

## A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE TECHNIQUES OF TRANSLATION

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1. This paper is for the discussion of translation as an art and as a skill, not of the use of the learner's mother tongue in the teaching of a foreign language.
2. A translator is a person skilled in the use of the language of the original version and that of the language used in the translated version.

### **I. The Rules of the Game**

The rules the translator must always keep in mind are as follows :

- a. He is translating for a reader who cannot read the original version (or reads with difficulty). A translation is useless when a reader (or listener) has to translate the passage back into the original language (in a special way known only to a few, fortunately or unfortunately) in order to grasp the meaning of what is to be communicated.
- b. A translator is not an (oral) interpreter, i.e. he is engaged in writing the piece of communication. He has a fair amount of time to think and polish his version.
- c. A translator makes wide use of the dictionary, usually several dictionaries, and does not depend in all cases only on one, i.e. English-Thai dictionaries, as there are many kinds published, and some are poorly edited or poorly proof-read.
- d. Although he cannot be 'strictly faithful', he has no right to distort the message originally communicated. (no translator knows the 'whole' of the original language, therefore, his interpretation rendering of the important message must always be on the side of 'good' and not of 'evil'). His translation, in case of uncertain interpretation, must not presume any kind of bad intention, political or otherwise.
- e. His first interest is the reader. He should keep in mind the time, place and situation involved. Is he translating for a sophisticated readership or young people, or the uninformed general public?
- f. His translation should be useful in some way. Even poetry is useful in its own way. Therefore he has no right to destroy the poetical quality that is translatable, remembering that there is much in poetry that is untranslatable.

## II. The Tricks of the Trade

Translation, like all activities, in order to be successful to a reasonable extent; needs some methods and techniques. Listed below are the minimum requirements needed of the translator.

- a. If he aims to be a translator in general, offering his service to whoever wants to employ him, he must 'know' the two languages very well, that is to say, he must understand the structure of the language, the orthography, and the customs and conventions that go with the writing of the language used in the original version.
- b. He must understand the general nature of language e.g. the local and regional restrictions in the use of idioms, sayings, proverbs etc.
- c. All languages depend on 'register'. There are varieties, and levels of words used at certain levels of a society, and by special groups of people viz, technical terms, slang, connotations, and so on.
- d. The English language is used by a variety of people who unfortunately tend to think of other groups as funny or foolish in some way or other. Only a very small number of native speakers of English (the best writers included) know about their own language, or even their own variety. A translator must be aware of this.
- e. Given what is said above, a translator, in studying the culture of the English speaking peoples, must make himself familiar with the life-styles of as many groups as possible. He can keep abreast through reading of papers, periodicals, magazines, and books, and take an interest in as many areas of life as possible.
- f. He must not presume to translate what is word-comical, or something verbally ironical (sometimes the irony is life-irony or drama and not literary). He must not presume to translate what is highly aesthetic language-wise, and in translating destroy the precious beauty of the original.
- g. If he translates or is working in a special place, say in the Ministry of Public Health, he will be dealing with correspondences of WHO and other international health organizations. If he works for the Ministry of Education, he will deal with UNESCO and other educational and cultural organization. He must keep abreast of the publications of the Royal Institutes in order to be able to use the terms coined for official usage. If he deals with higher education, he has to keep abreast with the publications of the newly coined terms of the Ministry of University Affairs.
- h. If he works for a business concern, he has to learn as much as he possibly can, as smartly as possible, about the business.
- i. Names cause a great deal of trouble. If he misspells Thai names, he is likely to be in trouble. So he has to learn to use the telephone when he sees strange

names. He must also be familiar with classical transliteration and the system of the Royal Institute. Anyway, he had better be careful with a name like 'Jitjam.' How is he going to transliterate that into Thai orthography?

- J. There are rules for transliterating Thai names into Roman letters, and vice versa, laid down by the Royal Institutes. Also there is what is known as classical transliteration of Indic names and terms. For this he must consult Monier-Williams Dictionary of Sanskrit-English. This was used by King Vajiravudh for surnames given by him to prominent families in his reign. It is adopted by scholars of Oriental Studies, sometimes in modified forms.

