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Article

Chu culture-related romanticism and shamanism in *Zhuangzi*: A translation perspective

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Abstract: *Zhuangzi* is a representative philosophical classic of Chu culture, which contains many Chu cultural elements. This article selects some Chu culture-specific items, such as Kun 鲲, Peng 鹏, Wu Zhu 巫祝, Shenwu Jixian 神巫季咸, and Wu Xianshao 巫咸招 from *Zhuangzi* to explore the romanticism and shamanism in the canon from the perspective of Chu culture, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of their rendering in the translations of the canon by sinologists such as James Legge, Herbert Giles, and Burton Watson. A new translation is proposed for them in this study to promote the cross-cultural dissemination of Chu culture.

Keywords: Chu culture; *Zhuangzi*; romanticism; shamanism; translation

1. Introduction

As one of the classics of the Taoist school, *Zhuangzi* (“庄子”) is a combination of philosophy, literature, and religion. The canon is well-known to the world for its bold, magnificent, and unique writing style and the use of many myths, legends, and fables, it embodies the ancient wisdom of the Orient and is regarded as a treasure of Chinese culture. The transmission of *Zhuangzi* in the world has lasted more than a hundred years, and it has been translated into many other languages. Some famous sinologists, such as James Legge (1891), Arthur Waley (1939), Burton Watson (1964/1968), and Victor H. Mair (1994) have devoted themselves to the English translation of it. Jingchu culture, also known as Chu culture, is an essential source of Chinese culture with rich and colorful regional cultural resources. Its divine way of thinking and unique socio-historical conditions gave Zhuangzi or Zhuang Zhou (庄周) a constant stream of inspiration. With romantic words and skillful techniques, he created *Zhuangzi*, a classic prose work that has been handed down to this day and has become a bright pearl in the treasury of Chinese culture. This article intends to explore effective methods for the restoration of original information from the perspective of Chu culture, focusing on the translation of five core concepts closely related to the culture in three major English translations of the canon by Herbert A. Giles, James Legge, and Burton Watson, to help Chu culture better go global.

2. Research methodology

2.1. Research purpose and question

At present, most scholars who study the English translation of Chu culture focus on the native classics of Chu, such as *Chu ci* 楚辞, *Shanhai jing* 山海经, *Daode jing*

道德经, and so on. However, *Zhuangzi,* a work deeply influenced by Chu culture, has so far received little attention from researchers in their study of the English translation of Chu culture. At the same time, many scholars who study the English translation of *Zhuangzi* have paid little attention to the rendering of Chu culture elements in it. Therefore, this article selects five Chu culture-related expressions, namely, "Kun 鲲", "Peng 鹏", "Wu Zhu 巫祝", "Shenwu Jixian 神巫季咸", and "Wu Xianshao 巫咸袑" in *Zhuangzi*, as the object of study, and explores the effective way of translating them into English on the basis of thick translation theory.

2.2. Theoretical basis

Appiah [1] first proposes the concept of "thick translation" which refers to "academic translation that seeks with its annotations and its accompanying glosses to locate the text in a rich cultural and linguistic context". It emphasizes intentionality, contextualization, and cultural difference. More specifically, comprehension of the source text hinges on discerning the author's intention; a comprehensive understanding of the context is imperative to grasp the author's intention; translation helps foster an understanding of cultural heterogeneity and diversity and a translator's genuine respect for source culture can only be demonstrated when target readers confront and embrace cultural heterogeneity.

The five expressions in question are heavily loaded with Chu culture, and their effective rendering can be based on thick translation. Specifically, the method of transliteration plus annotation can retain their phonetic feature and introduce the relevant background information. In some cases, amplification may be used together with transliteration and annotation. This translation method is aimed at maximizing the fidelity to the source language and culture. However, translation is a balancing act, and the target text is the result of the translator's compromise of numerous elements and considerations. The translator enjoys the limited freedom of choosing to be faithful to the author or the reader. The translation method proposed in this study is author-centered, and thus its effectiveness may need to be re-evaluated if the translator chooses to use reader-centered translation strategies and methods.

