

## Original Paper

# The Commentary and Analysis of English Translation of Changsheng Mijue in A Description of the Empire of China and Chinese Tartary

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### Abstract

*The Cave English translation version of A Description of the Empire of China and Chinese Tartary, one of the "three major masterworks" of European sinology, involves the content of traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the final section of which is a reorganized and abridged translation of Changsheng Mijue (The Secrets of Longevity) written by Shi Chengjin of the Qing dynasty. Through the discussion of original text and main content of this abridged English translation version, as well as an in-depth analysis of the characteristics and methods represented by the annotation translation, which is highlighted in this essay, it is suggested that the acceptance and understanding of the audience should be regarded as the fundamental criteria, various translation methods and strategies should be flexibly adopted, and the training of talents with compound cross-cultural skills and the promotion and practice of Sino-Western cross-cultural cooperative and exchange models should be continuously strengthened, so that more and more excellent ancient books of TCM can be boosted to spread overseas.*

### Keywords

*A Description of the Empire of China and Chinese Tartary, Changsheng Mijue (The Secrets of Longevity), English Translation*

## 1. Introduction

In 1735, A book about China was published in France, titled *Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique et physique de l'empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie chinoise* and translated

into Chinese as “中华帝国全志”. This four-volume folio work was compiled by the French missionary, geographer, and sinologist Jean-Baptiste Du Halde (1674-1743) based on extremely rich and fist-hand reports from 27 missionaries who visited China in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, due to the compilation of *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangères* (Chinese name is “耶稣会士中国书简集”). It is considered one of the "three major masterworks" of European sinology and an important document for Europeans to understand China (including TCM) in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The content is comprehensive, covering geography, history, politics, religion, economy, folklore, products, science and technology, education, language, and literature in China. The section of TCM is included in Volume III. After its initial publication, the book was well-received and soon appeared in various English translation editions, in particular, the 1738 translation edition published by "E Cave" is relatively complete, titled *A Description of the Empire of China and Chinese Tartary* (abbreviated as the “Cave version”), which is divided into two volumes, with the TCM part in the second volume, translated as "The Art of Medicine among the Chinese". The last section of this part, titled *CHAN SENG, Or, The Art of Procuring Health and Long Life* has long been believed to be translated from an ancient Chinese book on health maintenance, but the exact title of this book has always been unclear. What book indeed was this section translated from?

At the end of the previous section of the English translation, the translator clearly states: “I shall finish this article of the Chinese physic with an extract of a work translated by Father Dentrecolles, which will further shew the taste and way of thinking among Chinese.” This is a Chinese health maintenance work born in the 36<sup>th</sup> year of the *Kangxi* era (A.D. 1697), translated as "*Chang Seng*", which is the regimen summarized by the author through in-depth thinking after extensive reading of medical books and combining with his own experience, and was first used to guide personal health maintenance, recovering from a weak body and enjoying healthy and strong time, and then to guide others in health maintenance, characterized by an emphasis on moral cultivation and mental nourishment, which is also the primary regimen guidance suggested by the book. Based on the above information and combined with the content of the subsequent translation, it is evident that this is the TCM health maintenance work *Changsheng Mijue* (*The Secrets of Longevity*) written by *Shi Chengjin* of the *Qing* dynasty.

## 2. Introduction to Changsheng Mijue (The Secrets of Longevity)

*The Great Dictionary of Chinese Medical Books* records that *Changsheng Mijue* (*The Secrets of Longevity*) was written by *Shi Chengjin* (Style name is *Tianji*, Literary name is *Xing'an Fool*), who integrated the health-preserving famous sayings of previous sages before the *Qing* dynasty with his own health maintenance experience. Modern scholars have conducted more in-depth research. The book is divided into seven parts. The first part is the mind section, mainly discussing mental cultivation, including four kinds of mental and emotional health maintenance methods: always having good thoughts, always having harmonious and joyful thoughts, always having peaceful and happy thoughts, and always having healthy thoughts; the second part is the lust section, mainly discussing the health

