RESEARCH ARTICLE

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"Speech is Civilization Itself": A Comparison Drawn between the Chinese and Indian Cultural Tradition

Abstract   The great civilizations are created both in ancient China and India, but they differ considerably in the forms in which the culture achieves expression. This article puts in order the different forms from the aspects of language, linguistics, the philosophy of linguistics, the relation between language and literature, etc., which keep alive the cultural traditions of the two countries. The article explores the underlying causes and explains how the Indian Buddhism makes the direct connection with the ancient Chinese culture, and plays the complementary and supplementary role in the development of the ancient Chinese linguistics and literature.

Keywords   language, linguistics, the linguistic philosophy, the relation between language and literature

The Inheritance of the Ancient Sanskrit and the Vedic Sutras

Sanskrit is part of the Indo-European family, and the extant *Rigveda* is the earliest body of literature in that family. Chinese comes from the Sino-Tibetan family, and the oracle bone script of Shang and Zhou is the oldest source material of the family. And a script is a system of symbols to record a language. The Chinese characters have undergone a metamorphosis from the oracle bone script, lesser seal script and clerical script to the regular script that has been used up to now since the Eastern Han. However, any record is unable to be found on script

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in the Indian Vedic literature. And language is revered as a goddess in the Vedic mythology, but there is no such a legend as ours about the script invention devised by Cangjie in the prehistoric Chinese mythology. The earliest extant script that can be recognized in India is the Ashoka monumental inscription that dates from the third century and uses Brahmi and Kharosthi known as *lüchunti* 驴唇体 (the style of its letters that look like the ass lips). Brahmi is written from the left to the right, and has later transformed into various Indian scripts that include the Devanāgarī script of Sanskrit. Kharosthi is written from the right to the left, as is obviously influenced by the Persian script in the Western Asia, and it has gradually passed into oblivion in India.[1] The Tibetan script was invented in the seventh century or so by means of Sanskrit, whereas Phags-pa (1235–80) invented Mongolian Quadratic script by making use of the Tibetan script. Furthermore, The Tocharian language used in Kucha and Karasahr is also based on the Brahmi script.

Under normal conditions literary creations could hardly be handed down from ancient times unless they depend on the records in a script. *The Book of Dead* of the ancient Egypt was recorded on a papyrus scroll, and *Gilgamesh*, the Sumerian legend, was preserved on twelve clay tablets so that it is possible to have emerged from obscurity in the near modern archaeological excavations. The Chinese Five Classics were put down on bamboo slips and silk cloth, and hence can be transmitted through centuries to the modern times. We cannot but point out that the transmission of the four Indian Vedas, *Rigveda*, *Sāmaveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Atharvaveda*, is a great miracle in the cultural history of the world, which were composed in the oral form,[2] and collected from the fifteenth to the tenth century BC. The four Vedas have been handed down from generation to generation, preserved intact up to now and stayed unchanged for a long time, while eliminating reliance on writing for their transmission. The profound mystery that surrounds their preservation is the unusual method for their

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[1] In Chu Sanzang ji ji 出三藏记集 (A collection of the records concerning the Tripitaka). Liang Sengyou 梁僧佑 mentions two kinds of scripts in Hindus, where "In days of yore there were three people who create words. The oldest is Brahman whose script is written from the left to the right; the second is Kharosthi whose script is done in the opposite direction; the youngest is Cangjie whose script is written in the downward direction. Brahman and Kharosthi lives in Hindu while Cangjie, the official historian of Huangdi, lives in the Central Plains." And in Huhan yijing yinyi tongyi ji 胡汉译经音义同异记 (The contrast in the sound and sense in the scriptural translations from Sanskrit to Chinese) it is recorded that the legend about the Brahman's creation of script emerges after the Vedic times.

[2] In Liju feituo zuowei koutou wenxue 梨俱吠陀作为口头文学 (Rigveda as the work of spoken literature) (New Dheli, 1999), N.S. Datta describes such features that characterize Rigveda as the work of spoken literature, as idiomatic expressions, refrains and syllabic repetitions, etc.

transmission. There are five approaches to the recitation of each Vedic ode**,**
which are as follows,

    1. The Anthological Recital played according to the prosody;
    2. The Word Recital given when each word is separately pronounced without
liaison;
    3. The Successive Recital played in accordance with the order that is ab, bc, cd,
de, etc;
    4. The *bun* Recital given according to the order that is ab, ba, ab, bc, cb, bc,
etc.;
    5. The Closeness Recital played according to the order that is ab, ba, abc, cba,
abc, bc, cb, bcd, dcb, bcd, etc.

People who act in the manner of the transmission are not afraid of trouble;
instead the manner is aimed at refreshing one's memory. The Vedas are the sutra
of Brahmanism, where the priests must see to it that the Vedic ode is delivered
with precision when sacrifices are offered to their deities.

Such a unique method serves the role similar to the record in a script in
transmitting the Vedas. However, that the Vedic expressions remain unchanged
presents the later generations with the problem of deciphering them because
times change, and languages change with them in reality. And thus the Vedanga
emerge in the late stages of Veda, which is the six auxiliary disciplines associated
with the study of the Vedas, and consists of phonetics or phonology; ritual;
grammar; etymology; prosody; astronomy. Of them the three studies phonology,
etymology and grammar compose philology in the ancient India. The earliest
treatise that survives in etymology is *Nirukta* by Yaska in the fifth century BCE.
It offers the annotations to the lexicon *Nighantu* that collects uncommon and
hard words used in *Rigveda*, and Yaska takes illustrative quotations from
seventeen previous scholars, whose opinions often diverge from each other. This
indicates that quite a few problems come up in the late stages of Veda about the
understanding and explanation of the Vedic expressions. In *Nirukta* vocabularies
are divided into four categories, nouns, verbs, prepositions and changeless words,
and the principle that he formulates in etymology is that nouns derive from verbs,
which means that the verb roots can be tracked down from all the nouns.
Nighantu and Nirukta can be compared to *Erya* 尔雅 and *Shiming* 释名 by Liu
Xi 刘熙 in exegetics in the Han China. To view from the angle of the exegetical
studies, we see that *Nighantu* centers in verbs while *Erya* has nouns as its chief
concern. But *Shiming* differs somewhat from them, as Rao Zongyi 饶宗颐
points out that the rule that Liu Xi uses verbs to explain nouns by means of the

roots similar in pronunciation happens to coincide closely with Yaska's view.[3]

The Powerful Influence of the Panini *Sutra*

In the fourth century BC there came out the famous treatise *Ashtadhyayi* on the Sanskrit grammar in India. It is named after its author Pānini, and therefore known as the *Sutra of Pānini*. The language in his times already differed from the classic language of the Vedas. The treatise analyzes and summarizes the grammar of the commonly used language contemporary with him, with a view to the strict standardization, so that a foundation was laid for the Classical Sanskrit in the years to come. As a complete and strict Sanskrit morphology[4] it is divided into eight chapters with 3,983 scriptural sentences, and expounds such grammatical phenomenon as the Sanskrit root, stem, ending, derivative, prefix, suffix and compound. However, to state the content it adopts the parsimoniously economical prose style and method characteristic of a pithy mnemonic formula with the result that the students could hardly understand unless the teacher explains. This is the feature that characterizes the ancient Indian works in the style of the sutra, which were, with the wording as concise as possible, aimed at being memorized for convenience. Once an *Ashtadhyayi* annotator said, "Grammarians feel as if begetting a son when they are able to leave out half of a phoneme."[5] In the third century BCE *Vārttika* by Kātyāyana added a supplement to *Ashtadhyayi*. And in the second century BCE *Mahābhāsya* by Patañjali offered the explanatory notes to *Ashtadhyayi*. *Mahābhāsya* is not only an important sutra of Sanskrit grammar, but also establish the scriptural style that came into vogue later in India.

