

**ON THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF TAO YUANMING'S WORKS BY A.
R. DAVIS**

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ABSTRACT: *The works of Tao Yuanming and their significance by the famous western Sinologist Davis, namely the collection of Tao Yuanming's works' English version, is considered to be the most academic and representative masterpiece in the western studies on the translation of Tao Yuanming. Its works have complete data, detailed annotations and are faithful and vivid. Davies, the translator, wrote precisely and accurately in the translation, reproducing the simple and natural style of Tao Yuanming's original poems. The additional notes included all kinds of classics and historical books, and the additional comments also offered reasonable criticism and showed his unique understanding and opinion on some details and viewpoints that need to be verified. Translation by Sinologist Davis, can not only help Chinese scholars understand the master of China, including but not limited to Tao Yuanming' spread and accept in the English-speaking world, but also to attract more foreign Sinologist and mass audience English world to pay attention to Tao' studies, to focus on Chinese literature, so Chinese culture can go out and carry forward.*

KEYWORDS: Tao Yuanming, English translation, Davis

INTRODUCTION

The Chinese culture is extensive and profound, and its literary works shine brightly. Tao Yuanming was an outstanding poet in the period from the end of the Eastern Jin Dynasty to the beginning of the Liu and Song Dynasties. At the same time, he was the first master of Jiangxi literature, a poet, essayist and Chinese Fu writer. A scholar called Shen Deqian in Qing Dynasty said that he was a first-rate figure in China's Six Dynasties, so his poems walked alone through the ages (Shen Deqian, 1963). There are Li Bai, the immortal poet who drinks with the moon and expresses his will with wine, Su Shi, the god of poetry who drinks wine to the sky, and Bai Juyi, the demon of poetry who accompanies wine all his life. Tao Yuanming is the first poet in the history of Chinese literature to write a large number of poems on drinking, and the poems themed with wine account for two fifths of all the poems and articles. Tao Yuanming is also the first pastoral poet in China, who has the largest number of pastoral poems and is

considered to have the highest achievements. Therefore, he is called as the founder of pastoral poetry and pastoral poet. Zhong Rong, a scholar in the Southern Dynasty, called him "the master of landscape pastoral poetry" and "the father of ancient and modern recluse poets"(Zhong Rong, 2007). According to the statistics of Lu Qinli (1979), a total of 142 of Tao Yuanming's poems and essays are still in existence. Among them, the Collection of Tao Yuanming includes 125 poems and 12 articles of Tao Yuanming's immortal fame. Many of his famous works, such as *returning to live in the country*, *Drinking*, *Peach Blossoms* and so on, have been selected into the textbooks of primary and secondary schools to provide teachers with reference in teaching and students to appreciate and study, which have long-lasting practical value. Tao Yuanming and his works are not only popular in China, but also appreciated by readers in the West. He is a poet of great concern to Sinologists in the West. He is not only of China, but also of the world. Referred to relevant materials in the National Library of China, it can be found that Tao Yuanming's Western translation and introduction started from the French Jesuit missionary Joseph-Marie Amiot(1718-1793), the German version of Tao Yuanming's *Peach Blossoms* published by Alfred Focke in 1898, as well as other versions in French, Russian and other languages. At present, most of the western studies on the translation of Tao Yuanming focus on the English-speaking world. This paper discusses the English translation of Tao Yuanming. Most scholars believe that the study of Chinese Poetry in Britain began in the second half of the 19th century. The earliest English translation of Tao Yuanming's poems was published in 1898. At that time, Tao Yuanming's English translation was also selected by Herbert A. Giles, A famous British Sinologist English Verse, the same year as Alfred Focke's German translation. And Arthur Waley, one of Giles' best students, who has never been to China but is known as a "China expert", who introduced Tao Yuanming to the English-speaking world in early years, collected 12 Tao poems. He graduated from Cambridge University. This paper discusses the translation of Tao Yuanming by Davis, another famous Sinologist in Cambridge University. At present, more than 48 English translations of Tao Yuanming's poems have been published. Each translation has its own characteristics, involving more than 30 translators, including Fang Zhong, Wang Rongpei, Xu Yuanchong, Yang Xianyi, Dai Naidie, and Zhuo Zhenying, etc. in Chinese translation field, and western translators including A.R.Davis, David Hinton, James Robert, Ezra Pond, William Acker, Stephen Owen, Anne Birrell and others. Tao's works have been included in a number of English translations of Chinese Literature, including Cyril Birch's *Anthology of Chinese Literature* (Grove Weidenfeld, 1965), and Stephen Owen's *An Anthology of Chinese Literature* (W.W. Norton&Company, 1996), etc. Tao Yuanming and his poems have had a profound influence in China and abroad, and have been widely concerned, accepted and favored all over the world because of the numerous translations and the wide range of translators. I was lucky to get the two volumes of *Tao yuanming's works*