maintenance of coitus, emphasizing that lust cannot be forbidden, but it must be restrained, and discussing in detail on abstaining from sexual activities during times of extreme cold and heat, thunder and rain, annoyance and anger, inebriation and satiation, senescence, and illness; the third part is the diet section, mainly discussing the compatibilities and incompatibilities of diet, tea drinking, and wine drinking, detailing the “six compatibilities” of diet: early, slow, less, light, warm, and soft; the fourth part is the daily living section, detailing eight kinds of daily life maintenance methods: day maintenance, night maintenance, spring maintenance, summer maintenance, autumn maintenance, winter maintenance, travel maintenance, and drunkenness maintenance; the fifth part is the gist of *Qingfu* (pure wellbeing), mainly discussing the four beauties of good time, beautiful scenery, pleasing heart, and happy events, and the two difficulties of virtuous host and honored guest, classified according to the four beauties and two difficulties, divided into 16 categories: *Qingxiang* (pure enjoyment), *Qingshi* (good time), *Qingjing* (beautiful scenery), *Qingju* (serene dwelling), *Qingju* (beautiful fitting), *Qinglv* (good companion), *Qingyou* (elegant recreation), *Qinghua* (edifying conversation), *Qingfu* (favorite clothing), *Qingzhuan* (light delicacies), *Qingyun* (refined rhythm), *Qingfen* (delicate fragrance), *Qingti* (physical well-being), *Qingshi* (simple affairs), *Qingkuai* (refreshing activities), *Qingjie* (pure precepts); the sixth part is the lifelong benefits, including eight characters for self-cultivation, namely, ethics, virtue, fear, diligence, modesty, harmony, foolishness and happiness, emphasizing the concept of health maintenance of cultivating virtue and nourishing the heart, and exerting endurance to bring constant happiness; the last part is the hygienic must-read poems, including seven chapters: the first of mind, the second of lust, the third of diet, the fourth of season maintenance, the fifth of daily living, the sixth of recuperation, and the seventh of consciousness, summarizing the above contents in poetic form. This book is a unique copy with only one surviving edition of the block-printed book of Kangxi 36<sup>th</sup> year in the Qing dynasty, which is preserved in the library of the China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences. This book is plain and comprehensible, as it is based on the author's personal experience, and its health maintenance principles and specific operation methods are practical and feasible, which still have great contemporary significance at present. The modern photo-reprints of this book include: (1) the 2019 photo-reprint of the Ancient Chinese Medical Book Publishing House; (2) the 2022 photo-reprint of the *Chinese Medical Collection* by the National Library Publishing House. Now, by taking the former photo-reprint as the base text, we conducted analysis and research in comparison with the English translation.

### 3. The Content of the English Translation of Changsheng Mijue (The Secrets of Longevity)

Compared and referenced, this translation mainly excerptes four parts of *Changsheng Mijue* (*The Secrets of Longevity*): the preface, the mind section, the diet section, and the daily living section, and a small amount involves the lust section. The preface has no title, and is basically fully translated, but the word order has been adjusted; the second part "The Regulation of the Heart and its Affections" is excerpted from the "mind section", and the content has been appropriately summarized and reduced,

among which "always have a healthy thought" has an additional translation part that integrates part of "abstaining from sexual activities during times of senescence" in the lust section; the third part "The Regulation of Diet" is excerpted from the concerning contents of the preface, eating earlier, eating warmer, eating lighter, eating more slowly, eating less, and eating softer of the "diet section". The title and content have been modified and reorganized, which are the same to the remaining two parts of "The Regulation of the Actions of the Day" and "The Regulations for Rest at Night" that are both translated from the "daily living section", respectively, the preface, daily maintenance, summer maintenance, spring maintenance, winter maintenance, travel maintenance, and night maintenance. It is obvious that this is an abridged and reorganized translation of *Changsheng Mijue (The Secrets of Longevity)*.