In volume 2 of *Datang xiyu ji* 大唐西域记 (The great Tang records of the Western region), Xuanzang 玄奘 (CE 602–64) regards the treatise by Pānini as *Shengming lun* 声明论 (The oldest sutra about the script, grammar, rhyme, and rhythm). According to his account Pānini receives the teachings of Mahesvara, and "racks his brains in his painstaking research and collects different opinions from all quarters to compile the great tome. It has one thousand gathas, two lines of which consist of thirty-two characters. It explores all the grammatical phenomena that occur in the ancient and modern times and states succinctly the writings." In volume 4 of *Nanhai ji gui neifa zhuan* 南海寄归内法传 (The record

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[3] Rao Zongyi, 1993, p. 23.

[4] Concerning the content of Ashtadhyayi further reference could be found in Fanyu yufa boninijing gaishu 梵语语法波你尼经概述 (A brief account of the Sanskrit grammar Ashtadhyayi) included in Jin Kemu, 1983.

[5] R. W. Perrett, 2001, p. 187.

of the Southern countries) Yijing 义净 (CE 635–713) views it as the sutra, and think that "it is the cardinal sutra for all the studies of the script, rhyme and rhythm and grammar. It is rendered as *Lüequan yiming* 略诠意明 (Breif interpretation to sutra) and *Lüequan yaoyi* 略诠要义 (General introduction to sutra) with one thousand gathas. In addition, in volume 3 of *Daci ensi Sanzang fashi zhuan* 大慈恩寺三藏法师传 (A biography of the Tripiṭaka master of the great Ci'en monastery) Huili 慧立 (CE 615–?) and Yancong 彦悰 consider it to be Vyākarana, and give an account of the mythologized book-making process where "In the remotest kalpa of the world at first Brahman said that the tome has one million lokas,[6] and Indra said that it has one hundred thousand lokas. Later in Gandhara of the northern India Pānini reduced it to eight thousand lokas, which is exactly the current size of the present times in India." *Ashtadhyayi* is not written in the gatha style. Here Hsüan-tsang and Yijing said that it has one thousand gathas owing to the unit conversion from loka to gatha so as to calculate the total number of characters. It is not accurate for Huili and Yancong to claim it to have eight thousand gathas.

Judging by the historical material on Chinese Buddhism it was by means of such textbooks as Siddham (A northern Indian script used for writing Sanskrit during the period from CE 600 to 1200) that eminent monks in ancient China completed their acquisition of Sanskrit, and it is assumed that they might not directly study *Ashtadhyayi*. In explanation Yijing considered Siddham to be "the ancient study of script, and it is known as the chilidren primer to learn Sanskrit." And this can be found in some material on the arrival of the Japanese monks in the Tang China to seek essential Buddhist doctrines. In *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji* 入唐求法巡礼行记 (The record of a pilgrimage to the Tang China in pursuit of Buddhist doctrines) Monk Ennin (CE 794–864) records that he "in the beginning restudy Siddham and was taught the standard pronunciation[7] by the Indian Tripitaka Master Ratnacandra of the Qinglong Temple in May 16th" in the second year of the Huichang Era of the late Tang. In *Tiantai zong yanli si zuozhu yuanzhen zhuan* 天台宗延历寺座主圆珍传 (The biography of Abbot Enchin of the Tendai Enryakuji) by Miyoshi Nobuyuki it is recorded that Enchin "met the Tripitaka Prajñā Daluo of the Indian Magadha Na Landa Temple, and learned the Sanskrit Siddham from him", and that "Monk Enchin (CE 814–891) went to the Tang China, and often met Indian Tripitakas to be taught Siddham."[8] It is obvious that there were Indian monks in the Tang temples, who imparted Siddham.

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[6] A unit of rhythm in the poetic composition in ancient India.
[7] Gu Chengfu, 1986, p. 157.
[8] Bai Huawen, 2004, pp. 129, 172.

The Comparative Analysis of the Sanskrit and Chinese Philology

In China and India, there came out the treatises in exegetics and etymology before all others for the sake of the need to explain the sacred writings. And then on account of the necessity to deepen the understanding of the language itself, in India appeared grammatical works into which phonetics is incorporated, of which *Ashtadhyayi* is taken as the representative example. And in China the works in philology came out, of which *Shuowen jiezi* 说文解字 by Xu Shen 许慎 is drawn as the representative example. The cause lies in the difference in the forms of languages used in the two countries, where Sanskrit is the inflectional language and uses alphabetic writing whereas Chinese is the analytic or isolating language and uses ideography. To use Sanskrit one must achieve mastery of different grammatical rules relating to the changes of its stems and affixes, such as root, suffix, case decline of noun, verb change, compound, in addition to liaison, part of speech (masculine, feminine and neuter gender), number (singular, dual and plural), etc. And the use of Chinese is closely interconnected with writing, as in *Shuowen jiezi xu* 说文解字序 Xu Shen said, "Writing is the foundation upon which the study of the classics rests, and the beginning of benevolent government. It is what the forefathers leave to the later generations, and what the posterity can use to understand the former times." He was well versed in the development of Chinese characters. By means of the analysis of and the research on the structures of Chinese characters he established the six rules for the coinages, namely *liushu* 六书 (the six categories of Chinese characters), which refer to *zhishi* 指事 (the self-explanatory characters), *xiangxing* 象形 (the pictographic characters), *xingsheng* 形声 (the pictophonetic characters), *huiyi* 会意 (the associative compounds), *zhuanzhu* 转注 (the mutually explanatory or synonymous characters), and *jiajie* 假借 (the characters adapted to stand for homophones). His *Shuowen jiezi* not only occupies the role in standardizing Chinese characters in the Han China, but also lays a sound foundation for the scientific study of the development of the Chinese language in the later ages.

In the period of transition between the Western and Eastern Han dynasty the Indian Buddhism spread to China. Due to the circumstances surrounding the translation of the Buddhist scriptures, a rapid spread of Sanskrit phonetics was also enhanced. The features that distinguish the Sanskrit spelling can naturally promote the research into the Chinese rhyme and rhythm, once they are perceived. As in *Suishu* "Jingji zhi" 隋书·经籍志 (The history of the Sui dynasty [with reference to] the annals of the ancient books), it is said, "Since the

Later Han dynasty the Indian Buddhism has been practiced in China, and the exotic script of the Western Region has been introduced to the Central Plains, in which only fourteen units of sound can run through all the pronunciations. Known as Brahman Script it takes on wider significance with fewer expressions, and differs significantly from *Bati liuwen* 八体六文 (The eight scripts and six rules for the Chinese coinages)." Here the statement that "only fourteen units of sound can run through all the pronunciations" indicates that Sanskrit words can be coined by combining the fourteen vowel phonemes with the different consonant phonemes. In this way by virtue of the comparison between Sanskrit and Chinese, the Chinese ancients were educated on the differentiation of the Chinese speech sounds, which gave rise to the invention of the four tones and *fanqie* 反切 (the way of indicating pronunciation by joining initial of one character to final of another), as well as the development of phonology.