3. Chu romanticism in *Zhuangzi* and its translation

As the opening chapter of *Zhuangzi*, the "Xiaoyao you" ("逍遥游") depicts a vibrant and colorful world. In this world, there are both big fish and birds like Kunpeng 鲲鹏, as well as small insects and birds like Tiao 蜩 and Xuejiu 学鸠. In Zhuangzi's eyes, animals have their own freedom regardless of their size. The author skillfully replaces reality with a virtual world, and places readers into a mysterious and illusory realm through philosophical reasoning. The so-called "Xiaoyao you" is actually a spiritual journey of Zhuangzi, also known as a divine journey. Wang [2] asserts that this absolute freedom is unimpeded by time and space. This kind of romantic and peculiar divine journey can also be seen in Qu Yuan's "Li sao" and "Yuan you". Qu uses a large number of mythological images in the "Li sao" and leads the readers to explore the fictional mythological world through elaborate techniques. In the spiritual journey, Qu imagines himself wandering in a fairyland with gods and immortals. As

Wang [3] points out, although there are significant differences in the writing style between Zhuangzi's "Xiaoyao you" and Qu's "Shen you 神游" or spiritual journey, there are spiritual similarities. At that time, Qu Yuan's career was not smooth, and Zhuangzi's life was difficult. Therefore, they coincidentally created an ideal world in their works to seek spiritual comfort and liberation. Zhao [4] argues that this kind of illusion and fantasy is an essential characteristic of romantic literature. They jointly chose the romantic approach to express their emotions and express their ideals, which was not only related to the social reality at that time but also inseparable from the influence of Chu culture.

From a regional perspective, Chu was located in the south with abundant resources and a relatively rich living environment, giving it a romantic and natural charm compared to the northern regions. As Yin and Dan [5] point out, from a social perspective, after the prosperity of the Chu state, cultures from different regions continued to merge in the state which boasted winding mountains and beautiful forests, further nourishing the romantic character of the Chu people. The romantic spirit of Chu also naturally influenced Zhuangzi's creation. When Zhuangzi could not find a way out of the dark social reality and chose to live in seclusion, he created a surreal and bizarre world. Through some fables and rhetorical devices such as personification and exaggeration, he concretized and visualized abstract philosophical theories with simple and vivid stories. According to Jiang [6], among the 261 fables in *Zhuangzi*, 34 are related to nature, of which 26 are animal fables and 8 are plant fables. These animals and plants are based on the existing things in nature and the inherent characteristics of the species themselves. Wu [7] believes that through the author's further processing, they create images that are different from those in the natural world. In the process of translating it into English, translators should pay attention to the creative prototypes of these animals and plants in the fables and trace their cultural origins. This is not only beneficial for translators to grasp the true meaning of the original text and choose more appropriate translation methods but also conducive to the inheritance and development of Chinese culture.

3.1. Kun 鲲 and its translation

The fragment related to Kun 鲲 in the "Xiaoyao you" of *Zhuangzi* is like this: "There is a fish in Beiming, named Kun. Kun is so large that I don't know how many thousand miles it is; it changes and becomes a bird whose name is Peng. The back of the Peng measures I don't know how many thousand miles across, and when it rises and flies off, its wings are like clouds all over the sky". As Liu [8] points out, regarding the prototype of Kun, scholars throughout history have had controversies which can be divided into three categories: First, it refers to "tiny fish"; second, refers to "big fish"; third, it refers to "whale". There are some annotations regarding these three definitions. From the original text, it can be seen that the sentence "Kun is so large that I don't know how many thousand miles it is" and the sentence "There is a fish. It is thousands of miles wide. No one knows its cultivation. Its name is Kun". All describe the size of Kun. The interpretation of "tiny fish" is completely contradictory to the original meaning. It is seemingly contradictory, but as Guo [9] points out, Duan Yucai believes that this contains Zhuangzi's "debate between small and big".

Regarding the second interpretation, Kun itself has the meaning of a big fish. For example, in Guo's [9] work entitled *A Collection of Additional Notes on the Inner Chapters of Zhuangzi*, Zhu Guiyao is quoted as saying, "Kun has the meaning of a big fish, and Zhuangzi did not falsely borrow it", indicating that Kun itself has the meaning of a big fish. Wang and Liu [10] point out that as for the third interpretation, in Lu Deming's "Sound and Sense of *Zhuangzi*" of *Classic Poetry and Prose* in the Tang Dynasty, there are such descriptions as "Kun 鯤 is pronounced Kun 昆, and it is the name of a big fish" and "Kun 鯤 should be taken as Jing 鯨".