and their meanings by the famous Sinologist A.R.Davis published in university of Cambridge, which is known as the most academic translation of Tao Yuanming's works in the western world. In the process of careful reading, we appreciate naturally the translators' translation rigorous and meticulous attitude, understand deeply the original author Tao Yuanming, analyze all kinds of thought behind the works. This paper argues that Davis' English translation mainly embodies the following two characteristics: 1. Complete materials and rigorous writing; 2. Detailed annotations and thoughtful understanding.

Complete Materials and Rigorous Writing

Before the middle of the 20th century, the translation study about Tao Yuanming still stays in the age of abridged translation and selected translation, which is odd but not comprehensive in the English-speaking world until the middle of the 20th century because of a batch of sinologist and researchers who focus on the study of Tao Yuanming, after which there came a complete translation studies of Tao Yuanming and finished products, hence came the twist and quantitative change to qualitative leap. Thus, the translation and introduction study of Tao Yuanming has reached the stage of full translation. Davis, a famous sinologist, is one of the researchers who collected and sorted out Tao Yuanming's works in a scientific, systematic and complete way, and wrote his works in a rigorous and meticulous manner. He worked tirelessly to compile the two volumes of Tao Yuanming's works and their significance. In 1983, Tao Yuanming's works and their significance were published in Cambridge University to better introduce Tao Yuanming to the English-speaking world. Davis is worthy of being a sinologist proficient in ancient Chinese literature and thoughts. He not only respects and reproduces the original appearance of ancient Chinese literature, but also has his own unique opinions. As researchers in a heterogeneous cultural context, On the basis of transforming Tao Yuanming's works from Chinese into English properly, he also studied the Confucian ideology and culture behind the poetry, Confucianism political and literature in Tang dynasty (618-906), and scholars' view of Tao Yuanming in Song Dynasty (960-1297). From the perspective of ethics, Tao Yuanming, pays attention to personal accomplishment. Davis points out that scholars in China often have a thinking pattern in their interpretation of Tao Yuanming, and their political interpretation of Tao Yuanming is still deeply rooted, which strengthens the political elements and ignores the individual role of Tao Yuanming himself. *Tao Yuanming's works and their meanings* has two volumes. Volume I with 69 titles, in strict accordance with the form and content of poetry itself, divided Tao Yuanming's masterpieces into seven categories scientifically, accurately, clearly, precisely and completely, including 9 titles of "the four-word poems", 21 titles of "the 'address and answer' and other five-word poems", 17 titles of "dated and other poems", 8 titles of "the poems in series", 3 titles of "the fu-poems", 6

titles of "historical writings" and 5 titles of "Cautionary and sacrificial pieces". There are 136 poems and essays in Volume 1, one more than Volume 2, the litterateur of the Southern Dynasty Yan Tingzhi's recollection of Tao Yuanming, *Funeral elegy for the summoned scholar T'ao by Yen Yen-chih*, which has almost the same data as that of the collection of Tao Yuanming. Davis believes that some of the existing biographical historical materials are not really scientific, for example, whether Mr. Wu Liu is equal to Tao Yuanming himself, and whether the Peach-blossom Source really exists or not. Davis collected *the biographies of Tao Yuanming in the Song Book · Hermit Biography, Tao Yuanming Collection of Xiao Tong, the Book of Jin, Yi Wen Leiju and other materials*. Davis has complete materials of Tao Yuanming, whose translations, not only for translation, but also for the purpose of describing the significance of the works themselves, which are of great research value, providing not only for the general public, but also provide reference materials for Western researchers and Chinese researchers interested in Western Sinologists.