The Chinese speech sounds are made up of the three key elements that are *shengmu* 声母 (the initial of a syllable), *yunmu* 韵母 (the final of a syllable) and *shengdiao* 声调 (the tone of the characters). Of the three elements it is very easy to differentiate between *shengmu* and *yunmu* with the help of Sanskrit vowels and consonants. But the origin of the invention of the four tones remains somewhat obscure. In 1934 Chen Yinque 陈寅恪 (CE 1890–1969) published his article entitled *Sisheng sanwen* 四声三问 (Three questions about the four tones) in *Qinghua xuebao* 清华学报 (Tsinghua journal), where he thinks that the origin goes back to the Vedic *svara*, the three tones, which was considered to be "the high and low sound, namely the pitch accent in the English language." He thinks, "Buddhism is introduced to China, with which the three tones also spread to the land when the believers adapt themselves to the recital of the Buddhist scriptures."[9] The theory had extended an enormous influence, where the Chinese academic circles used to apply it very widely. In fact some flaws appear in his view, Rao Zongyi and Yu Min 俞敏 (CE 1916–1995) have already written articles to voice their dissenting opinions. In addition to the contrary opinion that Buddhists do not play the recital of their scriptures by adopting the Brahman recital methods according to the Buddhist disciplines, Rao Zongyi points out, in particular, the difference between Sanskrit and the Vedic language. In other words the *svara* of the Vedic language has already disappeared from Sanskrit.[10]

A brief introduction may be given here to the tone and stress of classical

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[9] Chen Yinque, 1980a, p. 328.

[10] Yu Min, "Hou Sanguo fanhan duiyin pu" 后三国梵汉对音谱 (The register of the Sanskrit and Chinese transcription in the post Three-Kingdom period), in Yu Min, 1999; Rao Zongyi, "Yindu boernixian zhi weituo sansheng lunlüe" 印度波儞尼仙之围陀三声论略 (The summary of the exposition advanced by Panini about the Vedic Svara), in Rao Zongyi, 1993.

languages in ancient India. The *svara* is adopted in the Vedic language, and its use is connected with meanings of words. The compound *indrasatru* could be taken as an example, which consists of the two words *indra* and *satru*. If the stress falls on the first part of the compound, it means *the person who is killed by Indra*; if the stress goes on the second part, it means *the person who kills Indra*. In Sanskrit, the stress is still carried when the recital is played, but is no longer connected with the meanings of words. According to the Indian scholar M.S. Murti, "The practice of pitch accentuation is stopped and that of stress accentuation is followed for a change in Sanskrit, the classical language."[11] And therefore the stress of Sanskrit differs substantially from the *svara* of the Vedic language. And the big difference exists between the four tones of Chinese and the stress of Sanskrit since the former is related to the meanings of words. But it is not possible that the Vedic language exercised a direct influence upon the discovery of this feature that characterizes the Chinese speech sounds, as is explained above. As matter of fact, it is a reasonable certainty that the Chinese ancients would determine the four tones in addition to *shengmu* and *yunmu* as long as they made a contrast to Sanskrit, and pondered on the Chinese speech sounds.

That is how things stand. The Indian classical linguistics is composed of etymology, phonetics and grammar, whereas the Chinese linguistics consists of exegetics, philology and phonology. India does not have philology in ancient times, and this has something to do with the aspect that Sanskrit is an alphabetic system of writing. It is introduced to China together with Buddhism, which gives rise to the emergence of the Chinese phonology, but does not bring about the origin of the Chinese grammar, which is connected with the facet that Chinese is an ideography without inflexions. Jin Kemu 金克木 used to draw *Ashtadhyayi* and *Shuowen jiezi* as the example to explain, "One is a network system of words, which has sounds as its focal point; while the other is a network of characters, which has pictograms as its chief concern."[12] In other words, the Indian ancients attach importance to speech sounds while the Chinese ancients place emphasis on characters. When the Chinese ancients were engaged in the explanation for some scriptures, they also paid attention to the grammatical phenomena of Chinese and wrote overall summaries on end. Despite this there had not come out the works about grammar, which fix grammatical structures as the object of study, before *Mashi wentong* 马氏文通 was brought out in modern times.

Sanskrit belongs to the Indo-European family, and hence the scholars in the nineteenth century Europe praised Sanskrit without exception for the linguistics

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[11] M. S. Murti, 1984, p. 58.
[12] Jin Kemu, 1999, p. 2.

achievement in ancient India as soon as they studied *Ashtadhyayi* and Sanskrit. Max Mülle said, "Sanskrit builds with certainty the only solid foundation for comparative philology. It is always the only reliable companion when being faced with complicated phenomena. A philologist who lacks the knowledge of Sanskrit would be likened to an astronomer who is lacking in the knowledge of mathematics."[13] And hence European scholars actively use Sanskrit linguistics for reference with a view to substantiating and improving the European linguistics. And this continues until the twentieth century, just as the American linguist L. Bloomfield praised *Ashtadhyayi* "as one of the monumental works that display the wisdom of mankind. The author provides a fully comprehensive account of the rules on the inflexion, derivative and compound of each word of his native language, and the application of each syntactic rule as well. Thus far there is not any other language of which so perfect a description has been issued."[14]

The Full Development of the Sphota Theory Enhanced by Bhartrhari and the Conveyance of the Language Essence

On the basis of grammar the Indian ancients applied hard thinking to languages on the philosophical level. The focal point is the relation between sound and sense under consideration. In *Mahābhāsya* Patañjali points out that the sole purpose of words is to convey meanings. To take an example, as soon as the word *gauh* (ox) is uttered, the sound image of an animal will be conjured up, which has four hoofs, a tail and horn, and the flesh that hangs down from its neck. He thinks that words themselves exist at the beginning, which stay unchanged and unalienable, but their existence is confirmed through sounds. He calls the words themselves *sphota*,[15] namely the words that demonstrate their original existence through sounds. To take *gauh* again as an example, the word exists at the beginning, but depends on for its existence the consecutive utterance of the three phonemes *g, au,* and *h*. None of the three phonemes can takes on the meaning of *gauh*. And the three phonemes are not emitted simultaneously, but done in sequence one after another till the last phoneme *h*. Only in this way can it be combined with the previously uttered *g* and *au* that flash across one's mind, and can the meaning of *gauh* be borne. He terms the pronunciation *dhvani*, which is accentuated to prove the existence of the words at the beginning.

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[13] M. S. Murti, 1984, p. 320.
[14] Bloomfield, 2004, p. 10.
[15] The original meaning of sphota is "unfold,""demonstrate,"and here it means that the meaning is demonstrated through the pronunciation, as given by Jin Kemu in his translation.

Patañjali's *Sphota* Theory reaches its exceptionally elaborate expression in *Vakyapadiya* written by Bhartrhari in the seventh century. *Vakyapadiya* is a treatise on the philosophy of Sanskrit linguistics, which is divided into three chapters. The first and third chapter includes the annotations offered by the author. It makes clear the purpose and theme from the beginning by pointing out, "The eternal Brahman, who never rises nor falls, is the essence of words (sounds), transformed into different objects (meanings), and creates the world."(1:1) The author equates Brahman with the essence of languages. Brahman is the original source of the world, where it either is the essence of languages, or exists with languages as its essence. And Bhartrhari also identifies languages with the creation of the world. And despite different approaches to expression, this statement achieves the result similar to that of the *Gospel According to John* in the *New Testament* that says, "In the beginning was the Word; the Word was with God; and the Word was God."

According to Bhartrhari, just as Brahman creates and presents everything, *sphota* creates and presents sound and sense. *Sphota* represents the ultimate existence of languages, which remain unchanged and inseparable. "Just as letters are not divided into parts, words are not broken up into letters, nor separated from sentences in the meantime."(1:73) That sentences are divided into words, and words into letters is just because understanding is found convenient. Bhartrhari divides the forms in which languages achieve expression into three levels, namely the subtlety, medium, and crudity. The subtle form is the absolute truth of languages, where the sound and sense can combine to form the unified entirety. The medium form is the presentation of the subtle form through mastery of thought. The crude form is the further presentation of the medium form. This form is, by means of the air motion in human body, transformed into the sound, which is perceived through the sense of hearing after the articulation through the faculty of speech. Patañjali calls the pronunciation *dhvani*, whereas Bhartrhari arranges a higher classification, in which he names the medium form the original *dhvani*, and the crude form the transformed *dhvani*. In other words, the original *dhvani* is the presentation of internal thought while the transformed *dhvani* is the presentation of the external sound. This is exactly as Bhartrhari said, "Just as the light that is given out from the piece of wood is not same light, the word during the course of thought results in the pronunciation of the word. The word under consideration during that course is followed by the word that attains the object (sense), which depends on the pronunciation (*dhvani*) for mastery."(1:46/7) In the pronunciation process, a word is understood when its last letter is pronounced; likewise, a sentence is comprehended when its last word is uttered.