Herbert Giles, James Legge, and Burton Watson respectively translate Kun as "Leviathan", "Khan", and "K'un", with annotations provided in both Legge's and Watson's translations. Leviathan is depicted in Western religion as a giant aquatic creature symbolizing evils living on the seabed, and its existence is mentioned in the Book of Job, Isaiah, and Psalms. Touitou [11] thinks that Leviathan was later often described as a big fish or a whale (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leviathan). Giles starts from the Western cultural context and uses "Leviathan" to represent "Kun", which is beneficial for the target readers to understand and imagine the animal. However, the shortcomings of this translation method are also evident. Firstly, from the original text "Kun is so large that I don't know how many thousand miles it is", it can be seen that the size of Kun's body exceeds the scope of human knowledge. If Leviathan is used to compare with Kun, it cannot fully describe the vastness of Kun. Secondly, Leviathan is the embodiment of chaos in Western religion, symbolizing evils that people want to eliminate. Yu [12] believes that the Kun in the "Xiaoyao you" is an image created by Zhuangzi with lofty aspirations, a heroic spirit, and a pursuit of freedom, and is a positive and uplifting image. Therefore, equating Leviathan with Kun not only leads to readers' misinterpretation of the original meaning but also hinders the international dissemination of Chinese Taoist philosophy. Legge and Watson respectively translate Kun as "Khan" and "Kun", using the Wade-Giles phonetic system and modern Chinese phonetic system, and add the footnotes to explain it. Legge [13] explains Kun and Peng in the same footnote, which reads: "Kun and Peng are fictional animals, far larger in size than the giant monsters Kraken and Rukh imagined by Westerners". He further points out that Zhuangzi depicts the enormous size of the Kunpeng and compares it with small animals, to illustrate that the size of the body is not related to the Tao and that attaining the Tao brings supreme happiness. Watson's [14] footnote reads: "Kun refers to small fish. Therefore, a paradox appears at the beginning of *Zhuangzi*: The smallest fish imaginable is the largest fish imaginable". In other words, Watson believes that Kun is a "tiny fish" and points out the contradiction in the original text. Although the content in the two translators' footnotes is different, using transliteration with an annotation is more helpful for readers to understand the original text and is conducive to cross-cultural communication.

3.2. Peng 鵬 and its translation

The image of Peng 鵬 is more closely related to Chu culture. The culture of Chu has a long and rich history, with many unique customs and traditions. Chu people's worship of phoenixes is not only of totemic worship but also of ancestral worship. In

literary works, Chu people often use the phoenix as a metaphor for sages. As Chen [15] points out, among various excavated Chu cultural relics, it is common for Chu people to decorate them with phoenix patterns. The Chu people believe that their ancestor was the fire god Zhu Rong, who transformed into a phoenix after his death. The phoenix totem is the embodiment of ancestors, so the Chu people's worship of phoenixes is a sublimation of ancestral worship. In their eyes, the phoenix, as a divine bird that connects the heavens, can guide the soul to ascend to Heaven. Therefore, Yao [16] contends that Chu's worship of the phoenix is also a primitive totem worship. Zhuangzi, who had long been influenced by Chu people, mentioned Kunpeng at the beginning of the "Xiaoyao you" as follows: "The Peng migrated to the southern underworld, where it hit the water for three thousand miles, lifted and swayed for ninety thousand miles, and rested in June". According to Duan [17], in the fourth chapter of Volume Seven of Xu Shen's *Shuowen jiezi*, the "part of birds" refers to "Peng" and "the ancient phoenix". The "Peng" that sways up ninety thousand miles is the phoenix, the celestial bird worshipped by Chu people. As for the translation of "Peng", Giles adopts the same method as used to deal with "Kun", which is to use animals from Western mythology for analogical naming and translate "Peng" as "Rukh". Al-Rawi [18] asserts that the prototype of Rukh or Ruc is a huge mythical bird in ancient Indian mythology, with its wings being about 18,900 meters long and its claws capable of catching elephants and rhinoceroses. Although Giles compares the Peng with the Ruc bird to create a more intuitive imagination for readers, Zhuangzi uses "Peng" to express the inclusive and infinite "Great Beauty Realm" of Taoism. Therefore, the limited size of the Ruc will constrain and limit the infinite size of the Peng.

