dimensional linearity), are not only formed in an "eindimensionale Linearität (one-dimensional linearity)" (Alhussein 2020: 58) of movements. Instead, they encompass cyclical processes where discussions and translations are sent back and forth, obscuring the boundary between the ST and the TT, until a final end text, which will be circulated within the target culture, is produced. There can be many TT, some of which, under certain circumstances, can even metamorphose into a semi ST. Buddhist translation is, therefore, an eventual outcome that is based on bidirectional or multidirectional conversations, and the collaboration

[12] This term denotes the final end target text. For more discussion, see Rosa et al. 2017.

sometimes occurs transgeographically or even transpatially. This is similar to the "hybrid linear-cyclical" process that Yu proposes (2022: 86-87).

To visualize the collaboration mode and facilitate the demonstration, I present a flow chart (Figure 2) to illustrate the early basic translaborative pattern:

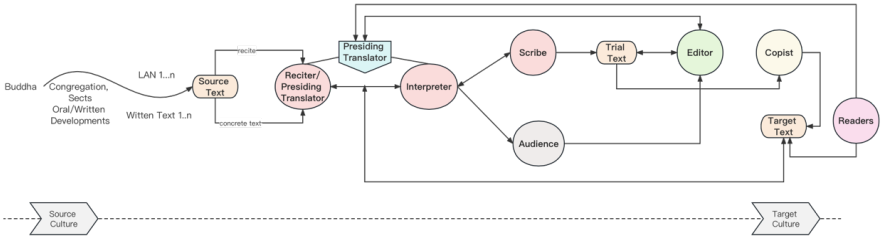

Figure 2: The linear-cyclical collaborative process

As Figure 2 demonstrates, translation is not only a unidirectional process. Rather, it also contains cyclical rotations. For example, when translating T1543 *Abhidharma-jñānaprasthāna-śāstra* in 383 AD in the capital city Chang'an 長安, Dao'an and Fahe 法和(fl. 349-402 AD) acted as editors. The Kaśmīri monk Saṃghadeva (Chi. 僧伽提婆; fl. ca. 383-398 AD) recited, and Zhu Fonian 竺佛念 interpreted. Two Chinese monks Sengmao 僧茂 (n.d.) and Huili 慧力 (n.d.) scribed. Fahe closely examined the doctrinal tenor. Until this step, the translation seems to be unidirectional, even though Sengmao and Huili collaborated on scribing, forming a small circle on their own (cf. Yu 2022: 87). Afterward, it was not Dao'an or Fahe, but Saṃghadeva, whose Chinese skills were not perfected until years later, first checked the meaning with *yiren*. Saṃghadeva's preliminary examination found that the quality of the translation was insufficient, and therefore, Dao'an and Fahe asked them to retranslate it. After the second translation, Dao'an and Fahe deleted four scrolls of content. Two years later, Chang'an was plunged into a crisis due to wartime turmoil. Dao'an died, and Saṃghadeva and Fahe went to another city Luoyang 洛陽 amid the mayhem. Within five years, Saṃghadeva's Chinese improved. He started to realize that the former translation was problematic, and therefore, Fahe pledged him to retranslate the scripture again. In this sense, *Abhidharma-jñānaprasthāna-śāstra* underwent at least three retranslations, and the final retranslation occurred at a different place, in a different time period and

with a different team.[13] The translation contains a cyclical process: not only was it translated and retranslated by a group of people after multidirectional discussions, but it was also translated transpatially and transgeographically, adding another layer of circularity to the process.

4.2. The position of the translator

One haecceity of Buddhist collaboration is that it is performed in real time before a crowd, making the translation procedures quite clear and transparent. Wang describes the spatial configuration of face-to-face translaboration during the Tang and Song dynasties (1984: 166-167). Figure 2, in contrast, delineates mainly the translation mode in a time period before these later dynasties that roughly corresponds with what most scholars termed the "preparatory translation stage" (ca. 67-317 AD) of Buddhist instillation and dissemination in China. This is also referred to as the "expounding sūtra period", with all participants physically present.