#### 4. The Main English Translation Methods and Characteristics

From the perspective of translation language, the translator obviously follows the consistent characteristic of popularizing and introductory translation as seen in *A Description of the Empire of China and Chinese Tartary*, and some chapters adopt the method of liberal translation, that is, the content of the original text has been appropriately summarized and integrated in the process of translation, not completely adhering to the order and content of the original text, or sometimes it incorporates the translator's own knowledge background and experience for interpretive and derivative translation. For the translation of some special terms, a method of annotated translation is adopted, including two kinds: square bracket in-text annotation and NOTE. post-text annotation, to explain the related concepts and terms in the original text in detail. The following focuses on the method of annotated translation:

##### 4.1 In-text Annotations

In-text annotations are often combined with the translator's experience and understanding to further explain the unique things and phenomena in the original text, so as to deepen the understanding of Western readers. Take some examples:

**Original text:** 世人不好茶 · 必好酒

**Translation:** But 'tis a common Saying, He who does not love Tea, covets Wine. [The Chinese, as I have observ'd, make their Wine of distill'd Rice, and it is very strong]

The Chinese meaning in the brackets is “据我所观察 · 中国人用蒸馏的大米制作成酒 · 酒性很烈。” This provides a deeper explanation of the production, composition, and properties of Chinese “wine”, specifically referred to in this context.

**Original text:** 春秋免风露之侵

**Translation:** In Spring it is of great Virtue against high Winds, the Serein [an unwholesome Vapour that falls after Sunset in hot Countries] and Dews so frequent and plentiful in that Season.

“Fenglu” is a unique concept in ancient Chinese, which has two kinds of explanations in the *Great Dictionary of Chinese*: one is "wind and dew", and the other is “like wind and cold”. It symbolizes the

wind and dew in nature, and metaphorically represents the invasion of wind and cold or abnormal natural climate. The translator translates “*Fenglu*” as “high Winds, the Serein and Dews”. Serein is a meteorological term, whose original meaning is “sunshower”, the translator uses the method of in-text annotation to further elucidate the meaning of Serein, which can be translated into Chinese as “一种在炎热的国家日落之后降下的有害蒸汽”. This understanding obviously goes beyond the common definition of “dew”, that is “A cold condensation of water droplets near the ground at night or in the early morning”, and believes that this unique climatic phenomenon should embrace hot and humid air containing toxic substances produced under hot climatic conditions, the exposure to such an environment will have adverse effects on health. In terms of the exact meaning of “*Fenglu*”, the translator has actually made a deep thinking and a more detailed explanation.

#### 4.2 Post-text Annotations

Post-text annotations are often used to explain some unique concepts and terms of TCM in the original text, involving prescription, Chinese materia medica, basic theories, methods of treatment and health maintenance, etc. The translator often makes objective comparisons between the Chinese and Western contexts based on his own experience and knowledge background, or applies Western concepts and methods for deconstruction and explanation. Two representative translation examples are listed:

##### 4.2.1 The translation of “*Dihuang* pills”, “*Fu lin*(*Poria*)” and “Chinese Root”

In the section of “Travel maintenance” in *Changsheng Mijue (The Secrets of Longevity)*, the method of taking *Liuwei Dihuang* pills or prepared rehmannia root for health maintenance during boat travel is specifically mentioned. The translator uniformly transliterates the names of Chinese materia medica, for example, 地黄 is translated as *Ti whang*, 土茯苓 as *Tu fu lin*, and 茯苓 as *Fu lin*, and specifically provides a detailed explanation of *Dihuang*, *Dihuang* pills along with the important Chinese medicinal herb *Fu lin* by the use of NOTE. ] at the end of the text.

Firstly, the translator explains in detail the original species, genuine regional area, morphological characteristics, and intake method of *Dihuang*, emphasizing the universal usage of *Dihuang* pills by Chinese people for health maintenance in comparison between China and the West, and then explains the main ingredients in *Dihuang* pills, which are different from the traditional ones, by employing the chemical analysis method of western medicines, identifies five main ingredients: aromatics, cordials, diuretics, gentle sudorifics, and weak acids. Obviously, the translator interprets the composition of the prescription by using the knowledge system familiar to Western readers.

