

Chuang Tzu in Germany: The Redirection of Chinese Literary Classics “Going Global”

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Abstract

As the quintessence of traditional Chinese culture, *Chuang Tzu* and other Chinese literary classics have been translated and introduced to many Western countries in succession, arousing Western attention and thoughts on Chinese culture. Since *Chuang Tzu* was introduced to Germany by sinologists and missionaries at the end of the nineteenth century, it has triggered a continuous upsurge of interest in its reading and research, which has solidified into a spiritual mirror aimed at fully representing traditional Chinese culture. From this translation and research history of *Chuang Tzu* in Germany, a general pattern of “translation lagging behind research” is illustrated. In this process, Germany’s interpretation and acceptance of *Chuang Tzu* is not only conducted from the perspective of literature and philosophy, but widely extends to other academic realms, including natural science, highlighting its distinct “fusion” and “cross-boundary” features. Examining the cross-cultural presentation and reappearance of *Chuang Tzu* in Germany is of great enlightening significance to the construction of a translation model for Chinese classics. Thus, a cooperative translation model in which domestic translators and foreign sinologists can draw on each other’s unique strengths during communication could be built. To this end, in the selection of translated classics, translators should pay attention to their own compatibility with the cultural background of the target countries to avoid invalid translation, which might even cause cultural conflicts. Consequently, the translation of Chinese classics will be shifted closer towards their purest original intended purposes.

Keywords: *Chuang Tzu, Germany, translation of Chinese classics, translation strategy*

1. Introduction

Chuang Tzu, a classic of both philosophical and literary significance, contains allegories and anecdotes that represent the carefree nature of the exemplary Taoist sage, Chuang Tzu. In the fields of literature and philosophy in China, its unprecedented artistic imagery and creativity have, for thousands of years, exerted a profound influence on later generations from the Han Dynasty (206 BC-220 AD) to the present, such as Sima Xiangru and Sima Qian during the Han Dynasty, Ruan Ji and Tao Yuanming during the Six Dynasties, Li Bai during the Tang Dynasty, and Sushi and Lu You in the Song Dynasty. Meanwhile, as the crystallization of traditional Chinese culture, *Chuang Tzu* has been successively translated and spread to many Western countries, triggering international attention and reflections on Chinese culture. In Germany, since *Chuang Tzu* was introduced by sinologists and missionaries at the end of the nineteenth century, it has triggered a continuous upsurge of interest in its reading and research.

Germany is a nation known for speculative thinking and numerous philosophers, therefore, it is natural that *Chuang Tzu* is highly praised within German academic circles for its vast and profound literary and philosophical implications. Faced with practical problems, such as the trauma left by two world wars and the deterioration of the environment after the industrial revolution, many Germans tried to seek solutions and life wisdom from Chuang Tzu’s philosophical concepts, such as “unity of heaven (nature) and man”, “stillness and non-action” and “machine heart (a scheming mind)”. As a result, the study, absorption and application of Chuang Tzu’s thoughts and his spiritual heritage became a trend of thought among German academia. Well-known writers, such as Alfred Bruno Döblin (1878-1957), Hermann Karl Hesse (1877-1962) and Bertolt Brecht (1898-1965), were deeply influenced by the thoughts of Chuang Tzu, rich elements of which could be traced in their works.

Chuang Tzu, as a seminal representative of Chinese cultural classics, exemplified the translation and dissemination of Chinese classics to other countries in terms of its history of translation, circulation, interpretation and acceptance in Germany. Through analyzing the characteristics reflected in this process, two key issues related to the translation of Chinese classics can be further discussed, which are, “what to translate” and “how to translate”. The first issue involves the choice of vocabulary for the translated texts, the reading expectations of foreign readers and

the consideration of cultural needs, while the second issue, which is more related to the translators themselves, concerns translation models and translation strategies.