Early translation is a combination of translation and explanation, and translation can also be a homiletic method through which Buddhist philosophies are propagated and promulgated across China. In order to preach Buddhist thought, the presiding translator needed to communicate with the actual listeners either by himself (if he was good at Chinese, such as Kumārajīva) or with the assistance of an interpreter (if he was not, such as Guṇabhardra 求那跋陀羅, 394-468 AD).

As the presiding translator (with or without the interpreter) must expound on the doctrines in real time to attendees, he/they were not only "translator as real reader" whose first act was "that of a receptive agent" as identified by O'Sullivan in her unidirectional schematic diagram regarding the translation process (2005: 90-92), but also vocal message-senders, making other attendees (i.e., scribes, editors, audiences, etc.) into "real readers" as a corollary. These scribes, editors and even audience members – who either consider themselves *yiren* or are considered *yiren* – proactively interacted with the presiding translators/interpreters, sometimes making the latter into "real-time receptors" to the former's advice and censures, who then adjusted or defended their translations accordingly. Once things are concluded with the consensus, the copyist could "copy and circulate" the semi-end text, even though this version may require further revisions

[13] Cf. Daoci 道慈 (fl. 391-401 AD)'s preface (T55, no. 2145, pp. 63c21-64a28), and Palumbo who has discussed this matter in great detail (2013: 68-77).

several years later, as in the case of T210 *Faju Jing* 法句經 (Pāli. *Dhammapada*). This will be discussed in detail below.

This translation mode thus contains "many intermediate positions" (DeLanda 2006: 32-37) that could, to some extent, act as a catalyst for reconsidering the "plethora of binary concepts" (Marais and Meylaerts 2022: 7) that impinged our further understandings of translation.

Buddhist collaboration – with its many procedures and many contributors, all of whom can be considered as "translators" under certain circumstances – is constituted of complicated relationships between the many roles of the translation forum, where multiple translators can be regarded not merely as moving "between" the SL and the TL as Tymoczko perspicaciously suggests (2014: 198 and passim). The existence of multiple translators in a collaboration enables a translator to jump out of the conventional position of "in-betweenness" and to transcend the middle space of ST and TT, operating barrier-freely in "a system inclusive of both SL and TL, a system that encompasses both" (Tymoczko 2014: 196).

Accordingly, interlinked with the expansion of the concept of "translators", translators can move all across the linear-cyclical process in Figure 2. Another objective condition that further emancipates translators from the in-betweenness is the multifarious languages and cultures involved in the translaboration, as the multiple translators in a translation forum do not necessarily come from the same cultural background. There can be as many source/target languages and cultures as the number of participants.

One example would be Dharmarakṣa (Chi. 竺法護, ca. 239-316 AD), whose collaborators, as examined by Boucher, have various cultural backgrounds and come from different countries and regions. According to the summary provided by Boucher (2006: 30-31), Dharmarakṣa was assisted and patronized by "a diverse array of Central Asians and Indians" who came from Kucha, Parthia, Sogdia, Khotan, Gandhāra/Kaśmīri, India and other unidentified western regions. It is indisputable that his translation forum was "truly international" (Boucher 2006: 32). The plurality of nationalities did not only enrich the number of languages and cultures involved in the translation process, but also implies the existence of "intermediate languages". For example, in the translation of T263 *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra*, Dharmarakṣa, originally from the Yuezhi lineage but a resident of Dunhuang, expounded on the source text in 286 AD. He orally conferred the explanation to Nie Chengyuan 聶承遠 (n.d.), a Chinese individual proficient in Sanskrit. Nie Chengyuan might have orally translated Dharmarakṣa's explanation into Chinese or refined Dharmarakṣa's oral

