

# The Overseas Traveling of *Guanzi*

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**Abstract:** Commencing with traveling theory, this study provides an overview of the traveling and development of *Guanzi* in Western and Asian contexts. It divides the developmental process into different stages and explores new development strategies for the travel of *Guanzi* in new contexts. This helps the academic community gain a better understanding of the traveling and impact of *Guanzi* in a global context, and expands the scope of research.

**Key words:** *Guanzi*; traveling theory; development strategies

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## 1. Introduction

Traveling theory refers to the process of dissemination and evolution of critical theories and intellectual currents across different cultures, contexts, and temporalities. This concept was initially proposed by Edward Said, an important contemporary American critic. He believed that the process of traveling can facilitate dialogue and exchange between different regions, cultures, and modes of thinking, thereby promoting the dissemination and development of knowledge.

Traveling theory is an exploration of theories as a distinctive cultural phenomenon and the series of landscapes they encounter throughout their movement. Through the mirror of theory, it allows us to examine the variations of theories across different geographical and temporal contexts. In the context of the compressed space and rapid cultural integration of the globalized era, the result of traveling theory is the highlighting of localization strategies.

During process of the traveling, a critical theory or intellectual movement can transcend national and cultural barriers by means of translation, interpretation, and application to adapt to various cultural and contextual settings. This theory or movement intermingles with other ideas and theories, giving rise to new forms and thoughts in this process. This process of evolution and fusion continuously enriches the reservoir of human knowledge and becomes one of the important forces driving the progress of human civilization.

In summary, theory travel is a process of intellectual exchange and evolution that transcends national and cultural boundaries. It facilitates dialogue and exchange between different regions and cultures, thereby promoting the advancement of human civilization.

## 2. Early Stage of *Guanzi*'s Traveling in the West

Traveling always begins with a certain purpose, and the selection of literary works for translation is

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driven by a cross-border force. This force, in other words, the purpose of translation, is to enhance cultural exchange and reference. Translation not only becomes a gateway to the external world, but also a tool for introspection and self-reflection.

In the late 19th century, Western countries began to evaluate and attempt translations of Guanzi. A German Scholar Gabelentz, provided a brief introduction to Guanzi in his work “L’oeuvre du philosophe Kuan-tse” (Philosophical Works of Guanzi), published in the journal “Mémoires de la Société des Études Japonaises” in 1886. The original text was in French. Harlez, a French scholar, published “Un ministre chinois au VII<sup>e</sup> siècle avant J.-C. Kuan-tze et le Kuan-tze-shu”(A Minister from Chinese: Guanzi and the Book of Guanzi), in the “Journal Asiatique” in 1896. This work introduced the achievements of Guan Zhong and the book Guanzi, including translations and interpretations of the first ten chapters of Guanzi with some deletions. The original text was in French. However, due to the difficulty of reading Guanzi in China, these foreign translators faced obvious challenges. Only some passages were quoted, and many mistranslations occurred in the content. Due to historical limitations, from 1902 to 1922, there was Grube, a German, who published “Geheilte derer enregischen Literatur” (History of Chinese Literature) in 1902. This book briefly introduced the book Guanzi in German. Parker’s “Prussian Culture 2500 Years Ago”, published in the “Asia Review” in 1918, reportedly introduced the achievements and thoughts of Guan Zhong, and the original text was in English. Parker’s “Kuan-tzu”, published in “New China Review” in 1921-1922, also made contributions, but none of these efforts by foreign scholars can be regarded as milestones in the spread of Guanzi in the West. It was not until Forke, a German sinologist, published “Geschichte der alten chinesischen Philosophie” (History of Ancient Chinese Philosophy)

in 1927 that a milestone was reached. This book is one of the authoritative works on Chinese philosophy in the West and provides a brief introduction to Guan Zhong, as well as translations of several excerpts from Guanzi including Mumin, Lizheng, Quanxiu, etc.. Afterwards, the study of Guanzi entered a new historical era of cultural traveling.