Bhartrhari's *Sphota* Theory reminds us by association of Saussure's View on *sign*. He points out, "We can use a sign to stand for the entirety, and the signified

and signifier to stand respectively for concept and sound image"[16]. And therefore *sphota* is the sign, while the sound and sense on which it takes is the signified or the image caused by the sound and the signified or concept. Meanwhile this is also associated with the explanation for *dayin xisheng* 大音希声 (great music has the faintest notes), put forward in *Laozi Daode jing zhu* 老子道德经注 (The commentary and sub-commentary to *Daode jing*) by Wang Bi 王弼 (CE 226–249), the Neo-Taoist philosopher in the Wei-Jin Period. He said, "That the ear listens but cannot hear is called the rarefied. Great music is the music that cannot be heard. If the music has notes it is only parts of the music, and it is either the *gong* or the *shang* note[17]. If we enjoy the beauty of the partial music, we then fail to appreciate the beauty of the ethereal music in its entirety. And therefore the music that has notes is not great music." That is the reason why *sphota* is the great music, namely the music that cannot be heard, and thus the absolute truth of languages. Once it has sounds it is divided into letters and words. This parades the cognizance of the essence of language in its entirety.

Bhartrhari praises languages so lavishly that he equates its essence with Brahman. According to *Fanwo tongyi* 梵我同一 (The unity is achieved between one's ego and Brahman), he said, "The speech reflects the intrinsic ego of the speaker, known as the great Sacred Cattle, the talisman. Whoever achieves command of languages can be nearer to the loftiest soul (Brahman); whoever attains mastery of the essence of the language activity can enjoy the heavenly sweet dew" (1:131/2). And he lays emphasis on grammar wherein "grammar is the nearest to Brahman, and is the supreme one of the ascetic practices, the vital part of the Vedas" (1:11). He thinks, "Words are connected with the essence of the matter (meanings) activity. Without grammar their essence can by no means be understood. Grammar demonstrates the door to extricate oneself, corrects the faulty wording when making use of languages, and purifies all knowledge. Just as all kinds of things are related to the categories of words, grammar builds the foundation for all learning in the world" (1:13/4/5).

In volume 4 of *Nanhai jigui neifazhuan* Yijing gives an introduction to *Vakyapadiya* by Bhartrhari, which is transliterated as *Bojialun* 薄伽论. By his own account "*Bojialun* has seven hundred gathas, and seven thousand explanatory notes, which are both written by Bhartrhari to describe agama and anuma^na-prama^n!a. Besides, there is *Prakirnaka*, which has three thousand gathas and fourteen thousand explanatory notes. The gathas are composed by Bhartrhari while the explanatory notes are provided by Dharmapala. It can be

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[16] Saussure, 1996, p. 60.

[17] Gong 宫 and shang 商 note refer respectively to the note of the ancient Chinese five-tone scale, which correspond separately to 1 and 2 in numbered musical notation.

soundly rated as the exhaustive search of the mysteries of the world, and as the thorough investigation of the reasonableness of human beings. Only when learners reach this stage can they be accomplished at explaining the knowledge of scripts, grammar, rhyme and rhythm, and be likened to august savants who attain total mastery of the classics and the hundred schools of thought." In contrast with *Vakyapadiya*, the seven hundred gathas are, as Yijing said, equivalent to the first two chapters of *Vakyapadiya* that survives now, since the first chapter has 156 gathas, and the second chapter 485 gathas, and then there are 641 gathas, nearly seven hundred gathas all together. As is named by Yijing, *Bina* is, in fact, the third chapter of the extant *Vakyapadiya*, known alternatively as *Prakirnaka* that can be rendered as the *Miscellaneous Expositions*. That Yijing named the translated version of the *Miscellaneous Expositions Bina* results obviously from the transliteration of *Pra*, the beginning clipped from the whole word *Prakirnaka*, just as he did likewise to transliterate *Vakyapadiya* as *Bojialun*. The third chapter of *Vakyapadiya* has 1323 gathas, which differs from Yijing's statement that "there are three thousand gathas." Furthermore, Yijing said it is Dharmapala that provides this part with explanatory notes. But its extant version shows that it is Helaraja that offers the notes.

The Logical Thinking behind the Comparison between the Chinese and Indian Linguistic Philosophy

Special importance is placed to the relation between sound and sense in the ancient Indian philosophy of linguistics. In *Vakyapadiya* Bhartrhari said, "The great celestial beings author the sutra, commentary and subcommentary, and think that it is eternal for sound and sense to be combined"(1:23). And the Chinese ancients attach real significance for the relation between the concept and objective being. In *Gongsun Longzi* "Mingshilun" 公孙龙子·名实论 it is said, "The concept is merely the name of the objective being." And in *Mozi* "Jingshuoshang" 墨子·经说上 it is said, "The name exists only for the concept, which terms the objective being. The combination of the concept and objective being means the amalgamation of the name and the matter." The theory about the concept and objective being differs to some extent from that on sound and sense. Here sound and sense is discussed in terms of the internal structure of languages, while the concept and objective being is explained as far as the external matter and languages are concerned. However, the two theories bear some points of similarity, because the term *artha* in Sanskrit carries the meanings of *object* or *matter*.

In *Zhuangzi* "Xiaoyao you" 庄子·逍遥游 Zhuangzi said, "The concept is

subordinate to the objective being." And the relation is borne between the superior and subordinate, whereupon the objective being is the main facet while the concept is the minor facet. This is in agreement with the view held by the Indian ancients on the relation between sound and sense. Bhartrhari said, "Once the meaning is expressed, the meaning carrier that serves the secondary role will have fulfilled its purpose and not been perceived"(1-54). In other words, the sound performs the function ancillary to that of the sense, and to perceive the sound is to understand the sense. And there is some agreement between him and Zhuangzi who holds, "The significance of the expressions lies in the meanings, which will not be imprinted on one's minds as soon as the meanings are grasped"(*Zhuangzi* "Waiwu" 庄子·外物). But Zhuangzi's view on the relation between the concept and objective being transcends the relation between the superior and subordinate facet. According to him the concept fails to express all the meanings of the objective being. He thinks, "Only the crudities of matter can be explained in words, while its sophisticated facets can only be sensed through cognitive faculties. And what is neither the sophisticated facets nor the crudities of matter is then the original source of the world. It can neither be apprehended nor be expressed." (*Zhuangzi* "Qiushui" 庄子·秋水). He divides matter, the objective being, into the crudities, sophisticated facets, and the original source. Our languages can only describe the shape and color of the crudities, and the sophisticated facets can only be sensed through our sensory organs, whereas the essence of the world, the Way, can neither be sensed, nor be expressed. This is exactly true of Laozi's statement that "the Way that can be told is not an Unvarying Way; the names that can be named are not unvarying names."