interpretation into more polished Chinese, after which two native Chinese individuals transcribed what they had heard. Afterwards, one Indian monk and one Kuchean layman together proofread the translation. Five years later, a Sogdian bhikṣu, together with other Chinese laymen, went to Dharmarakṣa to confirm the meaning. Following Dharmarakṣa's reiteration of the sūtra, the translation was once again adjusted accordingly. During this process, even though the ST was written in a specific language, and the target language was unquestionably Chinese, there were other languages that were presented and could have played a role. For example, did the Kuchean speaker, under whom the initial translation was proofread and edited, influence the translation final outcome? Did the Sogdian bhikṣu's questions influence the alteration of wordings and expressions in the second collation? With the broadened concept of "translator[s]" and the addition of intermediate languages besides the source and target ones, the translators could move more agilely, emancipating themselves from a fettered "in-betweenness" and, in the process, enervating the traditional dichotomy of ST and TT.

4.3. The dichotomy between ST and TT

There is no static ST or TT. Text is not a still object; rather, it is a "Text-Ereignis (textual event/occurrence)" that should be conceived in terms of "in seiner zeitlichen Dimension und damit in seiner Entstehung und Entweicklung (in its temporal dimension and thus in its origin and development)" (Alhussein 2020: 102). Alhussein proposes that because texts are "multidimensional, multiperspektiveisch und multifunktionell", and likewise, TT can retrospectively influence ST (2019: 99-100). This also describes the identity of ST and TT in an open translation forum, where TT can be perceived as ST. This process can be equated with indirect translation and until reaching the final "end text", there are always "mediating texts" (Rosa et al. 2017), even though not necessarily in a relay of multilingual transfers, but sometimes more in an editorial sense – that is, edited texts versus unedited texts. There are many steps from the beginning to the end of a translation, and all of the texts in between are continually transformed by collaborative work.

One peculiarity about Buddhist texts is that there is no ultimate "original text", as Wynne asserts. It is difficult and even impossible to stratify early Buddhist literature because there are no "original" texts (Wynne 2004: 98). Therefore, St. André (2010: 82) refers to these indirect

texts as "intertexts". The lack of a clear original text inhibits the dichotomies of ST and TT, making the translation process a more continuous and non-stop one that progresses toward the formation of an ever-changing TT that may transform into an ST. Just as Schahadat and Zbytovský (2016: 7) propose,

> die Übersetzung wird […] in seiner Prozesshaftigkeit bzw. Fortwährenden Transformationsdynamik betrachtet, deren Komplexität über ein einfaches Binärschema >ein Originaltext – ein Translat< bzw. >eine Ausgangskultur – eine Zielkultur< hinaus geht.
> The translation is considered in terms of its processuality or continuous dynamics of transformation, whose complexity goes beyond a simple binary schema of an 'original text – a translation' or 'a source culture – a target culture'.

For example, when retranslation appeared on the historical stage, it was common practice to hold the already translated previous versions and correct their content by contrasting them with a new "source text". Many "ST" or sources of oral recitation before Kumārajīva's arrival in Chang'an in 401 AD consisted of miscellaneous languages because ST were generated mainly in India and its peripheries, including Central Asian regions (Karashima 2016: 34) and source languages were mostly Indo-European (Zhu 2009: 11). After Kumarajiva came to China, he established Sanskrit as the orthodox language and often used the Sanskrit original text to check the previous translations and then produced "new" translations. Consequently, in these earlier translations, the initial TT became a quasi-ST on which emendations, collations and new translations were carried out.

In this sense, there is constant shifting from ST to TT and retroactively from TT/new ST to TT/new TT – a concrete dichotomy between ST and TT is dissolved. Even though when finally reaching an end text that is copied and circulated to the target readers outside the translation forum – who could digest the content slowly, unlike real-time target readers who personally listened to the preaching and translation offhand – there was no guarantee that the end text would not be restored back to a textual form to be revised again, as the above example of the translation of T263 exhibits.