In the rest of this paper, the second part discusses the relationship between “translation” and “research” of *Chuang Tzu* in Germany. The third part analyzes the characteristics displayed when *Chuang Tzu* was spread and accepted by German readers. In the fourth part, taking *Chuang Tzu* as an example, especially its translation, dissemination and acceptance experience in Germany, the author conducts an in-depth reflection and proposes a translation model of Chinese cultural classics for “going global”.

2. Research of *Chuang Tzu* Taking Precedence over Its Translation in Germany

From the translation and research history of *Chuang Tzu* in Germany, a general pattern of its accurate translation lagging behind philosophical research was displayed, since the earliest German translations of *Chuang Tzu* appeared by the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. However, as early as the 15th century, the strong curiosity of Germans about the mysterious oriental country had been aroused by *The Travels of Marco Polo*. Afterwards, since the 17th century, Chinese culture was brought back to Germany by German missionaries, such as Johann Adam Schall von Bell (1591-1666), Ignatius Kögler (1680-1746). Chinese classics, including *The Analects of Confucius*, *Shiji (Records of the Grand Historian)* and *Zizhi Tongjian (Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government)*, were successively translated by sinologists, such as Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), which was followed by the publishing of a series of sinological research works. The translation of those works and later research laid a solid ideological and cultural foundation for the translation, dissemination, acceptance and research of *Chuang Tzu* in Germany.

Heinrich Kurz (1805-1873) was the first German sinologist to study *Chuang Tzu*. In 1830, he published the article “H. Kurz. Über den chinesischen Philosophen Tschuangtse und seine Schriften” in German. Although this article was published when Kurz was studying in France, “it was a milestone for the research of *Chuang Tzu* in Germany because it unveiled a brand-new way for German sinologists to carry out their study at that time, and such research kicked off thereafter” (Walravens, 1999,

p. 103). In 1888, a sinologist named Georg von der Gabelentz (1840-1893) published *Beiträge zur chinesischen Grammatik, die Sprache des Chuang-Tsi*, which made an in-depth analysis of the relationship between the phrasing of Chuang Tzu and Chinese grammar. The paper was quite instructive for similar research, and it profoundly influenced the translation and dissemination of *Chuang Tzu* in Germany.

Wilhelm Grube (1885-1908), who studied under Georg von der Gabelentz, compiled stories related to Chuang Tzu such as “Zhuang Zhou dreaming about a butterfly” and “a person who is afraid of his shadow” in *Gschichte der Chinesischen Literatur* in 1902, and also analyzed the similarities and differences between “Zhuang Zhou dreaming about a butterfly” and a Spanish drama *La Vida es Sueño*, thus making him a pioneer of Chinese-Spanish comparative literature studies. After that, Richard Wilhelm (1873-1930), the first translator who translated *Chuang Tzu* into German directly from Chinese, published *über Leben und Werk des Zhuang Zhou* and *Dsung Dsi, der Mystik* in *Sinica* in 1928. In the above research, Richard Wilhelm emphasized that “(Chuang Tzu is) a poet as much as an ancient Chinese philosopher. His works, which are full of various images, are vibrant, fantastic and magical. What he leaves us is not so much logical thinking as intuitive imagery” (Wilhelm, 1928, pp. 73-80). Clearly, Richard Wilhelm had a profound understanding of the artistic features and language style of Chuang Tzu in literature, and he also made an in-depth interpretation of the literariness and artistry of *Chuang Tzu*.

In 1942, Werner Eichhorn (1899-1990) published *Die dauistische Spekulation im zweiten Kapitel des Dschuang Dsi in Sinica*. Josef Franz Thiel published *Das Erkenntnisproblem bei Chuang-tzu* in 1969, which gave a more in-depth discussion on Taoist thinking and epistemology related issues in *Chuang Tzu*. In 1982, *Metaphysik, Erkenntnis und praktische Philosophie im Chuang-Tzu*, written by a Chinese scholar named Zhang Congdong, reinterpreted the philosophical implications of *Chuang Tzu*, and its impact went beyond sinology and continued through the entire contemporary German society. Since the beginning of the 20th century, German scholars continued their multi-dimensional and in-depth study of *Chuang Tzu*. Taking advantage of their proficiency in the Chinese language, sinologists fully demonstrated their speculative consciousness and philosophical thinking in their study. Meanwhile, through comparing Chuang Tzu’s thoughts with those of Kant, Schelling and Hegel, they tried to explore the unique features of the oriental literature and a shared philosophical

spirit with *Chuang Tzu*.