When Davies translated Tao Yuanming's works into English, he dealt with the original works individually and objectively, and represented the original works properly. He also analyzed the difficult words, ambiguous words, or words that are easy to generate ambiguity in the poems in a specific way, handled them flexibly, and explained them by classification. Ancient Chinese names and their unique official positions, places, names, images, sources of allusions, Confucianism and Taoism, etc., are also marked. Volume II is one less than volume I of *"Funeral elegy for the summoned scholar T'ao by Yen Yen-chih"*, and the others are strictly corresponding to volume I. Volume II presents the original text of the traditional Chinese characters, which is neat in form and easy to read. The traditional Chinese characters once again reflect the Chinese culture's subtlety and researchability. Davis also made reasonable criticism of Chen Yinke, a master historian, for his research on T'ao-hua Yuan Chi P 'ang-cheng. Sou-Shen Hou-Chi is Tao's original draft, while his anthology is the final revised version. Davis believes that Chen's description of the two texts is not satisfactory, and it is necessary to explain the relationship between Tao Yuanming and *Sou-Shen Hou-Chi* (A. R. Davis, 1983). Mr. Chen wrote in *"Peach-Blossom Source"*: "Tao Yuanming's *Peach Blossoms Source* is both an allegorical and a factual article. As an allegorical article, it is well known in ancient and modern times and is not required to be discussed in detail. As a factual article, although there are many commentators in the past and recent times, what they have said is often wrong. " On the whole, Chen does not seem to have fully understood the relationship between allegory and what he sees as the depiction of reality in this work, nor has he fully considered Tao's possible views in the process of writing it" (A. R. Davis, 1983). On the basis of collecting a large number of historical materials about Tao Yuanming and his works, as well as all existing translations of Tao Yuanming

in China and abroad, it can be seen that Davis' research on Tao Yuanming has reached a level of perfection. Durisin, in *Comparative Literature Studies: An Exploration of the Methodological Findings*, proposes that "the subject of reception, rather than the subject of influence, becomes the factor determining the type of influence" (Mark Angenot, 2000). This is the same viewpoint of Jauss, the founder of "reception aesthetics", which emphasizes the subject status of the recipient. Davis's translation fully considers the acceptance needs of the target language, that is, English readers. In addition to the translation of the poem itself, he meticulously and conscientiously appends detailed explanations and comments on the corresponding culture-loaded words that are difficult to understand. Professor Fang Zhong (1984), who was the first systematic translator of Tao Yuanming's works in China, believed that it is not easy to translate Tao's poems, and it is even more difficult to translate Tao's poems. On the thorough understanding of a large number of Tao Yuanming's poems and essays, Davis believes that his works reveal the original author Tao Yuanming's distinct personality and the noble personality of not being in harmony with the common world. Zhu Guangqian believes that we have explained Yuan Ming's personality, we have explained his poetry, so there is no need to say much about the poetry itself (Zhu Guangqian, 1962), "At that time, the scholar-officials' losing their integrity were the most painful thing for Yuan Ming. Even if he did not have the power to change the customs, at least he was not willing to go along with the evil and lose his own personality, which was the main motive for Yuan Ming to abandon his official position..." (Liang Qichao, 1962). On the basis of scientific research on a large number of historical materials, Davis's affirmation of Tao Yuanming's independent personality, which is similar to the views of domestic researchers Zhu Guangqian and Liang Qichao, is quite wonderful.