The Way in the philosophical thought of Laozi and Zhuangzi is in harmony with the Brahman in the philosophy of the Indian Upanishads. They refer both to the original source of the world. Zhuangzi thinks, "The Way cannot be heard, and if heard, it is not the Way; the Way cannot be seen, and if seen, it is not the Way; the Way cannot be expressed, and if expressed, it is not the Way" (*Zhuangzi* "Zhibeiyou" 庄子·知北游). Likewise, in the philosophy of the Indian Upanishads it is thought that Brahman "cannot be expressed, nor considered, nor seen. But how is it known to us if its existence is not discussed" (*Kathaka Upanishad* 6-12). In other words it can be thought that Brahman "cannot be seen, nor expressed, nor grasped, without any shape or form; it cannot be conceived, nor named; it holds on to the belief that one's sole ego is the essence; it dwells in Nirvana that is devoid of any wild talks; it is tranquil, propitious and the one and only Way" (*Mandukya Upanishad* 7).

According to Chapter 69 of *Maha Prajnaparamita* translated by Kumarajiva (CE 344–413)the Indian Mahayana Buddhism also highlights the view that languages are powerless to express Buddha dharma, and says, "*Prajnaparamita*

cannot be explained in words. Neither the *Dhyanaparamita*, nor even the entire body of Buddhist scriptures can be told in words, whether they are the Law based on action or non-action, or the Doctrine of Voice-hearer, or the *Pratyekabuddha* Law, or the Bodhisattva Principle, or Buddhist dharma." But they have to be taught so as to enlighten people by sermons, and then, in accordance with Chapter 2 of *Saddharmapundarika-sutra* (Lotus Sutra of the wonderful law) translated by Kumarajiva, Bodhisattvas preach the Buddhist doctrines to all living creatures, "and introduce immeasurable and boundless teaching to make them realize the essence of Buddhism by using figures of speech and expressions by analogy, and identifying the principal and subsidiary causes." Madhyamika School holds that all things are made in combination through force of the principal and subsidiary causes, and they do not have the self-nature, wherein *sunyata* (emptiness) is the essence. According to volume 4 of *Madhyamika-sastra* translated by Kumarajiva, Nagarjuna (CE 150?–250) said, "All the laws and methods are devised by all mortal beings in combination by means of the power of the prime and secondary causes, which is, in my opinion, *sunyata*, or *prajnapt* (empiricism), or the middle-way creed." In other words, *sunyata* is the essence of the way in which all things are created in combination through force of the primary and secondary causes, and therefore *prajnapti* would only be the way in which they are called or explained. Here *sunyata* and *prajnapti* are both confirmed, which is free from bias. Thus there is the middle-way opinion. All things (*prajnapti*) that are created in combination through force of the principal and subsidiary causes, and their essence (*sunyata*), are respectively known as *sudi* 俗谛 (the relative truth sought in the secular world) and *zhendi* 真谛 (the absolute truth or Buddhist reasonableness). *Zhendi* cannot be revealed, but has to be taught by virtue of *sudi*, or expressed through *apoha*, or preached by using figure of speech, and identifying the principal and subsidiary causes. *Apoha* refers to the negative statement. The characteristic examples can be found in the statement that Nagarjuna releases on *sunyata*, which "neither comes into being, nor meets extinction; neither be constant nor variable; neither be similar nor different; it neither comes nor goes," according to volume 1 of *Madhyamika-sastra* translated by Kumarajiva. A clear similarity exists between this expression and *neti neti* (a chant or mantra that means *neither this, nor that*) issued about Brahman in the philosophy of the Indian Upanishads, as if they came down in one continuous line. *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* put out the alternative statement that the eternal Brahman is "not wide, not narrow, not short, not long, not red, not damp; and dispenses with the shadows, darkness, winds, space, contact, taste, fragrances, eyes, ears, languages, thoughts, heat and light, smells, mouths, finiteness, inside, outside" (38:8). Likewise, in the Taoist philosophy the Way has to be explained by

means of *zhiyan* 卮言 (the fables in the unrestrained style of writing), *chongyan* 重言 (the repeated talks) and fables, though it cannot be told in words (*Zhuangzi* "Tianxia" 庄子·天下). If we understand the philosophy of the Indian Upanishads, Mahayana Buddhism and the language thinking expressed in the Chinese Taoist philosophy, it would not be difficult to understand the method of the Chinese Zen Buddhism to preach the doctrines, as well as the purpose that "the Buddhist doctrines are transmitted outside the sutra, and independent of words or writing; the attention is directed to the human mind, and all living beings perceive one's true nature and are alike endowed with Buddhata."

During the course of the reflection on the philosophy of linguistics, the Chinese ancients also look at the reciprocal relationship among the meaning, expression and writing, in addition to the relations between the concept and objective being, and between the way and expression. In *Zhouyi* "Xici shangzhuan" 周易·系辞上传, it is said, "More should be expressed than what is put into words, and the words come to an end with the meaning inexhaustible." Zhuangzi said, "The reason why writing is valued by the common people is that it is the vehicle of communication of the meanings, but it does not transcend expressions. And expressions have the value on their own. The reason that expressions are prized is that they carry meanings. And meanings have something to refer to. However, that they refer to something cannot be communicated in words, and that writing is handed down from time to time is because the common people value expressions. What the common people value is merely writing, but it is not really worth being prized, because the common people value what is not truly valuable." *Zhuangzi* "Tiandao" 庄子·天道. The above expositions reflect the order of the levels reached by the meaning, expression and writing, which bears a certain similarity with the order of the levels attained by the *inner thoughts*, *spoken languages*, *written scripts* in Derrida's so-called *Logos Centrism*[18]. In the western tradition it is thought that logos takes concurrently on two meanings, namely *ratio* and *oratio*. And then the Logos Centrism can be alternatively known as the *Phonetic Centrism*. And then logos is similar to the *sense* in the ancient Chinese philosophy of linguistics as far as it carries the meanings of reason, thought, or significance, while it is close to *sphota* in the ancient Indian philosophy of linguistics in terms of logos' expression of speech sounds and the unity between sound and sense. However, during the course of the deliberation on languages, the Indian ancients concentrate their mind upon the relation between sound and sense, which does concern written scripts. This is not regarded as strange because to underestimate

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[18] Zhang Longxi, 2005, p. 60.

the written form of languages is the intrinsic feature that distinguishes the ancient Indian culture.

Despite the significance that attaches to the relationship among the meaning, expression and writing in the ancient Chinese philosophy of linguistics, far more reflection is shown about the relation between the meaning and the expression, which differs from the relation between the Way and names or the relation between Brahman and expression. The relation between the meaning and the expression is whether it is possible to exhaust one's meanings, and how to express them as completely and thoroughly as possible, whereas the Way and Brahman is already presumed not to be expressed in words. The greater tendency on the part of the Confucianism is that it is possible for the meanings to be exhausted in words. In *Zuozhuan* "Xianggong ershiwu nian" 左传·襄公二十五年 Confucius said, "Words can describe one's ambition and writing can record one's description." And in *Zhouyi* "Xici shangzhuan" he again said, "Wise men create *xiang* 象 to express meanings as completely as possible, and adopt divinatory symbols to distinguish the true from the false, and then one's meanings can reach their fullest expression in the 'Xici' 系辞." Here the *Xiang* not only refers to divinatory symbols, but also bears the meanings of images, imagery and symbols. And then the relation between the meaning and expression is developed into the relationship among the meaning, imagery and expression. In *Yanjin yilun* 言尽意论 included in volume 109 of *Quanjin wen* 全晋文 Ouyang Jian 欧阳建 (CE ?–300) emphasized, "The concept follows the change of the objective being; the expression changes with the inner thoughts. This is likened more exactly to the echo of sounds, and to the shadowing of objects, and the two can never be separated from each other. If so, the meaning can then be exhausted." Here the oneness of the meaning and expression is compared to the *reverberation of sounds*, like the Indian *Sphota* Theory. A profound influence has been exercised on the later generations, whether it is exerted by the Theory about the relationship among the meaning, imagery and expression, or by the Taoist Principle that the Way cannot be told in words, or by the View on the exhaustion of meanings in words, or by its opposite Thinking. All of them have been applied, in particular, in the ancient Chinese poetics. And the importance is attached to the conditions of literary composition where, as is described in *Wenxin diaolong* "Yinxiu" 文心雕龙·隐秀, the meanings are created beyond the range of utterance, and the profound implications and implicit expressions can conjure up the artistic images, so that the untapped potential for the expressive power is developed to the full. And in the ancient Indian poetics, the similar role has been occupied by the *Sphota* Theory and Thinking that the Brahman cannot be expressed. In *Dhvanyaloka* the Sanskrit expert at poetics Anandavardhana (CE 820–890) rates the grammarians as the forerunner of specialists. He said, "They