Compared with the research of *Chuang Tzu* in Germany, its translation was clearly lagging behind. It was not until 1910 that the first German translation of *Chuang Tzu*, titled *Reden und Gleichnisse des Tschuang-tse*, came out. It was an abridged edition published by Martin Buber (1878-1965) in Leipzig. However, it was nearly 30 years later than the earliest English edition, which was translated by the British scholar Balfour. As Buber was not proficient in Chinese, his book was a re-translation from Herbert Allen Giles's (1845-1935) English translation. Consequently, Buber was greatly influenced by Herbert. Specifically, his translation focused on the concept of "Tao" and emphasized the allegorical, philosophical and poetic features of the book. His translation contained 54 fables and some quotations from *Chuang Tzu*. Although Buber's translation was re-translated from the English version, and there were many defects in the book, its position in the German translation history of *Chuang Tzu* was unaffected. On the contrary, "it had a far-reaching effects on Heidegger and Hesse" (Wohlfart, 2001, p. 124).

In 1912, *Dschuang Dsi: Das wahre Buch vom südlichen Blütenland*, an abridged translation of *Chuang Tzu* by the missionary Richard Wilhelm (873-1930) became the first translation in German history that was directly translated from Chinese, triggering the emergence of "Taoism fever" in Germany. This edition's emphasis was not so much on the accuracy of translated language than on Chuang Tzu's poetic features. Based on the German cultural system and conceptual terms, it presented *Chuang Tzu*'s ideas to German readers with Goethe-style words. Unfortunately, this translation was an abridgment, and the tendency of "Christianization" was revealed in its contents. Therefore, the aesthetic characteristics of Taoism contained in *Chuang Tzu* were lacking in this translation, leading to a distorted presentation of the spiritual core of the original work to a certain extent. As a result, within his contemporary sinological community, Richard Wilhelm's pioneering translation of *Chuang Tzu* received both positive praise and objective and fair criticism from some sinologists (Wohlfart, 2001, p. 125). This was in sharp contrast to the overwhelming praise from Chinese scholars. *Dschuang Dsi: Das wahre Buch vom südlichen Blütenland* and the aforementioned *Reden und Gleichnisse des Tschuang-tse* not only fostered the creation of writers such as Döblin and Brecht, but also exerted a certain influence on German philosophy, literature and religion. After reading Richard Wilhelm's translation, the philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) regarded Chuang Tzu

as China’s most influential thinker.

At the beginning of the 20th century, translations by the missionary Erik Folke (1862-1939) and the sinologist Hans O. H. Stange appeared successively. Nevertheless, some abridged editions that showed up later did not arouse much response. It was not until 1998 that the first complete German translation of *Chuang Tzu* was officially published. It was translated by Stephan Schuhmacher, a German scholar, from the English version finished by Victor H. Mair, an American contemporary sinologist, and it became the most popular and well-known translation of *Chuang Tzu* in Germany. The translation, published by the Reclam Verlag Publishing House in 2003, was an excerpt from Schumacher’s translation. Schumacher inherited Victor H. Mair’s translation methods concerning the implied meanings of names, rhymes and rhetorical features, and attached importance to the truthful representation of the literary characteristics of *Chuang Tzu*. Günter Wohlfart, a distinguished contemporary German sinologist, ranked this translation as the most comprehensive and complete German translation of *Chuang Tzu*, and thus it was listed as a must-read book for scholars studying *Chuang Tzu* in German (Wohlfart, 2001, p. 109). The latest translation of *Chuang Tzu* in contemporary Germany is *Ein Zhuangzi Lesebuch* written by Henrik Jäger and published by Ammann Verlag in Zurich in 2009.