Legge translates "Peng" as "Phang", using the Wade-Giles phonetic system. He notices that using only transliteration cannot evoke readers' associations, and it is even more difficult to express the inherent meaning of the image of "Kunpeng". Therefore, Legge [13] adds the footnotes to supplement the explanation, not only comparing the body size of "Kun" and "Peng" with the Norse legends of Kraken and Roc in the North Sea, indicating that their body size far exceeds that of the latter but also pointing out the allegorical significance of the Kunpeng story. The only drawback is that Legge fails to explain the origin of the image of Kunpeng, and readers can only understand its large body size, without knowing its specific image. Watson uses modern Chinese Pinyin to translate "Peng" without adding a footnote for explanation. Readers only know the pronunciation of this animal name, and have no idea about its size or origin. Therefore, their understanding of the original text is inevitably inadequate.

It is believed that from the perspective of Chu culture dissemination, when translating Kun and Peng, translators should conduct sufficient traceability research, especially on the image of Peng that is closely related to Chu culture. How to reproduce the prototype of "phoenix" in the translation is a problem that Chu-culture translators need to take into consideration. According to Guo [19], it is worth noting that although Steven K. Coutinho has not translated the entire text of *Zhuangzi*, he has translated the animals' names when analyzing the story of "Kunpeng" in his research work. He notices the cultural origin of "Peng" and transliterates it as "Phoeng", which also corresponds to the English word "phoenix" in writing form. If an annotation is

added to explain the relationship between Peng and the phoenix-worshipping custom in Chu culture, it may produce better effects in disseminating Chu culture.

4. Chu shamanism in *Zhuangzi* and its translation

Shamanic culture is very ancient and can be traced back to primitive times. The level of prehistoric productivity was very low, and humans were still at the exploration stage of the natural world and themselves. Primitive humans believed that all things have spirits, and they must have some kind of connection with the outside world. Shamans or witches, on the other hand, are messengers who communicate between humans and gods, serving as a tool of connection. Geng [20] holds the view that witches communicate with gods through divination, worship, and other means.

During the pre-Qin period, the witchcraft style was most prevalent in the state of Chu, gradually becoming one of the characteristics of Chu culture. Chu witchcraft permeated into every aspect of the lives of the Chu people and even the entire Chinese nation. Religion places people under the power of ghosts and gods through worship, reverence, reliance on them, and praying for help. Lin and Zhang [21] think that this binary thinking of humans and nature places people under the influence of ghosts and gods. As Huang [22] points out, unlike later religions, Chu's shamanic culture depends on the harmony between humans and nature, and it is influenced by humans and gods. Shamans or wizards use some supernatural power to communicate with and balance ghosts and gods, to achieve the goal of controlling natural objects. The idea of the harmony between man and nature and the triumph of man over nature had a certain positive significance for the enlightenment and development of social thought at that time.

Taoism, as a local religion in China, has emerged and developed through the continuous absorption of folk ideas, with the main source being the Taoist ideology of Chu. Zhu [23] thinks that in the strong atmosphere of witchcraft in Chu, Taoist thought was also deeply influenced by it. Zhang Zhengming [24], an expert in the study of Chu history, points out that "After the late Spring and Autumn period, Chu culture entered its peak, and witchcraft began to diverge; those who inherited it were still shamans, and those who rationalized it were transformed into Taoists". Therefore, Huang [22] thinks that Taoism and witchcraft can be said to have a continuous academic origin, with the same roots and origins. Zhuangzi, who was deeply influenced by Chu culture, also inherited the Taoist school of thought, so the traces of Chu's shamanistic culture can be seen everywhere in his works.

There are only three places in *Zhuangzi* that directly mention the term "Wu 巫" or witch, including "此皆巫祝以知之矣, 所以为不详也" ("This is all known by the shaman, so it is unknown") in the chapter "The Human World", "郑有神巫曰季咸, 知人之死生存亡" ("Zheng had a divine shaman named Ji Xian, who knew the life and death of people") in the chapter "Ying the Emperor", and "巫咸袑曰: '来!吾语女'" ("Wu Xianshao said, 'Come! I speak to you, my daughter'") in the chapter "Tian yun". Among them, "Wuzhu 巫祝", "Shenwu Jixian 神巫季咸", and "Wu Xianshao 巫咸袑" are mentioned, and they are the expressions which contain the term "Wu 巫".