*Fu lin*(*Poria*) is a Chinese medicinal herb that has been introduced into European natural history field in relatively early times. For instance, the “*Flora Sinensis*” written by Polish missionary and botanist Michał Piotr Boym (1612-1659) in the 17<sup>th</sup> century had mentioned it. In the early process of dissemination and circulation, due to the unclear original species and name, it was often confused with glabrous greenbrier rhizome that was renowned as the “Chinese Root” by Europeans. Here, The translator makes a key explanation of *Fu lin* (*Poria*), the important component of *Dihuang* pills, detailing its medicinal effects, genuine regional area, growth environment, morphological

characteristics, and intake method, etc., not only clearly distinguishes it from glabrous greenbrier rhizome, but more importantly, with a research attitude, refers to the opinions of the Chinese herbalist and Father Dentrecolles, boldly proposes a speculation on the original species of *Fu lin* (Poria), reckoning that it should belong to the same species as the truffle commonly used in Europe, which is a kind of fungus growing at the root of felled pine trees. This is likely to be an earlier Western document that presents the original species of *Fu lin* (Poria) from the perspective of biological taxonomy, which is undoubtedly a step forward compared to the vague understanding of *Fu lin* (Poria) as the essence of pine trees and pine resin in Chinese medical books. At this time in Europe, the study of mycology had gone through the budding and initial phases and was entering an independent stage of discipline development. It was not until the American mycologist Schweiniz (1780-1834) classified *Fu lin* (Poria) as Sclerotium of deuteromycete class in 1822, which was officially named and adopted by the Swedish mycologist Elias Magnus Fries (1794-1878), that the exploration of the original species of *Fu lin* (Poria) gradually deepened.

It is undeniable that the annotated translations of *Dihuang* pills, *Fu lin* (Poria), and Chinese Root in *Changsheng Mijue (The Secrets of Longevity)* not only effectively convey the traditional cultural connotation and characteristics of TCM, but also apply modern Western theory to scientific analysis, promoting the understanding, exchange, and propagation of Chinese materia medica among exotic cultures.

#### 4.2.2 The Translation of “Essence, Qi, and Shen”

“Essence, *Qi*, and *Shen*” are basic concepts of TCM theory and are commonly used to explain the theory of health maintenance. The translator translates these three concepts with the methods of transliteration, liberal translation, and post-text annotations:

**Original text:** 大约人身所赖者三宝，三宝者，精，气，神也。精生气，气生神，神自灵也。故精绝则气绝，气绝则神绝，而命绝矣。

**Translation:** In general, our life depends upon the regular Motion of the Spirits: Of these there are three Sorts; the Vital which we call *Tsing*; the Animal, which we call *Ki*; and a third Degree of Spirits, much more noble, more free from Matter, and to which the Name of *Spirit* does much better agree, which are called *Shin*. The Vital Spirits produce the Animal, and of both these is begotten a third Degree of Spirits design'd for intellectual Operations. If the Vital Spirits happen to fail, the Animal must unavoidably droop; and this second sort of Spirits being exhausted the third cannot subsist, and the Man must die.

It can be seen that the translator uses Spirit to govern the three treasures of “Essence, *Qi*, and *Shen*” in the human body, and respectively transliterates and paraphrases them as: *Tsing*, vital spirits; *Ki*, animal spirits; *Shin*, the third degree of spirits, and provides an interpretive translation of “Essence, *Qi*, and *Shen*”. It is believed that life depends on the normal movement of Essence, *Qi*, and *Shen*, with a hierarchical distinction among the three, where “spirit” is more advanced and less bounded by matter.

