

A Study on English Translation of Landscape Culture in the Travel Diaries of Xu Xiake

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Abstract: Chinese landscape culture conveys a positive spirit: harmony between human and nature, that is, starting from human, to attach importance to the harmony and coordination between human and natural landscape. Translating Chinese landscape culture is an important way to carry forward Chinese culture. This paper analyzes the English translation of landscape in The Travel Diaries of Xu Xiake from a cultural perspective, aiming to promote the external dissemination of China's tourism resources and tourism culture.

1. Introduction

Chinese landscape culture takes landscape as the carrier and object of expression. The relationship between man and landscape is originated from the most primitive and basic needs of human survival and development. Chinese landscape culture focuses on the Chinese people's reverence for nature and the concept of harmony between man and nature. Confucius' theory of “Le shan” and “Le water” and Zhu Xi's theory of “all things in heaven and earth are one and the same” are all connected with the natural landscape and human life value, and regard the landscape as the spiritual home of human beings. Many wonderful mountain sceneries attract tourists and have gradually become famous scenic spots. Chinese landscape culture retains historical footprints and is a special window to understand Chinese culture and its development. This paper analyzes the English translation of landscape scenery in The Travel Diaries of Xu Xiake from a cultural perspective, aiming to promote the external dissemination of China's tourism resources and tourism culture.

2. Landscape Culture

There are magnificent mountains and rivers in our great motherland. The beautiful mountains and rivers give birth to colorful Chinese landscape culture, which is intertwined with the five-thousand-year civilization and has become the spiritual wealth of the traditional Chinese culture. Landscape culture is a precious heritage in traditional culture. The extensive and profound spiritual connotation contained in landscape culture provides inexhaustible spiritual nutrition for the inheritance, development and innovation of traditional culture.

Chinese landscape culture includes different types among which mountain culture and water culture are considered essentially important. Chinese people take great pride in the landscape of their country. They never hesitate to eulogize the landscape in their country. The most famous landscapes are the five sacred mountains, famous buddhist mountains, famous Taoist mountains, famous scenic mountains and Lushan Mountain, Huangshan Mountain, Wuyi Mountain, Guilin landscape, West Lake and so on. Landscape culture has contributed a lot to the enrichment of Chinese culture and the creation of spiritual civilization.

3. Appreciation of English Translation of Landscape Culture in The Travel Diaries of Xu Xiake

The Travel Diaries of Xu Xiake, known as the “strange book of the ages” and “one of the strangest books of ancient times and modern times”, was written by Xu Xiake, a great traveler,

geographer, historian and writer in the Ming dynasty of China. It has recorded the rich natural resources, geographical landscape and cultural features of the motherland accurately and vividly, providing important information for the study of later generations, with high scientific, historical and literary value.

The Travel Diaries of Xu Xiake show the colorful and vivid social life from the water village in the south of the Yangtze river to the southwest of the border. The book displays the motherland's beautiful rivers and mountains and nature of the myriad wonders. The Travel Diaries of Xu Xiake is praised by later generations as “the true writing, the big writing and the strange writing in the world”.^[1]

3.1 English Translation of Mountain Culture

The so-called mountain culture is to take the mountain as the main carrier of scenic spots. In ancient times, our ancestors used the mountains as their playground. Many famous mountains in China have their own unique cultural content. They become famous mountains with different personalities due to their different cultural contents. Xu Xiake visited four of the Five Great Mountains in China: Mount Tai(the east mountain), Mount Hua(the west mountain), Mount Heng(the north mountain), Mount Song(the central mountain) except Mount Heng(the south mountain), and Wutai mountain in Shanxi province, Putuo mountain in Zhejiang province, Jiuhua mountain in Anhui province (except Emei mountain, in Sichuan province).

(1) The Translation of Mount Heng(the north mountain)

“Following the road, I came to the foot of Heng SHAN where cliffs towered to the sky on both sides and a stream wound its way through the valley. I walked into the valley through a crack, and found the valley almost too narrow to lead anywhere; the deeper I went, the more serene and beautiful the scenery turned out to be. The attractive sights of the double peaks in Yique SHAN and Jiuqu SHAN in Wuyi SHAN could not match the beautiful scenery here.”^{[2]403}

This passage is taken from Heng SHAN chapter of The Travel Diaries of Xu Xiake. The original is written in Chinese. The translation vividly conveys the contents of the original. Xu Xiake went deep into the mountains, looking for quiet exploration, leaving clear spring shadow, listening to song yun. He wrote the topography of the mountain, the spirit of the mountain, the common charm of the mountain and their own unique charm.

