

论文

作为中国文学之《圣经》: 麦都思、王韬与“《圣经》委办本”

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摘要:

在 19 世纪,中国最大的一项翻译工程大概要算是《圣经》翻译了。从 19 世纪 20 年代到 60 年代,先后有五种《圣经》中译本由新教宣教会完成并出版问世。本文所讨论之《圣经》委办本,亦涉及许多传教士和他们的中国助手。围绕《圣经》中译之方法,传教士之间发生了激烈争吵。争论的焦点主要集中于究竟是绝对忠实于希伯来和希腊原文,还是要保证中国读者能够读懂接受。争论的第二个焦点在于中译本的文言水平(白话《圣经》中译本是稍晚才出现的):究竟是用受教育者能接受的标准文言,还是用初识文墨之人亦能读懂的更粗浅的文言。有关读者接受以及标准文言使用之话题的挑起者,乃传教士麦都思,他期待能够完成一部可以被称为中国文学的《圣经》中译本。在 1843 年至 1854 年间完成的“《圣经》委办本”中,麦都思最终几乎将自己的理想付诸实施。此目标的基本要求就是要找到中国协作者,协作者能够将传教士及其中国助手的工作转化成让人接受的中国散文。麦都思最初的人选为王昌桂,他是一位教授中国经典的儒生,但在新约《圣经》完成之前已去世。麦都思继而聘用了他当时尚年轻的儿子王韬,王韬协助完成了整部《圣经》,同时还写了一些宣教小册子,并修订了一部圣歌集。王韬的译者经历亦让我们对其早期思想的发展有了诸多了解。

关键词: 《圣经》翻译; 麦都思; 王韬

The Bible as Chinese Literature :Medhurst ,Wang Tao ,and the Delegates'V ersion

Abstract:

Probably the largest translation enterprise undertaken in China in the nineteenth century was that of Bible translation .Between the 1820s and the 1860s five full translations of the Bible into Chinese were completed and published by the Protestant missions .The Delegates'verson which is the subject of this article,involved scores of missionaries and their Chinese assistants .Fierce controversies broke out among the missionaries about methods of translation,particularly about absolute fidelity to the Hebrew and Greek texts versus the need to make the translation acceptable to Chinese readers .A secondarycontroversyconcerned the level of classical Chinese that should be used (translations into vernacular Chinese were not made until later) : should a standard classical Chinese be used,one that educated readers would accept,or a simplified form that the less literate would understand.The champion of acceptabilityand the use of a standard classical Chinese was the missionary Walter Henry Medhurst,who hoped to produce a translation of the Bible that would qualify as Chinese literature . In the Delegates'verson,which took from 1843 to1854 to complete,Medhurst at last had the opportunity to put his principles into practice . The essential requirement was to find Chinese collaborators who could put the workof the missionariesandtheirassistantsintoacceptableChinese prose .Hisfirst choice wasWang Changgui,a teacher of the Chinese classics,who died before the New Testament could be finished . Medhurst then engaged Wang Changgui's young son,Wang Tao,as his replacement,and Wang Tao helped to complete the Bible as well as to write tracts and revise a hymnbook . This experience as translator tells us much about the early development of his thinking .

Keywords: Bible translation; Walter Henry Medhurst; Wang Tao

收稿日期 2010-01-17 修回日期 网络版发布日期 2010-02-28

DOI:

基金项目:

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