The translator's understanding and translation of “Essence, *Qi*, and *Shen*” stem from the medical and

philosophical concept “spirit” whose influence lasted until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which I translates as “*靈*”. This concept was initially influenced by the concept of “pneuma” in the Stoic school of ancient Greek philosophy, translated into Latin as “spiritus”. In the Stoic philosophical concept, “pneuma” was a mixture of air and fire, the origin of the vitality and generation of all things in the universe, which dominated the vital and psychological functions of the human body. Erasistratus, the founder of ancient Greek physiology, drew on the concept of pneuma and developed the theory of vital spirit and animal spirit, and the medical theory of Galen in the Middle Ages absorbed and developed this theory, considering that the vital spirit was formed in the arterial blood created by the heat of the heart, which was the source of life and natural warmth, while the animal spirit was generated in the brain based on the vital spirit, which was a gaseous and subtle material entity, forming a connection between the immaterial soul and the material body. It appeared at the dawn of modern Western medicine to meet the requirement of explanation from religious rationality to physiological mechanism. The spirit theory achieved further developments in the early modern West, one of the developments was to explain all phenomena by means of the size, shape, and collision of particles within the framework of mechanical philosophy.

Obviously, the translator found a similar theoretical basis in the western classical medical system for the concept of “Essence, *Qi*, and *Shen*” in TCM, equating the “Essence” to the vital spirits in the above concept, “*Qi*” to the animal spirits, and regarding “*Shen*” as a third degree of spirits that was more similar to the concept of “spirit”, which dominated the intellectual activities of the human body.

In the post-text annotations, the translator further quotes the views of a modern Western writer, explaining his understanding of “Essence, *Qi*, and *Shen*” in detail, offering an analysis and analogy of these special concepts in TCM, which clearly demonstrates the influence of the above Western classical medical theories and religious theology. He argues that “All the Springs of a human body would be useless and unactive, If God had not produc’d and appointed the Vital Spirits, to make them act, and to imprint on them a lively Motion, and the Animal spirits to put the internal and external Senses in exercise. So he has dispos’d, as the general Instrument of the vegetative Soul in the Animal, the Arterial Blood, which is so call’d the Vital Spirit, when it hath been warm’d and purified in the Heart.” Subsequently, the composition and function of the animal spirit and the vital spirit are further explained using the concept of mechanical philosophy, and correspondes to the “Essence, *Qi*, and *Shen*” one by one: “The Animal spirits are much superior to the Vital, as they are the Instrument of a more noble Life. 1. The Particles which compose the Animal spirits are much smaller, and more subtle than those which compose the Vital. 2. The Particles of the Animal Spirits move in every Sense separately as the Particles of Air: This is the *Chinese Ki*. The Particles of the Vital Spirits creep gliding one over another, as the Parts of Water: This is the *Chinese Tsing*. 3. The Particles of the Animal Spirits are so rapid that they are imperceptible to all the Senses; and the finest Part of these Spirits is called *Shin*. The Operations of Growth, Nourishment, etc. are Vital Operations, and ascrib’d to the *Chinese Tsing*. Those of Perception, both by the internal and external Senses, are Animal Operations. The Animal Spirits,

according to the Ancients, are nothing but a subtle Air, a very fine Breath, exactly answering to the *Ki*.” The philosophical basis of the above theory obviously came from the Stoic school of ancient Greece philosophy, which was further explained afterwards: “It (*Ki*) is a composition of small Bodies, in a brisk and continued Motion, like those Particles which make the Flame of a lighted Torch: These Spirits, according to the moderns, are nothing but a subtle Humour, which flows from the brain into the Nerves with such an impetuous Force, that if opened they are difficult to be stopt.” From the sixth century B.C., for centuries onwards, the animal spirits had been regarded as the transmitter of sensation and movement, and used as the basis to explain the working mechanism of the human nervous system, It was not until the western scientific revolution in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, with the emergence of scientific methods and experimental evidence in the field of physiology, as well as the development and supplementation of neuromorphology, that medicine and religion gradually parted ways. Here, we can still catch a glimpse of the Western classical physiological concepts, which were still used as a theoretical tool to explain human physiological functions in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century of the West. These concepts facilitated dialogue and communication under the mutual collision of the two distinctly different medical systems of East and West.