5. Collaboration and conflict

The focus of "collaborative translation" seems to be on the congenial outcome achieved when multiple contributors work together harmoniously to produce an end text. Nevertheless, all relationships in the process of translation can be collaborative, conflicting, "or both" (Nunes et al. 2021: 9). As Israeal (2023: 12) states, "translation projects have often triggered disagreements over concealed differences in opinion and functioned as sites of conflict".

Scholars have noted the conflicts within the collaborative mode generated by "power-imbalance", and they aim to deconstruct the translation process to determine who has the final say. Other scholars also discussed the asymmetry of power that creates conflicts during the collaborative process from various perspectives to show that translation is "conditioned by structures of power" (Saadat 2017: 365). They particularly enjoy discussing who has the ultimate say and "the upper hand" (Toury 1995: 184).

By examining all the voices within the translation process, it is possible to trace the diverse viewpoints of the collaborators who engage in a joint project (Buzelin 2007: 141). However, in Buddhist translation, no single translator is endowed with the power to make a final decision. The conflicts in Buddhist collaboration are more complicated. The "final say" is not determined by a single person; rather, it may be the outcome of the interaction of multifarious powers and fields, the examination of which could enhance understanding of the "relations of power underlying" the translative process (Wolf 2010: 341).

One case study that may illustrate the conflicts within collaboration and also demonstrate the difficulty of deciding who has the "upper hand" is the translation of T210 *Faju Jing* (hereafter abbr. FJJ; translated in 224 AD), which was a cooperation work carried out by the lay translator Zhi Qian (Chi. 支謙; fl. 223-253 AD), who came from a Sinicized Yuezhi group, an Indian monk Vighna[14] (Chi. 維祇難; n.d.), his companion Zhu Jiangyan (Chi. 竺將炎, var. Zhu Lüyan 竺律炎; n.d.), and a group of audience members who helped to establish the translation policy as foreignization. Together, they contributed to the translation of FJJ; however, their collaboration was fraught with inconsistencies, and eventually Zhi Qian,

[14] This traditionally accepted spelling, i.e., Vighna, is problematic according to Nattier, who thinks it should be reconstructed as "Vijitananda" (2008: 113; 2023: 218, fn. 17).

who functioned as a scribe and editor in this translation forum, feigned compliance.

Below is a translation of an excerpt of the preface to FJJ, which was written by Zhi Qian himself, and contains primitive and seminal information that requires further analysis:

> In the third year of the Huangwu Era (224 CE), the Indian monk Vighna came to settle in Wuchang. Under him I received a version of this sutra consisting of five hundred gāthās, and I requested his companion Zhu Jiangyan to translate/interpret it. Jiangyan was well versed in the Indian language but did not know the Chinese language very well. When he transmitted the words, he sometimes retained the Indian sounds, and sometimes translated literally. The result was a translation that was unhewn and too straightforward. At first, I found it lacking in elegance, but Vighna said, "The Buddha said: follow the meaning without decorations and understand the law without ornaments. The one who transmits a scripture should make it easy to understand without losing its meaning, then it is good." The attendees all said, "Laozi cautioned that "beautiful words are not trustworthy and trustworthy words are not beautiful", and Confucius also said, "script cannot fully express the word; word cannot fully express the meaning". One should know the intention of a sage is fathomless and limitless. Now we transmit the foreign meaning, we should directly convey it." Therefore, I had nothing to say and received (the translation) from the mouth of the interpreter. (I) followed the original content without adding literary decorations. What (I) didn't understand about the interpretations, (I) would leave it blank and did not transmit (it). Hence there were falling and missing (content), many hadn't been rendered out.
> […]
> Earlier (when we) transmitted this (scripture), some (content) was not rendered out. Just at that time, Zhu Jiangyan came over. I consulted him further and again received these gāthās, procuring 13 more chapters. Besides, having proofread the older version, some augmentations and collations are made.