place rhymes on the phonemes heard. And the specialists in other areas, when expounding the essential qualities of poetry, must abide by their principles, and call the soul of the words, which attain the synthesis of the meanings with their carrier, by the name *rhyme*, namely so-called *poetry* in the general sense, in the light of the common suggestiveness"(1-13 Annotations).

The Division of Language and Literature between Ancient China and India

Literature is the art embedded in languages. Languages can be divided into the spoken and written languages while literature can also be divided into the spoken and written literature. It is self-evident that the language of the written literature differs from the spoken language. Since the spoken literature becomes the oral products of art, its language is not completely equated with the spoken language. Guo Shaoyu 郭绍虞 used to split up the Chinese literature into the literature characteristic of language and the literature typical of script, in order to sum up the evolution of the Chinese literature. The times before the Spring-Autumn Period is for the synthesis of poetry with music; the times from the Warring-State Period to the Han dynasty for metrical composition; the times from the Wei-Jin to the Northern-Southern dynasty for rhythmical prose marked by parallelism; the times from the Sui-Tang to the Northern Song for classical Chinese prose; the times from the Southern Song to the modern age for types of writing. In terms of this division the synthesis of poetry with music belongs to the literature characteristic of language, namely the literature that approaches the spoken language; the metrical composition fits into the literature typical of script, namely the literature that dispenses with the spoken language; the rhythmical prose marked by parallelism falls into the representative literature typical of script; the classical Chinese prose and types of writing is grouped again under the literature characteristic of language.[19] This summary yields a significant insight, as it completes the sequence of ideas for the language evolution of the Chinese literature. In terms of the concept the considerable similarity, if not a complete similarity, exists between the spoken literature and the literature typical of language, and between the written literature and the literature characteristic of script. The spoken literature refers, in the main, to the literature that depends on the spoken languages for the creation and transmission, while the written

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[19] Guo Shaoyu, "Zhongguo yuyan yu wenzi zhi fenqi zai wenxueshi shang de yanbian xianxiang" 中国语言与文字之分歧在文学史上的演变现象 (The phenomenon that the difference between the language and script receives expression in the development of the Chinese literary history), in Guo Shaoyu, 1997.

literature refers mainly to the literature that depends on the written languages for the composition and transmission. To judge from the angle of the literary receipt, the former concerns the relation between the telling and listening, while the latter is about the relation between the writing and reading. That the literature characteristic of language differs from the literature typical of script centers in the contrast between the literary and oral languages.

In the ancient India the Vedas, epics and the *Puranas* all come into the category of the spoken literature. During the period roughly before or after Jesus Christ India enters the epoch of the Classical Sanskrit Literature. The ancient Sanskrit, known as the Vedic language, which was used in the four Vedas, and the epic Sanskrit used in epics and the *Puranas*, are both the Sanskrit that approaches the spoken language at that time. But the Classical Sanskrit used in the Classical Sanskrit Literature is the language that demonstrates the cardinal importance of embellishments. *Kavyalankara* and *Kavyadarsa* in the Classical Sanskrit are the two earliest works that survive now, and were written with the stress on the exploration of the rhetorical skills harnessed with the literary languages. The specialists of the Classical Sanskrit poetics regard the rhetorical skills with the sound and sense that embellishes languages as the mark of the difference from everyday and science languages. Of course this does not mean that there are no rhetorical devices in the four Vedas, epics and the *Puranas*. Instead it is said that the rhetorical devices in them are comparatively simplicity itself while those in the Classical Sanskrit Literature tend to be more refined. *Kavyalankara* in the seventh century explains thirty-nine figures of speech, which amounts eventually to more than one hundred devices by means of further substantiation and development. To seek embellishments is the common feature that characterizes the Classical Sanskrit Literature. And those who carry it to extreme even think it a poetic talent to design an ornate and over-elaborate styles and contrive ingenious and hard rhetorical devices, which even degenerate almost into play with words. Such literary works would naturally depend no more on the spoken languages for the creation and transmission as the Vedas and epics did, and they must depend on the scripts and writing. And in the tenth chapter of his *Kavyamimamsa* of the ninth or tenth century, which concerns the *Poets' Conduct*, Rajasekhara (CE 880?–920?) goes into the details that "poets often take with them some boxes and suitcases in which there are pieces of wood and chalk, pens, ink bottles, palm leaves, birch barks, iron needles and the leaves of the borassus flabelliformis." All these are the writing instruments and material, of which the leaves of the palm and borassus flabelliformis are known as the leaves of the talipot palm in the Buddhist scriptures translated into Chinese.

In spite of this, the spoken literature still exists in the age of the Classical Sanskrit Literature. The two great epics were eventually finalized in the fourth or

fifth century, whereas it is even later for different kinds of the *Puranas* to be finalized. In the meantime the Sanskrit that approached oral languages were used in many literary works of stories. In ancient India, besides the Sanskrit literary works, there were always various kinds of literary works composed in the common languages. *Tripitaka*, a Buddhist sutra, can be taken as the prime example, which was written in Pali and collected in the third century BCE. Another typical example is found in the Jainism scriptures *Agama* written in Ardhamagadhi and collected in the fifth or sixth century. In the age of the Classical Sanskrit Literature Buddhism was transformed from Hinayana into Mahayana and the eminent monks began to use Sanskrit to write the scriptures. Out of necessity for the sermons, the Sanskrit used in the Mahayana scriptures is, in the main, the simple Sanskrit, close to spoken languages, but there were some scriptures that gave importance to rhetoric and elegance in the writing style, in imitation of the style of *Dashi* 大诗 (The long poetic narrative) in the Classical Sanskrit. The important common languages based on different local dialects also include Maharastri, Śauraseni, Magadhi, Paisaci, Apabhransa, etc. These common languages are developed into such different modern languages in India as Hindi, Bengali, Panjabi, etc., while Sanskrit as the universal language Tongyongyu in ancient India began to fall into disuse in the twelfth century.

Such a change in the ancient languages of India is related to phonetic scripts. The relation between languages and phonetic scripts is that scripts depend on languages, and the script spelling follows the change of languages. With the change of the times the ancient dialects of India diverge increasingly from the universal Sanskrit in grammar and vocabulary, and are developed into different independent languages with their spelling formed in the end. Such a change does not occur to Chinese. The Chinese characters belong to ideograph. When China was unified Emperor Zheng of Qin implemented the language policy aimed at the uniformity of the scripts. In this way the script always serves the role in exerting control over the language. The local dialects may diverge markedly from each other in the pronunciations, but the scripts with which they are timed to coincide still preserve unity. And the works written in the language may be more or less mixed with the dialects that appear in the form of the homophone characters. However, the dialects abide by the choice of history by being rendered practically obsolete or by being incorporated into the universal language. Under the influence of the stereotyped ideograph, various dialects are powerless to be developed into independent languages. And therefore Chinese does not vanish as Sanskrit and Latin did during the course of their development, which both used to be alphabetic writings. Of the myriad languages in the world Chinese still holds the original freshness and appeal from time to time.