### III. Names and Terms for Special Usage

1. Royal terms used for the members of the reigning dynasty are used by the Protocol Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as advised by the Royal Household. To use terms properly in Thai for members of royal families of countries with diplomatic relations with Thailand, consult papers issued by the Protocol Office. For royal families of the past, it is advisable to read a great deal of books written by Prince Damrong, and King Vajiravudh. Consult also Chalerm Pra Yot Chao-nai of the sixth and seventh reigns.
2. There are special terms used for the Buddha. He can learn from Buddhist writings, preferably those written before B.E. 2475.
3. Hindu Mythology and Historical Names.  
There are names and terms used from Hindu mythology known to Thai educated people for a long time. A good translator must make himself familiar with them. He must not translate the name of the god Shiva, as <sup>ชิวา</sup>. It betrays his lack of education, or the weakness of his educational system. Names of towns and places long known to Thai educated people should be written in traditional forms with the English in brackets, if he is translating English to Thai, e.g. Tenasserim as 'ตะนาวศรี', Moulmein as 'มะละแหม่ง', Pagan as 'พะโค' (Personally, I would not refer to King Prajadhipok as Rama VII, or King Ananda as Rama VIII. Legally, there was at first only one Ramadhipati, i.e. King Pra Putayodfa who was proclaimed as such. Later, King Vajiravudh proclaimed all the kings down to himself as Rama II, III, IV, V, and himself VI. King Prajadhipok was crowned Pramindra Maha Prajadhipok, and King Ananda as Paramendara Maha Ananda-mahidol).

### IV. What Should be Translated?

For the present time, all kinds of books should be translated—books on science and technology, on anthropology, on the social sciences, etc. Even novels, short stories, biographies, poems should be translated. But who should be responsible for the choice? On what kinds of books should the people's money be spent on? This needs good examination and long discussion.

**V. Who Should be Asked to Translate ?**

It is important to remember that a good translator should be specially trained, not to the exclusion of practising other language skills, of course. The wider the range of his interest, the better translator he ought to be. There are ways and means of training translators. There are also gifted people who learn to train themselves. Like all skills, the longer the experience the better the achievement.

**VI. What is a Good Translation ?**

A good translation manages to transfer the original message, the culture, and also the feelings involved. But at least, the message should not be distorted. If it is satirical, the translator must be aware of it, and transfer the satirical meaning.

## APPENDIX

*A Song by Pham Duy Says :*

*Our enemy has the name of hatred  
 Our enemy has the name of inhumanity  
 Our enemy has the name of anger  
 Our enemy wears the mask of an ideology  
 Our enemy has the name of freedom  
 Our enemy carries a deceitful appearance  
 Our enemy has a big basket of empty words  
 Our enemy is the attempt to divide us  
 Our enemy is not a man  
 If we kill man with whom shall we live?*

## บทเพลง

ของฟามต่าย

ศัตรูของเรามีชื่อว่าโมหคติ  
 ศัตรูของเรามีชื่อว่าความทารุณโหดร้าย  
 ศัตรูของเรามีชื่อว่าโทสะคติ  
 ศัตรูของเราสวมหน้ากากอกุศลกรรม  
 ศัตรูของเรามีชื่อว่าเสรีภาพ  
 ศัตรูของเรามีบุคคลิกลวงตา  
 ศัตรูของเรามีตระกร้าใบใหญ่บรรจุถ้อยคำที่ไร้ความหมาย  
 ศัตรูของเราคือความพยายามที่จะแบ่งแยกพวกเรา  
 ศัตรูของเราหาใช่มนุษย์ไม่  
 ถ้าเราฆ่าฟันมนุษย์เสียแล้วเราจะอยู่กับใครเล่า

ลูทีย์ ถอดความ

*Who*  
*Are you*  
*Who is born*  
*In the next room*  
*So loud to my own*  
*That I can hear the womb*  
*Opening and the dark run*  
*Over the ghost and the dropped son*  
*Behind the wall thin as a wren's bone?*  
*In the birth bloody room unknown*  
*To the burn and turn of time*  
*And the heart print of man*  
*Bows no baptism*  
*But dark alone*  
*Blessing on*  
*The Wild*  
*Child*

โกร  
 คอเจ้า  
 ชงเกิดมา  
 ณ ห้องตอน  
 เสียงดนตรีเรา  
 กระทั่งได้ยินเสียงครรภ  
 ค่อยเบ็ดและมึงเงาดำได้  
 ข้ามเจ้ากุดและเจ้าลูกหล่น  
 เบื้องหลังผนังบางตุ้กระตุนกกระทา  
 ในห้องคลอเคลือบเลือดมรุถึง  
 ความร้อนและความล่วงเวลา  
 และถึงดวงใจแห่งมนุษย์  
 ปราศจากพิชกรรม  
 แต่โดยโดดเดี่ยว  
 จงเป็นสุขเจ้า  
 ผู้พิศดาร  
 เทอญ

จาก *วิเคราะห์สวรรค์คดีไทย*

โดย ม.ล. บุญเหลือ เทพยสุวรรณ

STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

*Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To Watch his woods fill up with snow.*

*My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.*

*He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake,*

*The woods are lovely, dark and deep  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.*

ท่านผู้ใดสนใจจะแปลบทกวีนี้บ้าง

- บุญเหลือ

**Velocity**

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VVVELOCIDA

VVELOCIDAD

VELOCIDADE

**Ronaldo Azeredo**

**Brazil**