

On Translation

Reflections on the Translation Certificate Program
at Dharma Realm Buddhist University

關於翻譯

佛經翻譯碩士研修班感想

By Justin Lee on June 19, 2022 at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas
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李伯欣 2022年6月19日講於萬佛聖城
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我的名字是李伯欣，今年畢業於法界佛教大學佛經翻譯碩士研修班，並於2020年完成佛學經典研究的碩士課程。我深深感謝指導老師們的慈悲和智慧。雖然大家在Zoom的螢幕上僅看到我的臉，但你們真正看到的是所有在幕後奉獻成就我的人。言歸正傳，我想在今晚分享一些翻譯碩士研修課程的感想。

My name is Justin Lee and I graduated from the Translation Certificate program at Dharma Realm Buddhist University this year and from the Master's program in Buddhist Classics in 2020. I am deeply indebted to the kindness and wisdom of my guiding teachers. So while you may only see my face here on this Zoom screen, you are really gazing at all the people who have sacrificed to shape me into who I am. Without further adieu, I wanted to share a few reflections tonight from the Translation Certificate program.

Spheres of Translation

When I came into the translation program last fall, I presumed

翻譯的範疇

去年秋天，當我進入翻譯研修班時，我以為我們唯一要做的事情就是翻譯佛教經典。但隨著我們對翻譯的了解越來越深，我發現翻譯的課程內容遠超乎字面的意思，並且包含許多種「翻譯」的方式。

例如，我的一位同學喜歡照顧農場，另一位同學喜好烹飪和研究《易經》，另一位同學熱愛數學和文化的

that the only thing we would be doing was translating Buddhist texts. But as we got deeper and deeper into the work, I found out that there was so much more to translation than its literal meaning, and that there are many ways to “translate.”

For instance, one of my classmates enjoys running a farm. Another one of my classmates enjoys cooking and studying the *Yi Jing (Book of Changes)*. Another one of my classmates enjoys math and the vibrancy of culture. My other peers enjoyed studying Sanskrit, playing basketball, rock climbing, making GIFs, and designing homemade calendars. As the weeks went on, I came to see that while these activities didn't fit my preconceived notions of “translation,” they were in fact the very expressions of it. After all, the word “translate” comes from the Latin components “trans” meaning “across” and “latus” meaning “carried.” In essence, “to translate” means “to carry across.” We can carry across meaning with words, but this is not the only medium.

When we are farming, we carry across meaning through planting and harvesting. When we are cooking, we carry across meaning through flavor. When we are playing basketball or rock climbing, we carry across meaning through movement. In a sense, these can all be considered “translations.”

For me, it seemed the boundaries between the literary work of translation and lived, day-to-day experience of translation had become blurred. And I was left questioning: what exactly does it mean “to translate?” I don't know. And perhaps that is the answer. I don't know. In my eyes, it seemed everyone had become a “translator.”

But I feel that these spheres of translation need not stop here. They can grow ever larger. When we interact with people in different academic disciplines, such as computer science, psychology, biochemistry, arts, athletics, and so forth, we are indeed also translating. When we interact with people from diverse cultural backgrounds or people with different life experiences from us, we are also translating. When nations interact with each other via policies and such, these are also translations.

We are always translating in whatever we do, whether we know it or not. This was my first observation that I came to see.

Translation in a Fragmented World

However, how we translate is a far more pressing concern, and it is a concern not only for translators of scriptural texts, but a concern for all people on this planet. How we translate, how we convey meaning across the chasm of misunderstanding, is an issue that humanity faces in the current era.