(2) The Translation of Yandang Shan

“When I went into a valley, I saw the steep cliffs on both sides towering to the sky and the precipitous and exotic peaks rising one after another. Some of them stood upright as if they were cut by a knife, while others huddled closely together; some were like bamboo shoots side by side while others were like the tall and straight glossy ganoderma; some resembled writing brushes while others resembled bent turbans. There were cave openings like draw-up curtains and deep pools with bluish-green water as pure as indigo.”^{[2]29}

This passage is taken from Tiantai SHAN chapter of The Travel Diaries of Xu Xiake. The original is written in Chinese. The translation is faithful to the original. Xu Xiake had the ability to grasp the subtle differences between mountains and waters. With a great integration of the observer's subjective feelings, his description multiplies the sense of reality, and its artistic appeal has been strengthened.

3.2 English Translation of Water Culture

The so-called water culture is the main carrier of water scenic spots. Different water areas have different characteristics, such as rivers, lakes and seashore, which have their own conditions and therefore have different cultural connotations.

(1) The Translation of Huangguoshu Waterfalls

“The distance of the water that kept pouring down could not measured with zhang. I could see the water pouring down like lashing and squashing the pearls and splashing the jade fragments, the water foams splashing up and down and the waves roaring back and forth, like the smog soaring, the vigor of which was extremely turbulent and violent. Even though the marvelous poetic couplet It seems that the waterfall, like a pearl curtain, isn't hooked, Meanwhile it, like an unfolded silk,

hangs on a remote peak. could not be effective enough to compare with the natural magnificent sight.” [2]523

This passage is taken from The Waterfall in Baishui HE chapter of The Travel Diaries of Xu Xiake. The original is written in Chinese and its English translation is very faithful to the original. The translation well reserves the contents of the original. Xu Xiake describes the magnificent scenery of the waterfall from the perspective of sound, color and potential. Had it not been for his presence and careful observation and speculation, the author could never have described it so vividly and beautifully.

(2) The Translation of Lu Shan

“Looking down at the peaks on both sides of the steep gully, especially those near Tiechuan Feng, I was deeply impressed that they stood so upright to the sky from the bottom of the gully. The peaks stood erect by only a foot or so but contended with one another in beauty. The verdant mountains and peaks far away were covered by floating clouds; it was indeed a gorgeous view. Below the peaks gushed the turbulent rapids splashing like glowing snowflakes and sounding like rolling thunders, and I indulged myself in the captivating sight.” [2]117

This passage is taken from Lu SHAN chapter of The Travel Diaries of Xu Xiake. The original is written in Chinese. The translation well reserves the style of the original. Xu Xiake’s description is very expressive, very imaginative. The tourists attach to the steep cliff, and follow the stream upstream canyon overlooking. In front of the “snow running thunder, flying shock” waterfall, the surprise of the traveller, even the awe of nature is undisguised. “The eyes and ears are ecstatic! It is obvious that Xu xiake gets the best state of strange spiritual enjoyment in nature.

3.3 English Translation of Natural Scenery

(1) The Translation of Tiantai Shan

“Then, walking along the stream, I came to the foot of a mountain where I could see the precipitous cliffs overgrown with plants and trees hanging down from their tops, mostly *malus spectabilis* and *cercis chinensis*. The shady boughs of the trees were reflected in the stream, which made the view more attractive. Here and there, when the wind blew, I could smell the pleasant fragrance o *magnolias* and *vanillas*.” [2]19-21

This passage is taken from Tiantai SHAN chapter of The Travel Diaries of Xu Xiake. The original is written in Chinese. The translation well conveys the contents of the original. Xu xiake vividly describes a beautiful scene with fragrant flowers. Among them, there is the beauty of the reflection of branches and leaves in the visual sense, the sound beauty in hearing, the fragrance of flowers and intoxicating in smelling. The scene beauty that makes the author happy, and the artistic conception beauty makes the reader fascinated.

(2) The Translation of Danjiang rafting in Taihua Shan

“The clouds had dispersed, and the splendid sun shone in the sky to reveal a range of mist-covered rolling hills vying for beauty. The roaring waves pushed the boat forward past riverbanks with peach and plum blossoms in rich colors in the sun. As I sat on the bow of the boat, I felt as if I were on wings like an immortal.” [2]224

This passage is taken from Taihua SHAN chapter of The Travel Diaries of Xu Xiake. The original is written in Chinese. The translation well reserves the style of the original. These words vividly describe the peach and plum trees blooming profusion, good flower potential. Danjiang river rafting, a AAA scenic spot in China, is the ideal natural summer resort.

4. Conclusion

In today's world, tourism is becoming more and more popular as an important part of people's life. The study of Chinese landscape culture in “The Travel Diaries of Xu Xiake” is conducive to understanding our gorgeous landscape culture, summarizing our rich experience in the construction of landscape culture, better protecting and rational use, and actively exerting its various values. On the other hand, the study aims to meet the needs of our times, inherit and carry forward the fine traditions in this respect, and to build a new landscape culture of our times in the new historical

conditions.

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