4.1. Wuzhu 巫祝 and its translation

The term "Wuzhu 巫祝" is found in the chapter "The Human World", and its context is as follows: "Therefore, it is understood by Wuzhu that those with white catfish like cows, those with swollen noses like dolphins, and those with hemorrhoids are unsuitable to be offered as sacrifices to the river god. This is why gods and humans are considered auspicious". In the text, "Jiezhi 解之" means to offer sacrifices to gods and seek blessings to relieve sins. "Shihe 适河" refers to the practice of sinking young boys and girls into the river to offer sacrifices to the gods. *Shuowen jiezi* explains "Wu 巫" and "Zhu 祝" as follows: "Wu 巫 is Zhu 祝. Women can do things invisibly, and dance to subdue the gods"; "Zhu 祝 refers to the one who is in charge of the sacrificial ceremony". Chen [15] believes that the term "Wuzhu 巫祝" here refers to the wizard who performs witchcraft rituals.

In the text preceding the above quotation, Zhuangzi provides examples to describe the strict requirements for the quality of sacrificial offerings in the sacrificial customs of that time, aiming to demonstrate his central point in writing this section: There are pros and cons to everything, and there are risks to everything useful. The sacrificial customs mentioned in *Zhuangzi* are closely related to the strong atmosphere of witchcraft worship in the Chu region. The main objects of worship for Chu people are mountains, rivers, gods, and ancestors. Liu and Jia [25] point out that they hope to communicate with nature and gods through worship activities and pray for blessings from gods and ancestors. The shaman is the host of these sacrificial activities. Therefore, based on the context and the sacrificial customs at that time, it can be seen that the "Wuzhu 巫祝" mentioned in the text emphasizes more on its ritual hosting and magical functions. Giles translates it as "soothsayers". In English, soothsayer means "a person who can predict the future through magic, intuition, or other more rational means". There is an account in *Xun zi* like this: "The combination of yin and yang as well as the selection of the five divinations help to determine human auspiciousness and inauspiciousness". It can be seen that shamans do hold the position of presiding over divination ceremonies. The so-called divination refers to the ancient ancestors using the power of gods to judge misfortune and guide their actions when they were unable to make decisions about things in nature or the human world. Gu [26] argues that, whether it is a war, a political stance, a personal marriage, or an illness, Chu people always choose divination. However, the focus here is on describing the "Wuzhu 巫祝" presiding over sacrificial activities, rather than predicting future fortunes and misfortunes. Therefore, translating it as "soothsayers" is inaccurate and will distort the original meaning, leaving the target readers puzzled. Legge translates it as "wizard". This translation first assigns a gender label to "Wuzhu 巫祝". In Chinese, "Wu 巫" is a woman and "Xi 觋" is a man. In English, a female shaman is called a witch and a male shaman is called a wizard. As for the term "Wuzhu 巫祝" in the original text, it is difficult to determine its gender, so using the gender-specific term "wizard" is inappropriate, and this word has a negative connotation in Western culture. William A. Haviland [27], an American anthropologist, mentions that the wizard injected the substance that had cast a spell into the victim's body to kill him. Xu [28] asserts that at that time, the requirements for becoming a wizard in the state

of Chu were very high, requiring multiple strict conditions and a noble character to qualify for the position. Moreover, Sukhu [29] emphasizes that Qu Yuan also maintains the shamanism of Chu in *Chu ci*. Therefore, the image of witches in the state of Chu at that time was positive, and the translation "wizard" that goes against Chu's attitude towards witches would cause target readers to misunderstand the image of witches. Watson chooses to translate "Wuzhu 巫祝" as "shaman". As Se [30] points out, shamanism is a primitive religion in the Siberian region and northern China, where witches or wizards are referred to as shamans among the tribes. In Chinese cultural classics, especially Chu cultural classics such as *Chu ci*, the use frequency of witchcraft culture words is very high. In the process of foreign translation, many translators use "shaman" to translate "Wu 巫". For example, the famous British sinologist Arthur Waley provides his research monograph with the title of *The Nine Songs: A Study of Shamanism in Ancient China* and explains in the introduction why he translates "Wu 巫" as "shaman". Waley [31] points out that the function of Chinese witchcraft is the same as that of shamanism in Siberia and the Tungusic ethnic group, so "Wu 巫" can be conveniently translated as "shaman".