活力，還有同學對梵文、打籃球、攀岩、製作GIF動畫和設計日曆感興趣。隨著時間的推移，我逐漸發現，雖然這些活動完全超出我對「翻譯」的認知，但事實上這些活動正是「翻譯」的體現。「翻譯」的英文字眼來自拉丁文的 *trans*（即跨越之意）和 *latus*（即傳遞之意）。從本質上而言，翻譯意味著跨越。我們可以用語言來傳達意義，但這不是唯一的媒介。

在農場耕作時，我們藉由種植和收穫來傳遞意義。在烹調時，我們通過味道來傳遞意義。在打籃球或攀岩時，我們透過運動來傳遞意義。就某種意義而言，這些都可以被視為是「翻譯」。

對我而言，翻譯在文字工作與日復一日的的生活經驗的界線變得模糊。我不禁要問：「翻譯」的意思究竟是什麼？我不明白。或許這就是答案，我不知道，在我看來，似乎人人都可以成為「翻譯者」。

但我認為，翻譯的範疇並不局限於此，而是向外擴大。當我們與不同科系的同學切磋時，例如電腦科學、心理學、生物化學、藝術、體育等科系，我們確實是在翻譯。當我們與來自不同文化背景、不同生活經驗的人們互動時，我們也在翻譯。當國與國之間通過政策等進行交流時，這些也在翻譯。

無論我們做什麼，總是在翻譯，無論我們是否意識到。這是我到這裡所得到的第一個觀察結果。

在支離破碎的世界中翻譯

With the crises befalling the world—the pandemic; the war between Russia and Ukraine; fleeing refugees in the millions; conflicts in the Middle East; and the myriads of other social ailments, such as poverty, systemic racism, wealth inequality, consumerist culture, and the like—one may ask how this work of translation can be of any relevance at all. After all, we are just working with scriptures, right?

At the International Institute for the Translation of Buddhist Texts (IITBT), we have a code of ethics called the Eight Guidelines. For those who are not familiar with the eight guidelines, you may visit their website to read about them.

It dawned that these principles were not simply Buddhist principles. They were human principles. They were revealed because we are human and must be human. They exist because they wish to point to our fundamental nature that is universally accessible to everyone. It does not matter if we are Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, atheist, Caucasian, Hispanic, African American, Asian, and so forth—these principles exist because they wish to align our hearts and minds to our deeper humanity, one based on common values such as ethics, respect, wisdom, friendliness, and stillness, to only name a few.

Of the Eight Guidelines, the one I most reflected upon over the past year was the Fourth Guideline, which says:

Translators and volunteers must not establish themselves as the standard of correctness and suppress the work of others with their fault-finding.

In the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, a text that we worked with in the past year during the program, it says that people who wish to walk the bodhisattva path aspire “to directly know and perceive with utterly clear cognition all worlds in all their vastness and countless varieties.” By this definition, a bodhisattva — one of the highest expressions of our human potential — is any person who wishes to awaken others and themselves to their full potential.

When I read this passage in juxtaposition with the Fourth Principle, it unlocked its deeper meanings. At its heart, both a translator and a bodhisattva share a similar aspiration to know all worlds in their countless varieties. Both aspire to save through the conveyance of meaning. From this line of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, the goal of a translator, then, is not to seek for an ultimate truth, if there is one, but rather to embrace an infinite variety of “truths”

然而，我們如何翻譯是一個更迫切的問題，它不僅是經文翻譯者關注的問題，也是這個地球上所有人類關切的問題。我們如何翻譯、如何跨越曲解的鴻溝傳達意義，是人們當前所面臨的問題。

隨著危機降臨世界——新冠肺炎大流行、俄羅斯和烏克蘭之間的戰爭、數以百萬計的難民、中東的衝突；以及其他無數的社會問題，例如貧困、結構性種族主義、財富不均、消費主義文化等，人們可能會問—翻譯這項工作如何有關連性？畢竟，我們只是在經文上做文章，不是嗎？

在國際譯經學院（IITBT），我們有一個箴規，叫做八項基本守則。不清楚這些規範的人，可以瀏覽學院網頁的相關內容。

它讓我意識到，這些守則不僅是佛教的原則，也是作人的準則。八項守則被條列出來，是因為我們身為人，就該有人的樣子。這些規則的存在是希望指出我們的本性，這也是人人本自具有。無論我們是佛教徒、基督徒、穆斯林、無神論者、高加索裔、西語裔、非裔、亞裔等等，這些原則的存在是要將我們的心和認知與我們更深層的人性結合起來，這種人性的相同價值觀，例如道德、尊重、智慧、友善和寧靜，以上僅列舉幾例。

在這八項守則中，我在過去一年中最常反省的就是第四條，它是：

從事翻譯工作者不得自以為是，對他人作品吹毛求疵。

《華嚴經》中有一段經文是我們在過去一年的課程中學習的，文中說發願行菩薩道的人應矢志「十方無量。種種不同，智皆明了，現前知見。」根據這個定義，菩薩是我們人類潛能

that can all exist simultaneously. This is what it means to “directly know and perceive with utterly clear cognition all worlds.” We each have our own worlds, with their own set of truths and their own set of realities.