In short, from the translation, dissemination and reception of *Chuang Tzu* in Germany, in terms of the interconnection between translation and research, a general pattern of translation lagging behind research was displayed. Driven by academic tradition and research interest, German sinologists regarding *Chuang Tzu* as an important study object, first conducted research from the perspective of linguistics and comparative literature, with a series of research results thus emerging. Nevertheless, it was not until 1910 that the first German translation of *Chuang Tzu*, an abridged edition, officially came out. Since then, apart from abridgments, abbreviated translation and re-translation were also alternatives in the localization of this classic in Germany. However, the complete translation did not appear until the end of the 20th century, which is in sharp contrast to the early fruitful research conducted on this masterpiece.

3. “Fusion” and “Cross-boundary” in the Interpretation and Reception of *Chuang Tzu* in Germany

Germany’s interpretation and reception of *Chuang Tzu* was not only from the perspective of literature and philosophy, but extended to other academic fields, highlighting its distinct “fusion” and “cross-boundary” features. First of all, many sinologists were both translators and researchers. After the translation was completed, or in the process of translation, they would explore the ideological essence of *Chuang Tzu*. For instance, Richard Wilhelm, after publishing the abridged translation of Chuang Tzu (1912), successively published articles such as *über Leben und Werk des Zhuang Zhou* (1928) and *Dsung Dsi, der Mystik* (1928), etc., in which he believed that mysticism could be found in *Chuang Tzu*, which offered an explanation for the magical and magnificent narrative metaphors behind its abundance of imagery.

Secondly, borrowing imagery from *Chuang Tzu* was also widely seen in literary creation in Germany. As early as 1781, Karl Siegmund von Seckendorff published the novel *Das Rad des Schicksals*, which was based on the story of “Zhuang Zhou drums on a bowl and attains the great Tao”. In that novel, the author explained the meaning of survival in compliance with the laws of nature by means of Chuang Tzu’s roaming story. In addition, the ideas of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu once also flourished during the German expressionist movement. Alfred Bruno Döblin (1878-1957), who was known as “the founder of modern German novels”, interpreted the Taoist ideas of “non-action” and “the soft overcomes the hard, the weak overcomes the powerful” in his novel *Die drei Sprünge des Wand-lun*. Bertolt Brecht was deeply attracted by the thought of “non-action” in this novel and spoke highly of it (Brecht, 1968, p. 112). In addition, the imagery of the monstrous bird “Kun-peng” from “Enjoyment in Untroubled Ease” written by Chuang Tzu also showed up in another work of Döblin. It can be found that, confronted with the deterioration of the environment, spiritual emptiness and the decline of ideology brought about by the industrial revolution, Döblin regarded ideas such as “non-action”, “machine heart (a scheming mind)” as well as “unity of nature and man” as “a world-saving remedy” that can accommodate cultural heterogeneity. The author tried to find a tranquil life in his works.

The impact of Chuang Tzu’s thought is not confined to Germany, but penetrates into Austria, Switzerland and other German-speaking countries, because the literature of these countries is usually regarded as an inseparable part under the comprehensive

influence of historical, ethnic and other cultural factors. Specifically, the Austrian writer Hugo von Hofmannsthal expressed his recognition of Chuang Tzu’s belief in nothingness in his novel *The White Fan*. The idea conveyed at the beginning of his novel is consistent with that of “Zhuang Zhou drums on a bowl and attains the great Tao” through the protagonist’s soliloquy, in which life is regarded as a dream, and fame and fortune as a drifting cloud. Meanwhile, the author borrowed the persona of “an unfaithful widow”, and satirized the male protagonist Fortunio’s heartlessness and indifference through depicting the dreams and the real life of the young widow Miranda. In this way, Chuang Tzu’s idea of nothingness is reemphasized. Another Austrian writer, Franz Kafka (1883-1924), also resonated with *Chuang Tzu* in his study. What inspired him in *Chuang Tzu* was the philosophy of “harmony between man and nature” and the “subjectivity of personality theory”, as well as its fantastic and romantic narrative and free-flowing writing style. Kafka was hugely impacted by *Dschuang Dsi: Das wahre Buch vom südlichen Blütenland* translated by Richard Wilhelm. He believed the fundamental and primary problems of all religions and philosophies of life were clarified by a quote of Chuang Tzu, which was “Don’t think that all those who are alive will die after being born. Don’t think that all those who are dead will reincarnate after death. Are life and death interdependent? Death and life belong to one unity” (Ye, 1996, p. 454). Kafka’s novel, *Beim Bau der Chinesischen Mauer* written in 1917, made an absurd interpretation of life philosophy in an ironic manner with metaphors, borrowing from Chuang Tzu’s fables, to satirize the prevailing philosophy of existence and living at that time.