Se et al. [20,25,26,28,32,33] hold the view that according to the basic connotations and characteristics of the four main shamanic rituals of Chu witchcraft and shamanism, it can be seen that translating "Wu 巫" as "shaman" is somewhat rational and beneficial. In terms of their four major witchcraft rituals, there are indeed many similarities between Chu witchcraft and shamanism in terms of cultural connotations and cultural images. For example, in terms of sacrificial rituals and divination rituals, both in terms of methods and purposes, the two almost overlap with each other. At the same time, translating "Wu 巫" as "shaman" can avoid gender discrimination towards witches and does not carry emotional connotations, making it a neutral word. However, the two cannot be directly equated with each other. For example, in terms of joining rituals, the shamanism of the state of Chu emphasizes more on the origin and moral character of wizards, while shamanism requires a series of physical tests. Secondly, there is the ritual of treating diseases. Although Chu shamans also use the method of connecting with gods for treatment, there are scientific methods such as using herbs, while shamanistic treatment does not have any "medical" components. For example, Gu [26] thinks that in divination, Chu people sometimes choose to believe or not based on their situation, reflecting the positive thinking of Chu people that "man can conquer nature", while shamans do not have this advanced concept. In addition, according to Meng [34], shamanism is a religious form in northern China, and its inheritance reflects the culture of northern China. Kuang and Ma [35] contend that translating southern witchcraft with words that contain northern religious connotations may also lead to the suspicion of "translating southern objects with words from the north", which may cause readers to misunderstand the image of witches in the state of Chu. It is believed that although translating "Wu 巫" as "shaman" can provide readers with some associative inspiration for the image of wizards, this translation method is certainly convenient and has little significance for the dissemination and development of the witch culture with local characteristics in south China. Therefore, from the perspective of spreading Chu culture in the world, a more ideal translation strategy seems to be to provide detailed introductions in

paratexts such as general introductions and chapter introductions, and use phonetic annotations in the translation. In the general introduction or chapter introduction, shamanism can be used to assist in explaining the witchcraft of the Chu state, but the difference between the two should be clearly pointed out and they cannot be completely equated with each other. In the translation, we can transliterate "巫" as "Wu" and explain the main content and methods of the witchcraft ritual in the footnote or endnote according to the context. If there are any differences from shamanism, they should be pointed out. This translation strategy can help readers accurately understand the original meaning and also gain insight into the cultural background of the Chu state. Therefore, an ideal translation method for "Wu 巫" is transliteration plus annotation, and the note may be like this: Wu refers to the person in charge of the sacrificial ceremony in the state of Chu in which high requirements were imposed upon the quality of the offerings.

4.2. Shenwu Jixian 神巫季咸 and its translation

The context of the term "Shenwu Jixian 神巫季咸" in the chapter "Ying the Emperor" is like this: "Zheng had a divine witch named Ji Xian, who like a god, knew the life and death of people, and the period of misfortune, fortune, and longevity was determined by the passage of time". This paragraph describes the story of Ji Xian, a divine witch, observing the appearance of Huzi 壶子, with the theme revolving around "emptiness" and "depositing", and the reasoning behind it based on the principles of governance. Chen [15] believes that as Ji Xian is one of the main characters in the story, the translation method for the name needs further investigation. Regarding the shaman, there is an account in the "Huangdi pian" of *Lie zi* as follows: "There was a divine witch who came from Qi to Zheng, and was named Ji Xian". Guo [9] points out that Cheng Xuanying's relevant annotation in the Tang Dynasty is more detailed: "There was a divine witch in the state of Zheng, who was very effective and came from Qi, surnamed Ji Xian". Combined with the original text, Ji Xian is a wandering wizard who divinates and observes physical appearances of people. Jia [36] believes that the name Wu Xian 巫咸 is the title of a wizard, and Ji Xian uses the name Xian 咸 to highlight his supernatural characteristics; taking "Ji 季" as the surname implies reverence. It is uncertain whether there was such a person in history, but Zhuangzi did demonstrate the mysterious color of a wizard through the story.

The translations of Giles, Legge, and Watson for "Shenwu Jixian 神巫季咸" are respectively "a wonderful magician", "a mysterious wizard", and "a shaman of the gods". Legge's translation also provides a footnote like this: "巫 is generally feminine, meaning 'a witch.' We must take it here as masculine (= 觋). The general meaning of the character is 'magical', and the antics of such performers is to bring down the spirits". According to the Webster's Dictionary, the word "magician" has two meanings: (1) a person who plays magic tricks; (2) a person with magical power. From the context of the original text, Giles should have used the second meaning of "magician". In the Western context, the term "magic" usually has a negative meaning and is often used in fraudulent, unconventional, and dangerous ceremonies. Liang [37] argues that magicians who perform magic are also often marginalized by the public.