In contrast, the “Essence, *Qi*, and *Shen*” in the context of TCM, like other concepts, have profound philosophical and cultural connotations. The theory of *Qi* is deeply influenced by the *Qi* monism theory in ancient Chinese philosophy, which believes that *Qi* refers to the extremely subtle substance and the common constitutive origin of all things in the universe, constantly moving and never stopping. The Essence and *Qi* theory is an early concept of *Qi* monism, and the Essence is the refined form of *Qi*. The connotations of Essence, Essence and *Qi*, *Qi* are essentially the same. Hence, the Essence and *Qi* theory also regards *Qi* (Essence and *Qi*) as the origin of all things in the world and the common material basis for the generation of all things in the universe. The concept of *Shen* in the category of ancient philosophy is regarded as the sovereign, law of change, as well as the driving force for the occurrence, development and change of all things in the world. TCM has enriched and developed this series of ancient philosophical theories to explain human physiology, pathology, guide diagnosis, treatment and health maintenance, which has become an important theoretical basis and thinking method of TCM.

Science of TCM health maintenance regards “Essence, *Qi*, and *Shen*” as the three treasures of the human body, which are the three major elements to maintain the life activities of the human body, and the foundation of human health maintenance. Any deficiency on any side will lead to an imbalance in the state of life, resulting in illness or death. There is an interdependent and mutually beneficial relationship between the three. “Essence can be transformed into *Qi*. *Qi* can generate Essence. Essence and *Qi* can be transformed and generated from each other. Essence and *Qi* generate *Shen*. Essence and *Qi* nourish *Shen*. Essence and *Qi* are the material basis for *Shen*, and *Shen* also controls Essence and *Qi*. Therefore, the three treasures of Essence, *Qi*, and *Shen* are inseparable yet distinct.” The “Essence” in TCM has both broad and narrow definitions. The broad one refers to all the tangible and subtle substances in the human body, including *Qi*, blood, fluid, and the essence of water and drink. For



instance, *Suwen - Jin Gui Zhen Yan Lun* (Plain conversation-Discussion on the Important Ideas in the Golden Chamber) records that “Jing(Essence) is the foundation of the body.” The narrow one specifically refers to the essence of male and female reproduction. For instance, *Lingshu Jing - Jue Qi* (Spiritual Pivot-Differentiation of Qi) records that “[When] two spirits are interacting on each other, [the reproductive Essence of a male and female] combines to conceive a fetus. [The reproductive substance that] exists before the conception of the fetus is called Jing [Essence].” Medical scholars of previous dynasties have prioritized the essence cultivation in health maintenance. Qi in TCM refers to the most fundamental and subtle substance that constitutes the human body and maintains life activities, and also has the meaning of physiological functions. In the terminology of TCM, Qi is matched with different words to express a wide range of meanings owing to the differences in Zang Fu and functions, such as “Liver Qi”, “Stomach Qi”, “Gallbladder Qi”, “Pectoral Qi”, “Nutrient Qi”, “Defensive Qi”, etc. Shen in TCM used to explain the function of the human body also carries two meanings: one is the external performance of the normal life activities of the human body, and the other is the mental activities of the human being, encompassing the coordination and control of all physiological functions as well as the activities related to spirit, consciousness and thinking (i.e., “shenming”).

It can be concluded that the translator, encountering the group of basic theoretical terms of TCM like “Essence, Qi, and Shen” that are absent in the Western cultural context, fully draws on the concept of “spirit”, which has a similar philosophical basis in the Western classical medical theory, to translate and convey on the knowledge background and thinking mode of the Western audience at that time. This solves the communication obstacles caused by cultural gaps to a certain extent, and promotes the understanding and acceptance of special cultural-loaded terms concerning the basic theories of TCM among Western readers.