Likewise, many elements of *Chuang Tzu* could also be found in many works of Hermann Karl Hesse (1877-1962). For example, the huge bird in *Demian* was very similar to “Kun-peng” in “Enjoyment in Untroubled Ease”, whose size “I don’t know how many *li* it spreads”, and similarly, “when this bird rouses itself and flies, its wings are like clouds all-round the sky”. In *Journey to the East*, the idea of “there is no thing that is not “that”, and there is no thing that is not “this” was reflected. Hesse’s famous novel, *The Glass Bead Game*, not only contained Chinese elements such as Confucianism, Taoism (represented by Lao Tzu) and hexagrams from *The Book of Changes*, but also portrayed the father confessor whose favorite book was the philosophical work of Chuang Tzu. “He seems to be born to study Chinese ... Besides the annotated books about *The Book of Changes*, his favorite book is *Chuang Tzu* ... Since then, he has been living an idyllic life there in strict accordance with the way of an ancient Chinese

hermit” (Hesse, 2001, p. 117). One could tell how deeply Hesse was influenced by Chuang Tzu by the way the father confessor was depicted. Taoism was clearly an important factor in changing Hesse’s outlook on life, the world and literary creations.

In addition, Bertolt Brecht (1898-1965), a famous German dramatist, also cited allegories from *Chuang Tzu* in his play *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* and put forward “the advantage of being useless”. He also quoted passages from “Chuang Tzu: Man in the World, Associated with other Men”, which not only enhanced the philosophical nature of his play, but connected ideas as well. Brecht’s works were full of exotic oriental touches and philosophical connotations with ideas borrowed from *Chuang Tzu*, in particular, the advantage of being useless and the disadvantage of being useful. In fact, the most striking literary feature of *Chuang Tzu* is the use of allegories. In Germany, the acceptance of the literary value of *Chuang Tzu* started from its allegorical form. Therefore, Brecht’s play in the form of allegory also showed his acceptance and absorption of the literary features of *Chuang Tzu*. In *Mother Courage and Her Children*, Chuang Tzu’s idea about “the trouble of being useful” was put forward again. The allusions of “useful wood” and “useless wood” were directly cited from “Enjoyment in Untroubled Ease”, “Chuang Tzu: Man in the World, Associated with other Men”, and “The Tree on the Mountain”. What’s more, the idea of “non-action” was also implied in his *Buehder Wendungen*.

In contemporary times, Chuang Tzu continues to influence the creations of German writers with his unique philosophical thinking and philosophy of life. Hildegard Elisabeth Keller, a well-known contemporary Swiss German writer, litterateur and literary critic, is an example. Her *Das Kamel und das Nadelöhr. Eine Begegnung zwischen Zhuangzi und Meister Eckhart* caused a great response as soon as it was published. From the name of the work, one can tell how the author’s writing was affected by Chuang Tzu’s idea of “the difference between the small and the great”. In the introduction’s background knowledge, the author explained Chuang Tzu’s “Tao” in detail. She pointed out that “Enjoyment in Untroubled Ease” is the key to Chuang Tzu’s philosophy, and she named Chuang Tzu as a “wanderphilosoph”. At the end of the work, Keller expressed her understanding of the philosophical proposition of “self-recognition” by using the story of “Zhuang Zhou dreaming about a butterfly” from “*The Adjustment of Controversies*”.

