

Lost in Translation: *A Dialogue with Henry Rosemont, Jr.*

與亨利羅斯蒙教授 對談翻譯

Written by Ilona Bray
Chinese Translation by Sicheng Xu

白旂蘿文
胥世成 中譯

When you pick up a book or sacred text that has been translated from another language into yours, what do you hope to find? An exact word-for-word substitution? A work as lyrical or powerful as the original? One that puts ancient words into modern language that you can easily comprehend? Or something else?

Audience expectations were just one of the many translation-related issues raised and discussed by Henry Rosemont, Jr., scholar, Visiting Professor of Religious Studies at Brown University, and translator of such Chinese texts as *the Analects of Confucius*, at a meeting held at Berkeley Buddhist Monastery on October 5, 2013. Among the many attendees were Rev. Heng Sure, Dharma Master Heng Yin, UC Berkeley Professor Michael Nylan, and Dr. Martin Verhoeven.



當您拿到一本佛教譯著或是一篇佛法譯文的時候，您期望看到什麼樣的文句？是詞對詞的死板板的替換，還是和原文一樣充滿感情、充滿力量的語言？或是希望譯文已把晦澀的古語文風，轉換成了便於理解的現代語言？或者其他？

2013年10月5日，柏克萊佛寺舉辦的一次會議上，著名學者亨利·羅斯蒙提及了諸多翻譯中遇到的問題並做了相關研討。上面談到的讀者期望，即是討論中所涉及的眾多問題中的一個。羅斯蒙博士現任布朗大學宗教學方面的訪問教授，曾經翻譯過如《論語》等漢文典籍。參加會議的人數眾多，其中包括柏克萊佛寺住持恆實法師、佛經翻譯委員會秘書恆音法師、柏克萊大學的麥可奈藍教授，以及馬汀維荷文博士。

會議上並不只有理論相關的探討，翻譯方面的討論也激發了與會者們立即付諸實踐的興趣。大部分人加入到幾個翻譯小組當中，嘗試英譯《大方廣佛華嚴經》和憨山大師的《夢遊集》等佛教典籍的中文



No mere theoretical exercise, this discussion was of immediate practical interest to the audience. Most are involved in group projects to translate Buddhist writings—including *the Avatamsaka Sutra* and Chan Master Han Shan's *Wandering in a Dream*—from Chinese into English. They know firsthand the hours that can be spent trying to figure out where a Chinese sentence ends, or seeking a word in English to represent a concept that exists nowhere in Western culture.

The translation process is made even more challenging, noted Dr. Rosemont, by a phenomenon described by the biographers of the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein: "Anyone who writes anything worth reading says more than he intends." In other words, great texts are rich in layers of spoken and unspoken meaning. Our understanding of their meaning can change over time, too; particularly, as Dr. Nylan noted, because "the insight that people have into the time period changes".

The good news is that translation "by committee" is proving to be an effective way to unpack those layers of meaning. Rev. Heng Sure declared, "It can be a 20-minute struggle, but then out pops a conclusion that none of us had reached independently."

All agreed that no one translation can do it all, or please every reader. That doesn't necessarily mean that any one translation is bad or "wrong". But a translator should, according to Dr. Rosemont, become aware of what goal he or she is attempting to reach, and of the choices that must inevitably be made along the way. Beyond that, he says, "You have to think in creative ways. Preserve the elegance, too".



段落。所有參與者都切身體驗到，諸如找出漢文語句的隔斷處，以及在英文中找出適當的詞語或表達方式，以傳達西方文化中本不存在的概念時，可能都要花上數個小時的時間。

羅斯蒙博士指出，令翻譯過程更具挑戰性的是，語言中存在著一種現象——哲學家路德維希·維特根斯的傳記作家們這樣描述它：「任何值得讀的作文，其內涵都比作者最初表達的要多。」換句話說，一部好作品從「能言」至「不言」之間，隱含有不同層次和深度的意境。另外，我們對於這些內涵的理解，也隨著時代在不斷地變遷。正如奈藍博士所指出的，這特別是因為，「人們對於作品寫作時代的洞察力，不斷地在改變。」

雖然翻譯面對著諸多困難，還是有一個好消息。成立委員會並共同合作的翻譯模式，正被證明是一個解開這些層層謎團的有效方式。恒實法師說，採用這樣翻譯形式，可能會有持續20分鐘的分歧和討論，但在這之後，一個各人無法單獨做出的譯文往往會躍然而出。

任何翻譯都不可能面面俱到，或者令所有讀者同時滿意，這是與會者們的共識。但這並不意味著，所有的翻譯都不好乃至有錯。但是，正如羅斯蒙博士所指出的，一個翻譯者應該清楚地知道他想要達到的目標，以及在這個過程中所不可避免地做出的抉擇。此外，羅斯蒙博士說，「你必須進行富有創新性的思考，並在譯文中保留原文的優雅。」



攝影由恒實法師提供 DM Heng Sure Photography