## 5. Reflection and Discussion

### 5.1 The Importance of Annotated Translation

As one of the three major masterworks of European sinology born in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, *A Description of the Empire of China and Chinese Tartary* had been still regarded as a manual of knowledge about China until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its wide dissemination and profound influence are attributed to its translation and communication strategies and methods that are in line with the times and the audience, aiming to popularize and introduce Chinese science and culture to European readers, and paying more attention to the effectiveness of communication and the acceptance of the audience. Therein the translation and introduction of *Changsheng Mijue (The Secrets of Longevity)*, fully reflects the essence of this translation strategy, which highlights the significant role of annotated translation in the process of cross-cultural communication. When encountering some profound and cultural-loaded key terms that are crucial for gaining insight into the theory and cultural information of TCM, the translator does not entirely omit the translation, or merely stops at the level of simple term-to-term translation. Instead, he employs annotations, standing in the culturally diverse fields of China and the West, and combining

with personal experiences immersed in China, strives to convey the profound connotations behind the terms more thoroughly in order to facilitate genuine communication and understanding. In this process, various translation strategies are flexibly combined. For examples, foreignization method, which aims to approach the author and the source language culture and to retain the exotic cultural characteristics of the original text, is usually used when the source language culture is rich in knowledge contents and cultural deposits, but has an easy-to-understand universal basis in the target language culture, thereby stimulating the curiosity and interest of the Western audience. For instance, the above extended explanation of Chinese “wine” and “*fenglu*”, transliteration of Chinese materia medica names as well as explanation of their medicinal effects, genuine regional area, growth, morphology, and intake method, etc.; Domestication method, which aims to approach the readers and the target language culture, and to adapt the translated text to the background of the times and cultural characteristics of the target language, is usually used when exoticism and uniqueness of the source language culture are so overwhelming that there are no corresponding expressions in the target language culture, so it is necessary to apply the related concepts of the target language culture as a bridge to achieve mutual understanding and deepen cognition, for instance, the above explanation of “Essence, *Qi*, and *Shen*” based on the Western philosophical and cultural backgrounds, the elucidation of prescription composition and the original species of Chinese materia medica, etc. The presentation of such a translation characteristic is not confined to the use of one single translation strategy throughout the whole text, but rather takes the actual acceptance and understanding of the audience as the golden criteria of the translation outcome, which truly reflects the core of the translation activity, that is, to promote “mutual communication and understanding”.

### 5.2 The Importance of Cultivating Talents with Compound Cross-cultural Skills

In recent years, TCM health maintenance, with its unique advantages and charm, as well as the support of policy, is gradually becoming an advantageous discipline in the internationalization of TCM, whereas it also faces many nonnegligible communication issues and obstacles, which was pointed out by some scholars from the perspective of encoding and decoding: “In the process of international dissemination of TCM health maintenance, cultural gaps and conflicts are the paramount obstacles, and the mismatched cognition or incorrect information decoding from other cultural audiences is another prominent issue faced in the international dissemination of TCM health maintenance.” In order to solve the above problems, it is necessary to “pay more attention to translation issues and knowledge explanation, and timely adjust the periodic dissemination in the ongoing communication with the audience”. The English translation of *Changsheng Mijue (The Secrets of Longevity)* undoubtedly provides us with a reference example. Proper knowledge concept explanation is an effective way to solve cultural barriers and conflicts. Meanwhile, it also puts forward high requirements for the comprehensive expertise of cross-cultural communication of translator, who should first be well versed in the precise meaning and cultural background of the source language text, meanwhile, he should play the role of an excellent reader, being adept at navigating the historical and cultural context, expression

habits, and acceptance psychology of the target language, thus arriving at a suitable translation strategy between the source and target language to achieve an ideal and unobstructed cross-cultural communication outcome. The translator group dominated by European missionaries had laid the basic conditions for such cross-cultural communication. On the one hand, the missionaries had lived in China for decades, laying a certain research foundation in related fields like Chinese language, history, culture, and medicine. On the other hand, the innate advantage of being a native English speaker and growing up in Europe made it feasible to achieve the status of an excellent reader, which indicates that in the translation research of TCM, especially ancient works, the cultivation of cross-cultural compound professional talents who are proficient in both Chinese and Western cultures, languages, and medicine is particularly necessary, and the way to achieve this type of cultivation is a topic worth exploring and delving into.

