

# Cultural Images Translation in *Fusheng Liu Ji*

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**Abstract:** As Chinese culture draws growing attention from international academia, the translation of cultural images from Chinese to English has become a hot spot among translators and scholars. The translation of cultural images plays an important role in promoting Chinese culture at home and abroad. It is well-known that literature is usually related to culture. When reading or doing translation, one may encounter difficulties and problems with cultural images. Some traditional translation theories such as E.A. Nida's translation theory could not solve all problems in culture image translation. Based on traditional cultural image translation theories, this thesis starts from the study of culture turn and then it introduces the definitions of images and cultural images. Since cultural image is of great significance, some examples of Chinese cultural images that appeared in Chinese classical works and their translations are illustrated. This thesis has been written to illustrate the cultural images translation to find out proper ways in translating cultural images which adapted from in the English version of *Fusheng Liu Ji*, and some creative thoughts and suggestions on strategies of cultural images translation are concluded.

**Keywords:** Chinese Culture; Images Translation; Classical Literature; Translation Strategies

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## 1. Introduction

Since the *Fusheng Liu Ji* is regarded as an excellent classical literary works in China, it deserves intensive study because it contains a lot of valuable images of profound Chinese culture. Many examples. Mao Dun remarks that "the relation between vocabulary and intonation in an article is to the relation between the point and line positions and colours in a picture"<sup>[1]</sup>. Xu Jun published a similar view: "Translation is not only in the original model but is written as a realistic model the same to the original"<sup>[2]</sup>.

The study of the thesis mainly adopts the methods of definition, illustration, literary survey and induction. To give a concise definition of image and cultural image, I make an overview of the definitions given by other scholars and make a conclusion. Then I make a list of cultural images in classical Chinese literature to find out the classification and manifestation forms and through which I discovered the importance of cultural images translation. Then I choose the English version of *Fusheng Liu Ji* as an example to illustrate cultural images translation and some valuable translation skills used by Lin Yutang.

## 2. Definition of Cultural Images

Langacker considers image as for purpose of thought or expression, in a different way -- using a different image -- an idea to appraise solution scenarios [3]. Furthermore, Langacker has illustrated image from the perspectives of profiling, specificity, prominence and perspective<sup>[3]</sup>.

### 2.1 Profiling

Langacker demands that the same conceptual content can be described in different forms of languages, no matter how simple or complex, a language that is used to conceive and describe the same situation in particular way will be inevitably put to the scene on a specific solution, and the performance of the general solution is on the "base" and "profile". The "base" refers to a language to the cognitive domain of an underlying the concept of network; "profile" is a substrate term in a certain sense that requires to be understood by painted parts, namely the connotations of language expressions. That is to say,

“base” is the background of the language and it is objective, while “profile” provides context with the base and more emphasizes the concept. Thus, when one refers to things usually, he means the related concept but not the language itself.

## 2.2 Specificity

Specificity refers to the detailed degree of image, which includes fine levels, accurate degree and the details of the final image. In specific conceptual process, it requires choosing the appropriate level of detail which is usually decided by context, but it also depends on the intention and communication that are on conceptualization-dominated subject.

## 2.3 Prominence

Image has the relative salience. “Highlight degree” is divided into different types. One of the elements in division is related to “profiling” discussed above. The specifically profiled part in language is obviously more prominent than the rest part of the “base”.

In ancient China, the concept of image was firstly put forward from the philosophical point of view. Confucius has said that ancient saints created images of objects and recorded the language to express their thoughts.

Cultural image is fixed, and it reflects one aspect of culture connotation and accumulation. Image is concrete and perceived, but the culture reflected in it could be specific and abstract. Since culture is probably the broadest category in the science of human knowledge and a concept of almost everything. Many anthropologists have once defined culture. In 1952, U.S. researchers counted 164 different definitions. Their studies related to culture are from different theoretical perspectives such as behaviorism, functionalism, cognitive science, and dynamic angle of view, but they are always inseparable from the core of culture: the beliefs and values.