### 3. Development Stages of Guanzi’s Traveling in the West

The book “Ancient China” was published in 1927 by the French sinologist Henri Maspero. In the book, he argued that the edited version of Guanzi by Liu Xiang had been lost, and the current Guanzi is a modern forgery. He also claimed that Liu Xiang’s preface to the book was also a forgery. Maspero’s viewpoint dominated Western research on Guanzi until the 1960s and led Western scholars to view it with skepticism.

In 1929, Swiss scholar Bernhard Karlgren refuted Maspero’s first two points in his article “The Authenticity of Ancient Chinese Texts” published in the Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities. Karlgren argued that there were differences between “Guanzi: Law and Prohibition” and the forged “Shangshu: Taishi,” and that the passage in “Guanzi: Da Kuang” copied from “Zuo Zhuan” even retained the chronology of the State of Lu. He concluded that these arguments did not support the claim that Guanzi was written after “Taishi”. Regarding the claim that Guanzi simply copied from “Zuo Zhuan”, he argued that it only indicated that Guanzi was written after “Zuo Zhuan” but did not prove it to be a forgery.

In 1952, Dutch scholar P. Van Der Loon discussed Maspero’s third point in his article “On the Transmission of the Kuan-tzu” published in T’oung Pao. He argued that the “Qi Lüe”(Seven Strategies) mentioned by Zhang Shoujie was actually a misreading of “Qi Lu”(Seven Records) The “Qi Lu” was a bibliographical summary provided by Ruan Xiaoxu

(479-536), which Zhang Shoujie had cited multiple times, sometimes referring to it as "Seven Records" and sometimes as "Seven Strategies." Furthermore, the claim that there were eighteen "chapters" in Guanzi was likely a misunderstanding, as "juan"(scroll) was the more common division for Guanzi in the Sui and Tang dynasties.

In 1942, the British scholar Hughes translated the "ShuiDi"(Water and Land) and "Si Shi"(Four Seasons) chapters of Guanzi in his book "Chinese Philosophy in Classical Times," which became a widely circulated English translation of selected Chinese philosophical works.

Meanwhile, other scholars also dedicated themselves to the translation and study of Guanzi. In 1933, Gustav Haloun a British sinologist who translated the "Discipleship Duties" chapter of Guanzi which was published in the journal *Asia Major*.

In 1951, he published "Legalist Fragments" in *Asia Major*, which included translations and introductions of fragments of Legalist works, including the "Guanzi: Jiu Shou" chapter. He proposed the hypothesis that the original compilation of Guanzi took place during or before the year mentioned.

In 1954, a book titled "Economic Dialogues in Ancient China: Selections from the Guanzi" was published by Lewis Maverick. It mainly consisted of translations of economic and political writings from Guanzi, totaling 32 chapters, with some abridgments, accompanied by research papers by two Chinese scholars. This was the first monograph on Guanzi in the Western world.

#### **4.Stage of in-depth research on Guanzi Traveling in the West**

In the 1950s, there was a frequent emergence of research on the book Guanzi in the West. Following the publication of "Dialogues on Ancient Chinese Economy: Selected Works from Guanzi" in 1954,

translated by Tan Bofu and Wen Gongwen, both graduates of Chinese universities under the guidance of Lewis Maverick, a professor of economics at Southern Illinois University, they translated a total of 32 chapters, mostly excerpts, focusing on political and economic theories. The book also includes full translations of research articles by Chinese scholars, appended at the end of the book. This book provided valuable material for Western scholars studying Guanzi. However, since the translators did not seem to be students of economics and were unable to utilize detailed annotation materials from the Qing Dynasty and later, there were some errors and omissions in the translation. Nevertheless, it was still the first monograph on the study of Guanzi in the West.