Detailed Annotations and Thoughtful Understanding

Different from the pure poetic translation of most translators, Davis' translation is divided into two volumes, and both the original Chinese version and the English version are fully annotated (including supplementary comments, supplementary notes, etc.), which is the fundamental reason why Davis' translation is called the most academic translation in the West. Volume I is Translation and Commentary, and volume II is Additional Commentary, Notes and Biography. In volume I, except for the translation itself, there are additional comments of 63 titles in the total of 69 titles. In *an excursion to Hsieh-Ch'uan*, except for the comment, there is also *Excursion to the Stone Gate* as the appendix. According to the comment, Davis thinks that there are different textual variants about the date of *an excursion to Hsieh-Ch'uan*, hsin-ch'ou (401) and hsin-yu(421), while modern critics see them as mere accidental variations, choosing between the two to suit their point of view. The next pair of variations are the first line Wujih (Day 5) and Wu-Shih (50). Davis argues that this is inappropriate, and that these four

variants may be the result of a corruption of the schema, or of a correction of an impossible text, given that the revision is earlier in time, Davis prefers the hsin-ch'ou and the "Fifth Day" version of the first line of the poem (A. R. Davis, 1983). As for the reason why the commentary is deliberately included in the appendix "An Excursion to the Stone Gate", although Tao Yuanming's poem is a masterpiece of ancient times, Davis said that it has similarities with contemporary poetry, which makes it interesting and especially compelling to compare it. The sixth line of the poem reads: "Looking at the cliff, we think of layered wall (Kunlun mountains)", which echoes "divine mountain" in "Distantly they reminded us of the Divine Mountain" in Tao's poem (divine mountain refers to the fairyland of the top of Kunlun Mountains. According to ancient myths and legends, Kunlun mountains are residences for the western queen and other immortals.)

Although there is neither comment nor introduction in "after an old poem" of "the poems in series", the necessary 18 words and sentences of notes in the nine poems are all listed in footnotes. For example, in the tenth sentence of the first one of the nine poems, "Which has made these words prove false", the demonstrative pronoun and noun "these words", the specific meaning and reference of the words are hidden in the poem, leaving room for the readers to think and infer. Therefore, in order to retain the literary color of the poem itself, the corresponding translation is only properly translated as "these words" also leaves room for the English-speaking reader or for the reader interested in the English translation. Of course, the sinologist Davis is by no means a careless scholar. The gaps in reference and the reasonable answer that needs to be given are noted in the endnotes. These words refer to "our pledge at parting" in the original poem. In "the poems in series", "miscellaneous poems", "Singing of poor scholars", "Reading the Shan-hai-ching", and "In imitation of burial songs" are not marked with comments. But of course, there is an introduction before the corresponding poems. A general introduction is given before "Singing of the Two Shus", "Singing of the Three Good Men" and "Singing of Ching K'o", and then their respective translations, sources and comments are given respectively. The sources are marked from the first to the ninth chapters of "Written after reading history", and the general comments are appended after the preface.

Among the 68 titles in Volume 2, in addition to the masterpieces of the original Chinese characters, 14 have additional notes and comments, 39 have additional notes, and 2 have additional comments, including "We all enjoy ourselves together beneath the cypresses at the tombs of the Chou family" and "Peach-blossom Source". There are also 13 titles with neither additional comments nor comments, but all of them have been commented on and explained in detail in volume 1. In Davis's notes and commentaries,