In Chinese the division is created between the Vernacular Prose and Literary

Sinitic, and thus there is the division between the Classical Chinese Literature and Vernacular Literature. In terms of the concept their relation both correspond to and differ from the relation between the spoken and written literature, and the relation between the literature typical of language and literature characteristic of script. Moreover, the Vernacular Literature is known as the Popular Literature, but the Popular Literature does not all fall into the category of the Vernacular Literature, because in ancient China the traditional operas and novels put into the category of the Popular Literature can be composed in the Literary Sinitic. The diversity in the technical terms provides reflection upon different viewing angles and footholds, and upon the complexity that arises from the relation itself between the literature and language.

The Literary Sinitic gradually takes shape in the Warring-state Period when the culture began to be in vogue in the written form. The papermaking technique has yet to be devised at that time. Due to the restriction on the writing material it is absolutely necessary for the writing style in the Classical Chinese to tend to be economical, as the bamboo slips are relatively heavier and silks more expensive. On the basis of the laconic manner in writing the quest is pursued for *cida* 辞达 (the lucidity and smoothness in one's linguistic expression), *ciqiao* 辞巧 (the ear-pleasing and clever talk) and *wenzhi binbin* 文质彬彬 (the perfect synthesis of the elegance in the writing style with the substance in the content). Thus, the syntax and vocabulary is gradually built for the Literary Sinitic, in contrast with that of the spoken languages, which develops and is carried forward in practice. In the meantime the Literary Sinitic effects adjustments to the need in reality, and then different types of writings and styles are formed to be tailored to different contents and ways of expression. It is the case as in *Dianlun* "Lunwen" 典论·论文 Cao Pi said, "*Zouyi* 奏议 (The memorials presented to the emperor) should be quaintly refined; expositions logically reasonable; *Minglei* 铭诔 (The dirges forming part of a funeral rite and epitaph inscribed on a gravestone) gravely truthful; poems and rhapsodies need to be exquisitely elegant." And the types of writings in the Literary Sinitic that *Wenxin diaolong* expounds amount to as many as tens of them.

The Wei, Jin and Northern-Southern dynasties are the times when the Chinese literature is lodged in the growing consciousness. Two spectacular advances are made on the mode of thought. One is the expression of the view that "The poetry is to display the emotion", on the basis of the thought that "The poetry is to express the ambitions"; the other is the pursuit of the beautifulness of art in the languages, and the importance placed on the parallelism and antithesis in the rhythmical prose, on the prosodic rules that govern the rhythm of words, and on the rhetorical embellishments in writing. Likewise, in *Wenfu* 文赋 (The rhapsody on the literary composition) Lu Ji 陆机 (CE 261–303）said, "The

expression of thought does not dispense with artistry; the wording should be crouched in beautiful languages. The rhyme and rhythm can achieve harmony when the expressions with musical and metrical effect follow one another, just like a criss-cross pattern of the five colors." In the Yongming Prosody based on the Theory about *sisheng babing* 四声八病 (the level, rising, falling and entering tones, in the Classical Chinese pronunciation and the eight flaws that should be avoided in the rhyme scheme of the poetic composition) it is revealed that the mystery surrounds the beautifulness of rhyme and rhythm in the Chinese poetry, and the Prosody lays a theoretical foundation for the rules and forms of classical poetic composition. Meanwhile in prose the importance is attached to the embellishments and cadence of writing, and, in particular, to the parallelism and antithesis, and thus such a rhythmical prose emerge, and its sentences are characterized by the symmetry, carefulness and neatness, namely *Piansi liliu* 骈四俪六 (a parallel construction of pairs of four-character and six-character sentences). It can be believed that the rhythmical prose epitomizes the prose styles in ancient China, which strive towards the ultimate achievement enhanced in the art of languages.

The Literary Styles in the Translated Buddhist Scriptures in the Wei, Jin, and Northern-Southern Dynasties and Their Influence on the Chinese Vernacular Literature

The Wei, Jin and Northern-Southern dynasties coincide with the times when the translation of the Buddhist scriptures rises to prominence, and then during the course of the scriptural translation, the discussion continues as to whether the style should be simple or refined in the translated texts. The Chinese eminent monks familiarize themselves with the concise but refined style in the Classical Chinese, which can be found in the prefaces that they write for the translated Buddhist scriptures. The unsuitability or even doubt may arise when fleeting glances flick at the tedious and plain style of the translated texts. Nevertheless, when the scriptural translations develop in depth the awareness increases, where the style adopted conforms to the true features of the Buddhist scriptures in the original. By virtue of the comparison between the Sanskrit and Chinese scriptural style the monk Dao'an 道安 (CE 312–385) reaches the conclusion in *Mohe boluoruo boluomi jing chaoxu* 摩诃钵罗若波罗蜜经抄序 (An introduction to Maha Prajnaparamita), where he said, "Simplicity is upheld in the genre of the Sanskrit scriptures whereas Chinese people are attracted to the elegant style in their translations", just as in *Dazhi shilun xu* 大智释论序 (An introduction to Maha Prajnaparamitasastra) Seng Rui 僧睿 is also impressed with the difference

that "The Sanskrit scriptures are complicated in the form while Chinese people are drawn to the plain narration." It is not difficult to understand the contrast, because the Buddhist scriptural styles are rooted in such a manner that the sermon is normally delivered in the oral form. As a result its expressions tend to be simple and common, and trivial details and refrains are not turned aside in the narration and argument. In this consciousness they would not avoid using the style in colloquial language or the style close to everyday language in their translation of the Buddhist scriptures. It is interesting that, to defend their view on the style in the translated scriptures, they select, in particular, *Book of Documents* and *Book of Verse*, the two Confucian classics that approach the colloquial language in style. They said, "If *Book of Verse* is regarded as complicated and prolix, and *Book of Documents* as simple and plain, and revisions were carried out in them so as to be adapted to the need of the present time, this would arouse vehement opposition from Ma Rong 马融 (CE 79–166) and Zheng Xuan 郑玄 (CE 127–200), the two great classic experts in the late Eastern Han dynasty", according to *Mohe boluoruo boluomi jing chaoxu* by Dao'an.

And therefore in the Wei, Jin and Northern-Southern dynasties, it is the rhythmical prose marked by parallelism that elevates the style of the Classical Chinese on the one hand; it is the Chinese translations of the Buddhist scriptures that promote the vernacular style on the other hand. Both take on the equally immense significance for the Chinese literary history. Before their epoch-making role is performed, what can be recognized as the Vernacular Literature or that close to the Vernacular Literature only comprises some folk songs and proverbs found piecemeal in the classics, or popular ballads in *Book of Verse* and *yuefu* of Han, which are gleaned from the common people. From then on, by virtue of the style of the Buddhist scriptural translations, the Vernacular Literature keeps pace with the Classical Chinese Literature, and gains high strength increasingly. Wherein the most remarkable example is that *bianwen* 变文 (a popular Tang literary form) greatly facilitates the rapid development of the literary narrative popular with the common people in ancient China. The *bianwen* adopts the colloquial form that combines the metrical with prose works, which is at first used to recount the stories in the Buddhist scriptures, and later to embroider those in the Chinese history. The synthesis of the metrical works with prose is originally the commonly used style adopted in the Buddhist scriptures. In Hindu the fictional narrative of the Classical Sanskrit has such a style called *campu* (An Indian verse form). Later the Tang *bianwen* is transformed gradually into the *huaben* 话本 (the scripts in colloquial language for story-telling based on the works written in literary Sinitic) in the Song and Yuan China, namely *baihua*

xiaoshuo 白话小说 (The fiction written in the vernacular Chinese). The Song-Yuan *huaben* is then developed into the vernacular novels written in the style of *zhanghuiti* 章回体 (the serial fiction with each chapter headed by a couplet giving the gist of its content) in the Ming and Qing China.