Therefore, translating "Wu 巫" as "magician" not only fails to convey the mysterious color that Zhuangzi wants to express but also gives a negative color to Shenwu Jixian. Here Legge's translation is more acceptable. His translation "a mysterious wizard" not only represents Ji Xian's mysterious color, but also indicates the shaman's gender. Because the gender of the witch Ji Xian can be determined here, Legge specifically points out in the annotation that female shamans are "witches" and male shamans are "wizards". The translation of "wizard" is accurate in terms of gender, but its negative connotations cannot be concealed. In the annotation, Legge also provides a brief explanation of the image of the shaman, pointing out that the basic meaning of "Wu 巫" is "magical" and can descend through certain actions. This is an explanation of the main content and methods of witchcraft mentioned in the original text. Watson translates "Wu 巫" as "shaman" and adds the qualifier "of the gods", meaning the "shaman of the gods". His translation reproduces the divine power of Ji Xian to some extent, who can see people, recognize appearances, and predict the future. But for the sake of spreading Chu culture, a more ideal translation can be produced via the method of "addition plus transliteration plus annotation", that is, "a mysterious Wu", accompanied by the following note: "The Wu of Chu was able to make the spirit descend from high and predict the future".

4.3. Wu Xianshao 巫咸招 and its translation

"Wu Xianshao 巫咸招" can be found in the chapter "Tian yun", and its context is like this: "Wu Xianshao said: 'Come! I speak of a woman. Heaven has six poles and five constants, and if the emperor follows them, he will govern; if he goes against them, he will be cruel. In the Nine Luo region, if he is well prepared, he will supervise the lower earth, and the whole world will support him. This is called the superior emperor". This paragraph uses Wu Xianshao's words to answer the question about the laws of nature at the beginning of this chapter. The translations of Giles, Legge, and Watson are respectively "Wu Han Chan", "Wu-hsien Thiao", and "The shaman Xian". Giles' translation is provided with a commentary, while Legge's and Watson's translations provide a footnote. Both Giles and Legge consider Wu Xianshao as a personal name and thus use transliteration to deal with it, without specifying this person's identity as a shaman. Watson believes that "Wu 巫" is an identity, "Xian 咸" is a person's name, and "Shao 招" is an action which is similar to "Zhao 招" in meaning, using the method of free translation plus transliteration to render "Wu Xian 巫咸".

Before the Qing Dynasty, scholars generally agreed that Wu Xian 巫咸 referred to the identity of a shaman, while Shao 招 was his name. According to Guo [9], in the Tang Dynasty, Chengxuan Ying's annotation stated that "Wu Xian was a divine shaman, and the prime minister of Emperor Zhongzong of the Shang Dynasty. His name was Shao". This annotation indicates that Wu Xian was both a wizard and a courtier, and Shao was his name. In the Qing Dynasty, Xuan Ying [38] proposed that "Shao 招 is a misspelling of Zhao 招" and "Since ancient times, there has never been Wu Xianshao but only Wu Xian". In his view, Shao is not the name of Wu Xian, but the action of summoning questioners, and he points out that there was Wu Xian but no

Wu Xianshao in ancient times. In fact, the name "Wu Xian" is common in ancient Chinese literary works. The "Book of Zhou" and the "Book of Shang" in *The Book of Documents* both mention that Wu Xian was a shaman during the Taiwu period of the Shang Dynasty, who participated in national politics by explaining and eliminating disasters. The verse line "Wu Xian will descend at night" ("巫咸将夕降") in the poem "Li sao" of *Chu ci* also mentions this divine witch. In the "Dahuang xijing" of *Shanhai jing*, there are the names of the ten witches of Lingshan, with Wu Xian ranking first. In Jia's [36] opinion, these records can indeed illustrate the saying that "There was Wu Xian in ancient times, but there was no Wu Xiansaho". The character "招" in "Wu Xianshao 巫咸招" should be a verb. The first sentence in the "Tian yun" is a series of questions about nature, and as a medium of communication between Heaven and man, wizards answer the questions logically. The use of "Zhao 招" to indicate Wu Xian's god-summoning gesture further demonstrates the wizard's divine nature. Therefore, "Wu Xianshao" should be understood as a greeting gesture made by the divine shaman Wu Xian.