Finally, it is worth noting that apart from scholars from the realms of sinology, literature and philosophy, even the natural science community has noticed the

universality of Chuang Tzu’s thought after World War II, illustrating the “cross-boundary” feature of German academia’s acceptance of the philosopher’s ideas. Some scientists applied the idea of “machine heart (a scheming mind)” to the philosophy of technology to explain the danger of using machines. For example, Werner Karl Heisenberg (1901-1976), a German physicist, agreed with Chuang Tzu’s theory and thought, and one of Chuang Tzu’s arguments about “machine heart (a scheming mind)” was repeatedly quoted in his discussion on the philosophy of technology, which is “I have heard from my teacher that, where there are ingenious contrivances, there are sure to be subtle doings; and that, where there are subtle doings, there is sure to be a scheming mind. But, when there is a scheming mind in the breast, its pure simplicity is impaired. When this pure simplicity is impaired, the spirit becomes unsettled, and the unsettled spirit is not the proper residence of the Tao. It is not that I do not know (the contrivance of which you mention), but I should be ashamed to use it” (Chuang Tzu: Heaven and Earth). Heisenberg emphasized that using “ingenious contrivances” might breed “a scheming mind” which may erode a pure mind and produce an eagerness for quick success and instant benefits. Out of strong approval of the above cited argument, Heisenberg often quoted relevant paragraphs from *Chuang Tzu: Heaven and Earth* when he was writing *Das Naturbild der heutigen Physik* (1956). In 1999, Jochen Roepke, a professor of economics, also illustrated the inherent logical connection between “ending” and “beginning” in his papers on enterprise self-awareness and self-reformation, with a quotation of Chuang Tzu, which was “life is the follower of death, and death is the predecessor of life”, emphasizing that the reform goal should be continually redefined and understood.

In summary, from the dissemination and reception of *Chuang Tzu* in Germany, characteristics of “fusion” and “cross-boundary” were demonstrated. First of all, many German translators of *Chuang Tzu* were not only translators, but also sinologists who studied this work. During or after the process of translation, they made an in-depth study of the ideological messages within *Chuang Tzu*. Secondly, in the field of literary creation, the image of Chuang Tzu also shows up in a large number of German literary works, such as *Das Rad des Schicksals*, *Die drei Sprünge des Wand-lun*, *Beim Bau der Chinesischen Mauer*, *Der gute Mensch von*, and so on. Finally, the universality of Chuang Tzu’s thoughts went beyond the realm of sinology, literature and philosophy, and its influence even extended to the field of natural science. Specifically, the concept of “machine heart” proposed by Chuang Tzu was adopted to explain the

philosophy of the danger of using machines, which truly reflected the “cross-boundary” feature in the reception of his thoughts by German academic circles.

4. Redirection of and Reflection on the Translation Strategies of Chinese Literary Classics Represented by *Chuang Tzu*

Chinese literary classics, represented by *Chuang Tzu*, take on the cultural genes and ideological core of the Chinese nation; therefore their translation has become an important step for accommodating cultural heterogeneity and facilitating Chinese culture in “going global”. The cross-cultural presentation and reappearance of *Chuang Tzu* in Germany have inspired the construction of a basic translation model for the cross-language communication of Chinese classics in contemporary society.