Wisdom, it seems, is not so much about choosing to be “right,” but about choosing to “understand,” to understand the multiplicity of perspectives, of truths, and of worlds. It does not strive for all things to be the same. It allows for the multiplicity of experiences and traditions to exist rooted in an understanding of a common humanity. It acknowledges differences rather than fears it. This spirit of understanding will perhaps be one of the most pressing concerns of our time and will likely dictate the course of our humanity.

In a deeper sense, the Fourth Principle teaches us that no tradition, faith, person, or association can assume themselves as the “standard of correctness” for the way things ought to be. This is one of the quickest ways to initiate a conflict and is evident in the violence we see today. Everyone wants to be “right.” Few people wish to understand.

Most, if not all, social ailments come from being unable to understand one another. We kill one another because of it. We blow each other up because of it. We cast people into the shadows because of it. We deprive people of their humanity, we silence people, we blame people because of it.

It takes courage to conquer others, but it takes greater courage to conquer ourselves.

Can we have the courage to lay down arms, whatever they may be, and try to understand? Can we see the common humanity beneath all of the so-called labels we take for real? If we wish to live our lives meaningfully, we need to set aside our notions about each other, look past all the names, all the labels, and even our painful histories and mistakes, and try to understand one another. Only then can we truly be considered “humans.” Only then can we truly be considered “translators.” We may not be perfect at first, but at least we try. And that is enough.

These are my reflections for tonight. Thank you. ❀

最極致的表現之一，也就是發願幫助自己和其他人覺醒的人。

當我把這段經文與國際譯經學院八項守則的第四條並列閱讀時，它解開更深層的含義。就其核心而言，譯者和菩薩都有一個相似的志願，即了解所有世界的種種類別。兩者都立志通過傳遞意義來度化（眾生）。從《華嚴經》的這句經文來看，譯者的目標並非尋求一個究竟的真理（如果有的話），而是接受一個無限的「真理」，這些真理是可以同時並存。這就是「十方無量。種種不同，智皆明了，現前知見。」的意思。我們每個人都有自己所屬的世界，有自己認定的一套真理和現實。

看來，智慧與其說是選擇「正確」，不如說是選擇「理解」，理解各種觀點、真理和世界的多樣性。智慧並非追求所有事物都要一致，而是允許經驗和傳統的多樣性存在。以對全人類的理解為本，接受差異而非害怕有所不同。這種理解的精神也許是我們這個時代最迫切的議題之一，還可能決定我們人類的發展。

在更深的意義上，第四項守則教導我們，任何傳統、信仰、個人或組織都不能自以為是。這是最容易引發衝突的一種方式，現今生活中的暴力事件就是明顯的例子。每個人都希望自己是「正確的」，但很少有人願意去理解。

多數（如果不是全部）社會問題源自於無法相互理解，我們因而互相傷害、互相戰爭、讓人蒙上陰影、剝奪人性、使人噤聲，並且因此責怪他人。

征服他人需要勇氣，但征服自己需要更大的勇氣。我們是否有勇氣放下武器（無論是何種武裝）並嘗試去理解？我們是否能在所有我們認同的標籤下看到共通的人性？如果我們希望有意義地生活，我們需要放下對彼此的成見，忽略所有的假名、所有的標籤，甚至那些沉痛的歷史和錯誤，試著相互理解。唯有如此，我們才能真正被視為「人」。唯有如此，我們才能真正被認定是「翻譯者」。一開始我們可能並不完美，但至少我們努力了，這已足夠。以上是我今晚的心得分享，謝謝。 ❀