he elaborates on various Chinese allusions and different versions of Tao Yuanming's works for Western readers. In order to make the readers who are accustomed to English language and culture better understand the meaning of the culture-loaded word "p'ang-cheng" derived from the transliteration of "旁证" in Chinese, Davis interprets it as "Circumstantial Evidence" by means of the functional equivalence approach. Davis comprehensively studies Tao Yuanming's Chinese works and conducts a translation study on them. There are introduction before the translation and additional comments or notes after the translation, from which we can know that Tao Yuanming is diligent and studious, well-read, knowledgeable, fond of and good at citing canons. According to statistics, 183 kinds of classical works are quoted in Tao Yuanming's works. We can know from Davis's comments that his works embody the essence of Chuang Tzu philosophy, Taoism and Confucianism, etc. At the same time, the original author Tao Yuanming cites the essence of many masterpieces like "Jin Guozhi", "Peacefully around the whole world", "The songs of Chu", "Huai Nan Tzu", "Notes on Book of Waterways", and to borrow "three emperors" myths and legends of Jingwei, pengzu image to express the great ambitions, with diversity, strange imagination, extensive writing sources, diversely creative thinking, whose works has a long and unfailing history. We should use inheritance vision to look at the history of poetry translation texts, every new translation should consider its relationship with the old in front of the translation, and consider a new translation of historical significance and the necessity of the new translation work. Therefore, the translation is the inheritance relationship between the translator in the translation when a problem must be proven (Yang Cheng-hu, 2012). Liu Chongde, a translation scholar, once said, "All scholars and experts have their own strengths and weaknesses... In the process of academic research, one should take advantage of others' strengths and make up for the shortcomings of others, instead of putting oneself above others, denying everything and pushing others down to elevate oneself" (Liu Chongde, 2000). It is collected and delving into various periods and related works and research, which is for Tao Yuanming, including Chinese and western writings, (these can be reflected in the reviews and comments). He almost exhaust all data, analytical thinking and make their own judgment, takes its essence, also the lack of demonstration of put forward reasonable advice and opinion, the essence of translation again He completed the English translation of Tao Yuanming's works, and published the most academic "Tao Yuanming's works and their significance" in the western translation of Tao Yuanming.

CONCLUSION

This paper review the translation of Davis's "Tao Yuanming's complete collection", namely "Tao Yuanming's works and their meaning", the western highest academic

masterpieces of Tao Yuanming's translation, to explore the versions from all aspects, including the translator in the translation itself and additional comments of Davis's unique insights and perspectives of the individual opinion, additional comments, necessary words and the explanation of the history of the various annotations, to explore the study of Chinese literary works represented by Tao Yuanming's works and Western Sinologists represented by Davis, as well as the dissemination and acceptance of Chinese literary works in the English-speaking world. The translation study of Tao Yuanming's works by Davis, with complete information, accurate translation words, annotations and details, simple style, loyally and vividly reproduce the original style. In this translation, the Sinologist Davis himself gives views on some details need to be verified, questioned and rational criticism. Therefore, Tao Yuanming's works not only have a profound influence in China, but also attract wide attention in the West. The study of Tao by Western scholars has been quite profound, which helps readers in the English-speaking world to have a more comprehensive and profound interpretation of Tao Yuanming and also learn to understand Chinese literary works. Davis sets an example for western scholars to study the translation and introduction of Tao Yuanming, which will attract more western sinologists to study Chinese masters including but not limited to Tao Yuanming and his related works, which is conducive to the inheritance and development of the brilliant Chinese culture, both at home and abroad, to carry forward the relevant culture and make it forever stand in the whole world.

But in any case, Sinologist Davis has always been a heterogeneous culture researchers, who has collected a large amount of data, but from the inherent thinking and culture from the western perspective on Tao' studies, he only emphasizes the personality and emotion expression of Tao yuanming, ignoring Tao yuanming's social environment and various complex elements, which is too one-sided. Davis, lack of the the study of the Chinese social background and the understanding of the political culture of China at that time, which are also the difficulties, problems and obstacles that other western sinologists have to overcome in the translation of the classics of Chinese masters represented by Tao Yuanming. This not only enlightens the west to the Chinese literature translation researchers, but also enlighten the Chinese concerns of the Chinese translations of western classics research scholar, to pay attention to the original author political and cultural background at that time, this is English to Chinese and even more than the premise of multi-cultural and difficulties of the study of language texts and the breakthrough point, is under the background of globalization, multicultural multilingual communication convenience, provide practical research ideas for the relevant language, culture and translation studies.

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