According to Zhi Qian's account, there were conflicts between him and nearly everybody else in the translation forum. Zhi Qian's translation style has been unanimously described as "巧(skillful)", "文雅 (refined and elegant)", "文麗 (refined and beautiful)" by scholarly monks of later

generations, and he resorted to this translation style because "refinedness and conciseness" were trendy at the time. That is also why he criticized Zhu Jiangyan's translation, which was either transliterated or literally rendered, censoring that this translation style was not "elegant" enough.

When he criticized Zhu Jiangyan's translation style, it was not Zhu Jiangyan, but Vighna who brought the foreign text into China spoke for and defended Zhu Jiangyan. However, Vighna did not confront Zhi Qian directly; he prevaricated by first citing Buddhavacana – the word of the Buddha that enjoys the utmost authority. Agreeing with Vighna, all of the audience members joined the fray. They also reverberated with Vighna's point of view by citing Laozi's and Confucian words to reason with Zhi Qian. It should be noted that even in the preface, Zhi Qian acted only as a scribe, he should possess great power and prestige in the translation field. According to his biography, he was summoned for his renowned intelligence and erudition by Sun Quan 孫權 (182- 252 AD), the king of the Wu Kingdom. He was then appointed *boshi* 博士 [erudite] and tutor to the crown prince. In addition, it is said that he was also conversant in six languages. With all these traits and being the one who was able to host the translation for FJJ and also being an editor who could control the final outcome of the product as implied in the above preface, Zhi Qian seemed able to have the final say at this translation forum. However, at the end of the discussion, Zhi Qian had to agree to their criterion and write down verbatim what Zhu Jiangyan conferred to him.

Zhi Qian could have buckled under the pressure, and he lost his "power of speech" not directly to Vighna, Zhu Jiangyan and listeners, but more specifically to the representors of upper symbolic power – Buddha, Laozi, and Confucius – whose words were tacitly acknowledged as an "invisible" legitimacy of power, enforcing Zhi Qian to toe the mark. Zhi Qian could not win this battle in light of he was fighting at the odds and that his opposers cited unassailable quotes from great figures. It was possible to grasp Zhi Qian's passive resistance, as he said that he had to sincerely take down whatever was imparted to him, and he left it blank when he did not grasp the interpreter's intention. This conflict within the collaborative process was a war without gunfire.

In the current T210 FJJ, there are examples of transliteration and literal translation, which derived from the translation style advocated by Vighna and his supporters. For example, in Chapter Bhikkhuvagga (Chi. 沙門品), there is a pāda which the Pāli version reads:

	na	aññesaṃ	pihayaṃ	care[15]
Eng P.	not	of others	envy	should act[16]
Chi.	無	愛	他	行
Eng C.	not	envy	of others	(should) act

(extracted from DhP 365, von Hinüber and Norman 1995: 103)

Without Pāli or other parallel texts, one will find this Chinese hard to understand, even though it conforms to Chinese grammar rules. This may be the typical "literal translation" or nearly "word-for-word translation" that Zhi Qian opposed originally but nonetheless retained in the current FJJ, manifesting Zhi Qian's concession after the debate.

However, Zhi Qian was not a completely subordinate and passive "translator". For example, in the paralleling *Pāli* text, the original lengthy and redundant verses of the same provenance in the same chapter are:

360. cakkhunā saṃvaro sādhu, sādhu sotena saṃvaro,
ghāṇena saṃvaro sādhu, sādhu jivhāya saṃvaro.
361. kāyena saṃvaro sādhu, sādhu vācāya saṃvaro,
manasā saṃvaro sādhu sādhu sabbattha saṃvaro
sabbattha saṃvuto bhikku sabbhadukkhā pamuccati.[17]
(von Hinüber and Norman 1995: 102)

A word-for-word translation for the above two stanzas would be:

360. [*eye[18]] [restraint] [good], [good] [*ear] [restraint]
[*nose] [restraint] [good], [good] [*tongue] [restraint]

[15] As a euphonic combination, the "na-aññesaṃ" part should be "nāññesaṃ" (von Hinüber and Norman 1995: 103). Here it is separated to demonstrate the word-for-word translation.