## 3. Cultural Images Translation in Chinses Literature

In literature, cultural images can be found almost everywhere. Cultural images are simple, humorous and vivid, and often become a highlight in the original; at the same time, the cultural image itself bears the rich Chinese cultural information, which inspires in the Chinese readers infinite imagination and reveries. But, when they turn to read the English translation of these works, it is often a regret to find that the gleaming images of the original work are obscure or lost its presence in the translated work.

The translation of cultural images in classical Chinese literature is obviously no doubt a great difficulty, and the cultural images translation itself is closely linked with many controversial bigger problems in the studies of translation. However, only limited to word for word translation or sentence for sentence translation, readers of different culture couldn't truly understand the author's mind on the background at that time when Chinese authors mention the cultural images of Chinese characteristic cultural images. So the translation of cultural images should follow two principles: cultural equivalence principle and effective principle. It should be on base of the different kinds of concrete operating strategies. Xie Tianzhen has once reviewed that “cultural image translation requires the translators should not only convey the basic information of the original, but also convey the original cultural image, otherwise, no matter how good the translation is; sometimes there will be a great regret”<sup>[4]</sup>.

Transferring cultural images are the true translation in a true sense, especially in literary translation. There are many problems involved in the dislocation of cultural image. Tan Zaixi has overviewed that an important feature in literature is more use of metaphor and novel language while the author's real intention may need to be read between lines<sup>[4]</sup>; If the metaphor of the original image is all omitted by the translators, it may be hard to make clear all the information to the readers.

Eugene A. Nida's translation theory and put the translation of the cultural issues at the height of the ideology; he thinks that domestication translation does not reflect the equality of cultural exchange in the certain culture, but a kind of hegemonic behavior of culture of the original and therefore, he greatly advocates foreignization translation<sup>[5]</sup>. Because foreignization reflects the differences that are relevant with two cultures both in source text and the target text, so the more permanent value of the original, the more translators should adopt the translation method of foreignization<sup>[6]</sup>.

## 4. Images Translation in *Fusheng Liu Ji*

*Fusheng Liu Ji*, written by Shen Fu, is one of the well-known typical works among Qing fictions in Chinese classical literature, and it is full of plentiful cultural connotations. As we know that Qing fiction has been attached great attention in recent years. This is because significant developments occurred in Chinese literature during the period of Qing era. The characters in the Qing fiction are mostly paid more attention to the pursuit of individualization, especially in the narrative language, whether it is to describe the picture, environment, or the characters, or even to elaborate story plots, appears to be smooth and concise, particularly with regard to the artistic interpretation and Qing fiction which has reflected a broader life picture of the people's lives in Qing dynasty, whose description style differs from the former thick line gradually to the evolution of fine lines<sup>[7]</sup>. Thus, the effect of text full of a strong sense of rhythm, and image in translation text is naturally formed. From the aspect of language, Qing fiction is richer in artistic expression. This paper will make a case study of *Fusheng Liu Ji* from different aspects to explore proper solutions for solving the barriers existed in translation practice and to improve literature effects of classical Chinese fiction translation even help promote Chinese cultural communication.

As for the language in the fiction, it is richer in artistic expression than other fictions<sup>[8]</sup>. The characters in the work are paid more attention to in the pursuit of individuation. Especially in the author's narrative language, whether it is to describe the picture, environment<sup>[9]</sup>, or the characters, even to elaborate story plots, the language used in the fiction all appears to be smooth and concise<sup>[10]</sup>.

There are a great many other examples of cultural images in *Fusheng Liu Ji*. The case study of the English version of *Fusheng Liu Ji* will help us explore to some methods and skills from different aspects to solve the barriers existed in translation practice and to improve literature effects of Chinese cultural images translation in promoting Chinese culture communication.

## 5. Conclusion

There are still many difficulties for translating practitioners, and the existing translation strategies and methods are still at issue, as they could not fully meet the requirement for translating Chinese cultural images. Based on traditional cultural image translation theories, this thesis starts from the study of culture turn and then it introduces the definitions of images and cultural images. Since cultural image is of great significance, some examples of Chinese cultural images that appeared in Chinese classical works and their translations are illustrated.

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