During this period, high-quality research results on Guanzi continued to emerge in Europe and America. In 1959, Soviet sinologist B.M.Stain (B. M. Штейн) published the book "Guanzi: Research and Translation" in Moscow, which included translations of 18 chapters of Guanzi, mainly studies the economic ideas of Guanzi and selects 18 chapters from Guanzi, including "Cheng Ma", "Xiao Kuang", "Zhi Guo", "Di Yuan", "Chen Cheng Ma", etc..The research part consists of an introduction, in which the author's many insights are highly valuable. French famous sinologist Maspéro wrote "La Chine Antique" in 1955, discussing Guanzi and conducting some textual research. He believed that the surviving Guanzi is a forgery and that the Han Dynasty compilation of Guanzi has been lost. The original text is in French.The great English scholar J. Needham wrote "Science and Civilisation in China" starting in 1954, and published in multiple volumes. This book introduces works in Guanzi such as "Shui Di" and "Du Di" that involve the introduction to Chinese natural sciences.

During this period, the most significant achievement in the study of Guanzi was made by W.

Allyn Rickett from the United States, who was regarded by Western scholars as an authority on the study of Guanzi. From 1948 to 1951, Rickett studied and worked at Yenching University in China. In 1963, he published a paper entitled “A Historical Chart of Ancient China” (Guanzi • You Guan) in the journal “Bulletin”; in 1965, he published his monograph “Guanzi - A repository of Early Chinese Thought” in English at the University of Hong Kong. The main content of this book is the complete English translation with detailed annotations and textual research of 12 chapters of Guanzi, including “Da Kuang” and “Du Di”. In 1985, the first volume of Rickett’s Guanzi was published as part of “the Princeton Library of Asian Translations” by Princeton University Press. The subtitle of this book is “Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays from Ancient China, Research and Translation.” In 1987, his article “Guanzi and Newly Discovered Bamboo and Silk Manuscripts” was included in the book “The Chinese Conception of Nature and Society”. The author dedicated himself to research and visited China more than ten times to collect research achievements and archaeological discoveries of Chinese scholars, which he promptly reflected in his articles. In 1997, his second published volume of Guanzi has completed the full translation version of Guanzi, which opened up new horizons for the study of Guanzi abroad.

### **5. Guanzi’s Traveling in the Asia**

Compared to the cultural exploration of Guanzi in the west, research on Guanzi in Asia has also made progress. Since the latter half of the 17th century, scholars have been continuously annotating Guanzi. Among them, the works published by Inoshishi Kunpei in 1789, titled “Corrections to Guanzi Zuan Hua”(Corrections to Guanzi) in two volumes, the work published by Hiraatsu Yasui in 1864, titled “Compendium on Guanzi” in twenty-four volumes, and the work published in 1870, titled “Supplementary

Corrections to Guanzi,” are frequently referenced by Chinese and Japanese scholars due to the similarities in cultural background. The Japanese translations of Guanzi have been published since 1922. Since the 1960s, there has been an increasing number of research papers. In 1987, Japanese scholar Kanaya Osamu’s monograph titled “Studies on Guanzi” was published by Iwanami Shoten in Japan, which consists of eight chapters. It comprehensively explores the relationship between Guanzi and Guan Zhong, the versions, the political, economic, military, philosophical, legal, seasonal thoughts in Guanzi, and the position of Guanzi in the history of thought. In 1989, Japanese scholar Taninaka Nobukazu published “Japan-China: Guanzi Relationship Research Paper and Literature Index” at Waseda University Publishing, which collects catalogs of Guanzi versions, research papers, and monographs published or released by China and Japan from ancient times to September 1989. The book is divided into six sections: versions, prefaces and postscripts, authentication, monographs, papers, and unpublished references. Each section lists Japan and China separately, and each item includes seven aspects: title and volume of the work, author’s name, publishing institution or periodical, publication or release date, content composition, abstract, and references. This comprehensive collection serves as a useful reference tool for researchers.