From the perspective of translators’ identity, foreign translators represented by sinologists and scholars of Chinese origin have been playing a leading role in the German translation history of *Chuang Tzu* for over a hundred years. They adopted either re-translation or direct translation strategies, but the final product was patchy, and even some classic translations were also flawed. Taking Richard Wilhelm’s version as an example, although it catered to the target readers’ reading habits in terms of cultural system and expression, the translator’s Christian background inevitably left a religious mark on the translation. Moreover, his lack of professional knowledge about Taoism also led to distortion and misreading of the original work. More contemporary translators and researchers developed a more comprehensive and profound understanding in studying *Chuang Tzu*, however, as non-natives, they still lacked a thorough understanding of Chinese culture. Therefore, it is an urgent task to build a comprehensive training system for nurturing local translators equipped with excellent language skills, a large knowledge bank of Chinese history and culture, yet also possessive of a profound understanding of the cultural and historical background of the target countries. However, although the translation by Chinese translators may enjoy high faithfulness and retain the Chinese characteristics of the original work, in most cases the end product may not be readily accepted in the target countries. As for sinologists, they also have shortcomings in properly conveying Chinese ideologies and thoroughly understanding the original works. Hence, on the basis of reaching a balance between the active “out-going translation” and the selective “in-coming translation”, efforts should be made to construct a cooperative translation model in

which Chinese translators and foreign sinologists could draw on each other’s strengths to offset their own weaknesses.

In terms of readers’ needs, one of the main reasons why *Chuang Tzu* has been well accepted in Germany for a long time is that local readers resonate with the author’s ideological connotations. In other words, only communication at a relevant ideological and philosophical level could reach the internal nerve of a civilization. During the expressionist movement when the dissemination and acceptance of *Chuang Tzu* were at a peak in Germany, the Germans were shrouded in universal depression and despair brought by wars. Therefore, the philosophy of “non-action” aligned with people’s desire to return to nature, and “achieving Tao in stillness” with people’s psychological needs, and they found a good recipe for salvation in Chinese philosophy. While modern civilization has brought unprecedented material prosperity, it has also caused many people’s spiritual desolation and confusion. The idea of “machine heart (a scheming mind)”, the attitude of “attaining the great Tao in stillness” and the concept of “unity of man and nature” are completely consistent with many German’s inner desire to find their egos and lead a peaceful life. Consequently, in the process of translating Chinese classics, readers’ disposition must be taken into consideration because incompatibility between the translated works and the history and culture of the target countries directly restricts the international influence of the Chinese culture being conveyed in those translated works. Meanwhile, different Chinese classics catering to different countries will be translated so as to avoid translation that is invalid or even causes cultural conflicts. In this way a number of well-translated Chinese classics can emerge, which can not only spread the rich Chinese traditional thoughts worldwide, but also meet the reading expectations of overseas readers, thus truly redirecting the translation strategies of outstanding Chinese classics.

5. Concluding Remarks

Chuang Tzu has been popular in the Western countries for a long time, and his thoughts have gradually become the common spiritual heritage of all human beings. Moreover, since the start of greater cultural exchanges between China and the Western countries in modern times, pre-Qin classics such as *Chuang Tzu*, *Lao Tzu*, *Four Books* and *Five Classics* in ancient China, as well as some Chinese medical classics, have been translated and spread all over the world, especially in English, French and

Japanese.

It is particularly necessary to study the translation and introduction of Chinese cultural classics in Germany, since the cross-cultural presentation of *Chuang Tzu* in Germany is a typical case of translation and dissemination of Chinese cultural classics in the Western cultural communities. Chronologically, its philosophical research took precedence over its accurate translation in Germany. Due to its strong cultural penetration and influence beyond cultural boundaries, *Chuang Tzu*'s unique features of "fusion" and "cross-boundary" could also be found when it was being interpreted and accepted by German readers. In other words, Chuang Tzu's thought has not only been thoroughly studied and blended into German literature works after adaptation, but also used in other academic fields in an interdisciplinary manner in Germany.

By means of analyzing the characteristics revealed when *Chuang Tzu* was translated and accepted in Germany, it can be seen that culture is open, and only through mutual communication can it be inherited and developed. In recent years, with the continuous improvement of China's international status, as a key strategy to present the essence of Chinese culture to the world, the translation of traditional Chinese cultural literary classics has become an invaluable field of academic research. The translation and dissemination of *Chuang Tzu* in Germany illustrates its impact beyond time and space. Besides, the circulation of this classic in Germany also provides insights for transforming the translation strategies of Chinese classics, by constructing a translation model, so as to truly realize the redirection of Chinese cultural classics "going global".

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