### 5.3 The Importance of Sino-Western Cross-cultural Cooperation and Exchange

It should be pointed out that there are also some cases of mismatched cognition or incorrect information decoding from other culture in the translation of *Changsheng Mijue (The Secrets of Longevity)*. For example, this paragraph in “night maintenance” section:

**Original text:** “肺为五脏华盖，主出声音。凡人卧下，肺即傍侧收敛，倘或语言，必又将肺提起。肺一提起，则五脏尽皆摇动。譬如钟磬一样，不悬挂则不发声。我夫子“寝不语”之意，或是此也。”

**Translation:** “WHEN once you are in Bed keep Silence, and refrain from all Talking. Of the Internals the Lungs are the tenderest, which are placed above the others, and serve for Respiration, and Formation of the Voice: When therefore you are laid down in a proper Posture, they incline to and rest upon the Side; whereas, if you talk, you force the Lungs to raise themselves in part, and by strongly heaving they shake all the other noble internal Parts. A Comparison will help to make you understand me: The Voice which comes from the Lungs is like the Sound from a Bell; if the Bell be not hung, you damage it by striking it to make it sound. It is said, that *Confucius* made it a Law to himself not to speak after he was in Bed, no doubt for this Reason.”

Although the translator translated the original text with considerable fidelity, he made mismatched interpretations in the post-text annotation, such as criticizing the description of the anatomic position and physiological function of the lungs from the perspective of Western anatomy, indicating the role of the lung lobes and midriff in the morphological and respiratory function of the lungs. This is actually a cognitive conflict between the characteristic *Xiang* thinking in five *Zang* visceral theory of TCM and Western anatomy. “Keep silence in bed” is an important discourse of Confucius on daily health maintenance and etiquette norms. Talking while sleeping leads to relative excitement of the brain, which is not conducive to falling asleep quickly and maintaining good sleep quality. “Keep silence in bed” is also a etiquette norm to respect others, which actually has a certain scientific basis and cultural connotation. The translator did not grasp its meaning but instead made incorrect question and interpretation, arguing that Confucius proposed this view probably because “he had discoursed enough

with his disciples in the day and wanted rest at night!” It is obvious that this is a problem in translation and communication caused by the mismatch of Sino-Western cultural cognition, which indicates that Western translators whose native language is English, have an inevitable weakness in understanding Chinese culture. Similarly, for Chinese translators whose native language is Chinese, there is also an inevitable disadvantage in understanding Western culture and expressing in the target language. Therefore, in order to achieve good cross-cultural translation and dissemination, it is necessary to persistently enhance the comprehensive quality of translators themselves, combine the advantages of Chinese and Western personnel to form a cooperative translation model, and continuously strengthen the dynamic exchange and communication with the audience in the translation process.

## 6. Conclusion

In summary, the English translation method and characteristics represented by the annotated translation in *Changsheng Mijue (The Secrets of Longevity)* of *A Description of the Empire of China and Chinese Tartary* are of positive significance in the international communication, not only for the TCM health maintenance, but also for the entire international dissemination of TCM. TCM terms with cultural-loaded characteristics are the key to maintaining the features of TCM, and to correctly understanding and practicing TCM, which are also unavoidable issues in the process of translation and dissemination. How to translate and disseminate in a simple yet profound way? The appropriate translation and communication strategies and models are crucial. The acceptance and understanding of the audience should be regarded as the fundamental criteria, various translation methods and strategies should be flexibly adopted, and the cultivation of talents with compound cross-cultural skills and the promotion and practice of Sino-Western cross-cultural cooperative and exchange models should be continuously strengthened, so that more excellent ancient books of TCM can be spread overseas and benefit mankind.

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