[16] A free translation provided by Norman is "One should not wander about envying others" (2000: 52)

[17] Norman (2000: 52) translates these two gāthās into English as:

360. Restraint of the eye is good; restraint of the ear is good;
restraint of the nose is good; restraint of the tongue is good.
361. Restraint of the body is good; restraint of the-voice is good;
restraint of the mind is good; restraint everywhere is good.
A bhikkhu who is restrained everywhere is released from all misery.

[18] All nouns in these two gāthās are in singular instrumental case, which could be rendered as "with", "over", etc. As is seen in Norman's English translation above, these are all translated as "of". All instrumental cases will be marked with asterisks.

361. [*body] [restraint] [good], [good] [*voice] [restraint] [*mind] [restraint] [good], [good] [everywhere] [restraint] [everywhere] [restrained] [bhikku] [all suffering[19]] [is released]

The Chinese version, compared to the lengthy original, is very concise and does not adopt a *verbum pro verbo* strategy:

> 端目、耳、鼻、口， 身意常守正，
> 比丘行如是， 可以免眾苦[20]。
> (Constraint eye, ear, nose, mouth and always uphold body and mind straight; If a bhikkhu can do so, he could be remitted from all misery.)

If Zhi Qian truly followed other people's advice to take down Zhu Jiangyan's "phonetical transliteration" or "literal translation", as he proclaimed in the preface, these would not appear in the present FJJ, as Zhu Jiangyan was not *au fait* with Chinese and he was less likely to be able to shorten source sentences while maintaining the meaning.

Accordingly, as he indicated in the preface, Zhi Qian revised and collated the initial translation several years later with the previous interpreter, Zhu Jiangyan. This time, Zhi Qian had the "upper hand", and he was finally able to not only amend what was not rendered – partly[21] due to his tactic of not writing down what he did not understand – but also rephrase and revise the "inelegant" literal translation. In fact, he even went a step further. Nattier (2023: 342) illustrates in great detail how Zhi Qian inserted additional verses from other sources into "chapters that were already present in the original translation" and insinuates Zhi Qian possessed editorial license.

Consequently, Zhi Qian lost the battle and surrendered *status quo ante* but won the power to collate the translation in a way he was more conformable with *status quo post*. The power imbalance during the formative years of the translation shifted. By looking closely at the interactions

[19] This is a compound of ablative form.

[20] T04, no. 210, p. 572a2-3

[21] There are of course other factors that influenced the collation of FJJ. Another major impact factor could be the different source versions that were imported into China at that time. According to the preface to FJJ, apart from a nine hundred gāthās one, there was a seven hundred gāthās translated version before Zhi Qian and his collaborators" translation; the version Vighna brought to China was five hundred gāthās version. For a discussion on this matter, see Nattier 2023, etc.

recorded in historical materials, it is possible to better understand the conflict, recessions and even "revenge" that occurred as part of the collaboration, which can occur transpacially, transgeographically and transtextually.

6. Future Studies

The collaborative translation of Buddhist texts in China is a kaleidoscopic and fascinating, as well as dazzling and perplexing, process. This paper discussed some of this phenomenon, which could be found passim in the vault of this almost terra incognita, with most of it lying wide open, clamouring for investigation. Collaborative translation is nomothetic in the sense that it shares certain similarities with other translaborative activities; nevertheless, it is also idiographic when considering the large number of multiple translators who contributed to the establishment of the Chinese Tripiṭaka, the multifarious cultures and languages that were involved in its translating process, and the lingual gap between the source languages and Chinese – which was so dichotomously heterogeneous (Zacchetti 2005: 2) that Boucher considers the translation of Buddhist scriptures to be "one of the most extraordinary cross-cultural exchanges" (2017: 498). Future studies on Buddhist translation written from the perspective of modern translation studies should seek to enrich the discipline while also expanding existing viewpoints on Buddhist collaboration by applying an interdisciplinary approach.

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