From 1989 to 1992, Mr. Endo Tetsuo published a three-volume Japanese translation of Guanzi by Meiji Shoin. This was the first complete translation in Japan. The book extensively incorporated the research achievements of Chinese and Japanese scholars, providing the most authoritative translation for further study of Guanzi in Japan. The works of Kanaya, Taninaka, and Endo were concentratedly published in the late 1980s to the 1990s. It marks a new stage in the study of Guanzi in Japan. During these years,

these three scholars also published numerous papers on Sino-Japanese cultural studies in Chinese and Japanese journals. Undoubtedly, this has greatly contributed to the study of Chinese culture.

## **6. New Development Strategies for Overseas Traveling of Guanzi**

The traveling of a literary work to be reborn is not always smooth sailing, it is an extremely complex process of transformation from the original text to the translated version. The new development strategy needs to align with the strategies of cultural travel in foreign countries. Ideas that are fully or partially absorbed or accommodated undergo a certain degree of transformation due to their new positions and applications in the new space and time.

When Guanzi sets out from its original linguistic environment, it also embarks on a traveling of cultural translation. In order to successfully complete this journey, translators often need to make adjustments to adapt to the changes of the new linguistic context. The translation strategy employed by the translator at this stage is not so much determined by personal translation habits as it is greatly influenced by the target language culture, that is, how to make the literary work better accepted in the target language culture and achieve its rebirth. This translation strategy is based on considerations from a higher cultural level, especially when the translated literary system is relatively marginalized. Usually, translators use annotations, expository comments, footnotes, and other techniques to make the translation more in line with the linguistic habits of the target language, and thus easier for readers to understand.

Guanzi is reborn and recognized by the target language culture, and it plays a certain role in promoting the target language literature (culture). This is a "win-win" situation. It is undeniable that the transformation of the meaning of a literary work is always incomplete,

just like travelers whose original single way of life is impacted and even disintegrated by the changes of the culture they are in. What is gained and lost in translation is also an issue that translation research should focus on. The value of translation lies in the rebirth of literary works.

If the effect of cultural interaction is not achieved, then the translation is also incomplete. Since translation cannot completely adhere to the original text, a successful translation should not only focus on the discussion of language conversion but also be a complementary and mutually beneficial process. In other words, what is lost in translation should be compensated in another way to achieve balance. After being translated, Guanzi becomes a part of translated literature in the target language culture and is injected with vibrant vitality, experiencing a rebirth in a foreign land. The translated work finds its home in the target language culture and gains a new significance. Steiner also believes that after the translation is produced, we no longer rely on the original text because the translated version is more important in comparison.

After being absorbed or accepted, Guanzi can be said to have been reused and reborn. In the traveling of a literary work, its cultural essence undergoes collision and actively strives for completeness, with translation serving as the medium. This translation process is not one-way but bidirectional. The receiving culture infiltrates and changes the characteristics of the original culture.

From all of the above, it can be seen that the meaning and value of Guanzi are generated through constant selection, interpretation, and acceptance. Translation is no longer a unidirectional flow from the source language culture to the target language culture; it is a bidirectional and cross-cultural activity.

## **7. Conclusion**

Chinese classic Guanzi has been transmitted to the

world through translation. This process of dissemination is an unforgettable traveling, a cultural traveling that transcends time and space. When Guanzi undergoes the transformation of its temporal and spatial position during its traveling abroad, it encounters unavoidable influence from external factors such as society, history, and culture. It is by no means a vacuum zone. Therefore, to some degree, the meaning of a literary work remains opened by means of translation. Travel theory expands the concept of translation, allowing it to break free from its narrow confines and enter a broader context and perspective.

The traveling of Guanzi is an ongoing process. The literary work, appearing in a different form upon reaching a destination, can embark on a new round of traveling. The same case is for Guanzi, there is no final starting point or destination. While avoiding simplistic absorption and assimilation of foreign cultures, we should vigorously promote the spirit of mutual communication and mutual benefit, and strive to achieve the goal of mutual inclusiveness in the traveling of literary works by promoting mutual understanding

and acceptance.

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