After extensive research and verification, Watson not only uses "shaman" to indicate Wu Xian's identity as a witch but also translates "Shao" as "beckon" (summoning). Watson [14] also points out in the footnote that his translation method referred to the viewpoint of modern scholar Ma Xulun: "Shao is the same as "Zhao 招". Ma's [39] annotation in *Zhuangzi yizheng* states that "Shao 招 is borrowed as Zhao 招, and *Shuowen* says: 'One greets someone else by beckoning'". Watson's translation brings the supernatural nature of wizards to life, and readers of the translation can also empathize with it. The translation of "Wu Xianshao 巫咸招" can be improved based on Watson's translation as follows: "The Wu named Xian beckoned".

5. Concluding remarks

Zhuangzi was inspired and influenced by Chu culture from various aspects, and traces of Chu culture can be seen everywhere in his works. However, in the study of the English translation of *Zhuangzi*, few scholars have paid attention to the translation and introduction of Chu culture. This case study shows that from the perspective of spreading Chu culture, in the process of translating the canon into English, translators first need to use various research strategies and methods. For example, they can make good use of the latest research achievements on the newly unearthed Chu relics, conduct extensive traceability research, link Chu culture with the content of *Zhuangzi*, try hard to preserve the Chu cultural factors in the canon in translating and flexibly employ translation strategies and methods. The method of "transliteration plus annotation" proposed in this study can maximize the representation effects of Chu culture, romanticism, phoenix worship culture, and shamanistic culture contained in *Zhuangzi*.

As far as the three translations are concerned. it is inaccurate for Giles and Legge to compare the "Peng" in the "Xiaoyao you" with the Ruc bird in the Western cultural context. This translation method will not only mislead Western readers concerning the size of the body of the "Peng", but also fail to connect it with the totem of Chu culture, namely the phoenix. However, transliterating "Peng" as "Phoeng" can directly connect

it with the phoenix in terms of sound and form. If further annotations are added to indicate that Zhuangzi was influenced by Chu's reverence for phoenix culture and created the image of "Peng", it would have a better effect in the dissemination of Chu culture. The shamanistic culture of Chu also had a huge influence on Zhuangzi's creation. This article discusses the translation methods of Wuzhu 巫祝, Shenwu Jixian 神巫季咸, and Wu Xianshao 巫咸袑 in *Zhuangzi*. The translation of the keyword "Wu 巫", which best reflects Chu's witchcraft culture, cannot be ignored. Firstly, the translation of Wu should try to reflect the various abilities of the wizard, rather than being limited to a single skill. For example, Giles' translation of "Wuzhu巫祝" as "soothsayers" is not comprehensive enough. Secondly, translating Wu as "witch" and "wizard" is gender-specific, and "wizard" is often seen as a derogatory term in English culture, which contradicts the original meaning of Wu in *Zhuangzi* and the author's intention. Finally, translating Wu as "shaman" may seem like a better choice, but there are still many differences between shamanism and witchcraft in the state of Chu, and they cannot be completely equated with each other. At the same time, "translating things from the south with words from the north" can also cause misunderstandings and misinterpretations when it comes to the intercultural dissemination of the unique witchcraft culture in South China. Therefore, it is believed that the best translation method for Wu should be phonetic annotation, transliterating it as Wu, and providing a detailed introduction to the witchcraft culture of the Chu state in the introduction to the target text. In places where Wu appears in the text, footnotes or endnotes should be used to provide more specific explanations of the witchcraft emphasized in that context, and to supplement the meaning of Wu to prevent it from becoming an empty linguistic symbol. In addition, the transliteration has a short form with a simple pronunciation and is easy to spread. At the same time, translating "巫" into the Chinese Pinyin version "Wu" makes it full of mystery, just like the witchcraft religion of the Chu state, which makes people endlessly imagine and want to explore it. In short, translators should always keep in mind the goal of spreading Chu culture, try to explore various new translation methods, and contribute to the better promotion of Chinese culture, including Jingchu culture.

It should be noted that the present study is qualitative research, and its data collection may not be comprehensive. Future research on this topic may shift the research perspective from author-centred to reader-centred, and a combination of qualitative and quantitative research may produce more reliable and insightful achievements.

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