The development of the Tang-Song literary narrative has completed the preparations for the emergence of the drama. The Chinese theatre appears in the Song and Yuan dynasty, which does obviously later than that in Hindu and Hellas. There are all sorts of reasons behind it, but one of them is for sure that the literary narrative is not fully developed in the formative stages. In both Hindu and Hellas the drama emerges after the epics, and the earliest subject matter derives, in the main, from the stories and legends included in the epics. This constitutes a clear indication that the transformation can soon be expected into the art of theatrical performance from the subject matter based on literary narrative characterized by fabrication. In ancient China the cultural phenomenon can be proved by the fact that the term *chuanqi* 传奇 is the name all of the Tang-Song tales, of the Yuan variety plays and of the Ming-Qing poetic operas. As matter of fact according to the historical material on the drama in the period of transition from Yuan to Ming, it is of the opinion that the traditional operas have its origin in the *chuanqi*. This is the case, as in *Qinglou ji* 青楼集 (The research collection compiled in the Qing tower) Xia Tingzhi 夏庭芝 said, "In Tang there are works of *chuanqi* compiled all by the literati, which are likened to the unofficial history, and conducive to much amusement in a great sense of humor. And in Song the actors' part or lines include the singing, elocution and joking." And in *Nancun chuogeng lu* 南村辍耕录 (The handwritten records kept at leisure after working in farming in the southern village) Tao Zongyi 陶宗仪 also put forward his view on the *chuanqi* and said, "The books of anecdotes disappear and then the *chuanqi* works emerge; the *chuanqi* works are composed, wherein the traditional operas forge ahead into the future."

In the meantime, under the influence of *gatha* (The panegyric included in the Buddhist scriptures) in the translated Buddhist scriptures, the Buddhist monks compose poems in the vernacular language. Among them the well-known monk poets there are Baozhi 宝志, Fu Dashi 傅大士 of the Northern-Southern dynasty, and Wang Fanzhi 王梵志, Hanshan 寒山, Shide 拾得, and Pang Jushi 庞居士, etc. of the Tang China. Their composition gives rise to the formulation of the Buddhist School of Poetry, in the way that breaks new ground, in the vernacular language of the ancient times. It is natural that they are keenly aware that their poems written in the vernacular language did not conform with the criterion of the poetic art appreciated by the literati and scholar officials. But they relied on the firm foundation built by the masses, and brim with great confidence, with the result that equality is achieved in the social position between their poetic

composition and the poetry in the literary Sinitic. In a quatrain incorporated in *Quantang shi* 全唐诗 (The complete collection of the Tang poetry) (vol. 807), Shide used to explain,

> My lays should be verse too;
> Someone names them gatha,
> Which ne'er differs from verse;
> Be careful when 'tis read.

And in a quatrain included in *Quantang shi* (vol. 806), Hanshan also states,

> Someone laughs at my lays,
> Which meet all refined tastes.
> No need dictates Zheng's notes;
> Nor presses Mao's comment.

In addition, the rhymes and ballads popular among the people in the Tang China, namely the text set to the melodies for performance, prepare the way for the Tang-Song *ci* poetry characteristic of the style without an equal number of characters in each line. Such rhymes and ballads certainly include the sung texts from the Buddhist scriptures. And it is really believed that the Buddhist monks are always a vital new force in the movement of the Tang Vernacular Literature.

Furthermore, there was another even more direct and important change of direction for the Tang *bianwen*, where a tendency was shown towards the folk prosimetric literature (a genre of popular literature partly in verse and partly in prose). The Tang *bianwen* shared common origins with the precious scrolls (the popular religious literature in the former times) popular in the period of transition between Yuan and Ming. The content of the storytelling and ballading can come into the category of the Buddhist scriptures and into the non-scripture category, and the former constitutes the majority. Another category of the prosimetric literature in the Yuan-Ming period is, by a joint name, called *cihua* 词话 (The storytelling interspersed with songs and ballads), but there are only a few of the works that survive now. And therefore the *cihua* works during the reign of Emperor Xianzong of Ming are very precious, which were excavated in 1967 in the Jiading County, Shanghai.[20] The *cihua* excavated then has thirteen kinds of

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[20] The cihua works were published in facsimile in 1973 by Shanghai Museum. Another version is Ming Chenghua shuochang cihua congkan 明成化说唱词话丛刊 (The collected cihua

works, of which there are three kinds of historical stories, eight kinds of the court case, and two kinds of monsters and spirits. This serves as the indication that the prosimetric literature centers in the historical stories and folk legends in terms of the content. Besides, each of the *cihua* works are supplemented with some pictures, which shows the inheritance of the original design for the storytelling and ballading of the *bianwen* texts coupled with the caption. This kind of *cihua* is followed by the long literary *guci* 鼓词 (The versified stories sung to the accompaniment of small drums and other instruments) and *tanci* 弹词 (The storytelling accompanied by stringed instruments) in the Ming-Qing prosimetric literature. And the *Guci* spread in the north of the country while the *tanci* is disseminated in the Southern Land.

Chen Yinque was made blind in his later years, and, with the help of his assistant, he listened and recited the *tanci* composition *Zaisheng yuan* 再生缘 (The affinity predestined to spark the rebirth). As a result he wrote *Lun Zaisheng yuan* 论再生缘 (An investigation into the *tanci* work *Zaisheng yuan*). It was composed by the female writer Chen Ruisheng 陈瑞生 (CE 1751–1790?) in the Qing dynasty, and the size reaches more than six hundred thousand words. In his treatise he said, it "is a romantic magnum opus composed in the narrative style with an extended form of regulated verse with seven-character lines." And he also said, "Common people are always astonished at the reputation acquired by the Hindu, Hellas and Western epics, but not knowledgeable about the fact that such a flamboyant style has already been developed in my country. The profound and extensive knowledge of religion and philosophy demonstrated in the foreign epics goes far beyond the scope of the thought expressed in the *tanci* works of my country, but the real difference does not exist as far as only the style is concerned." [21] What is pointed out here by Chen Yinque assumes full significance in that he may phrase the questions about the comparative literature. In the Pre-Qin Times there did not come out such long literary narratives as the western epics in the oral tradition. The healthy development of the spoken prosimetric literature had taken place increasingly when the Tang and Song imperial reign commenced in the Medieval Times. And it was till the Ming and Qing dynasty in the Near Modern Times that a period of the rising prosperity was launched in the prosimetric literature, where there were a huge number of the long literary narratives. As far as only *tanci* is concerned, "there are at least four hundred pieces when conducting an extensive investigation into the title

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works of the prosimetric literature during the chenghua era of ming) checked and punctuated by Zhu Yixuan 朱一玄 and published by Zhongzhou guji chubanshe in 1997.

[21] Chen Yinque, "Lun Zaisheng yuan" 论再生缘 (An investigation into the tanci work Zaisheng yuan), in Chen Yinque, 1980b.

catalogues produced by different scholars, and into the library and private collection of books."[22] Among them there are a good few pieces whose size amounts to one million characters, and even more than one million. There are one million and two hundred thousand characters in *Yuchuan yuan* 玉钏缘 (The jade bracelet preordained to build up the relationship), and one million and seven hundred thousand characters in *Feng shuangfei* 凤双飞 (The phoenixes fly in pairs). Both outnumber the Hindi epic *Ramayana* that has about one million words. And the longest *tanci* work is *Liuhua meng* 榴花梦 (The dream about the pomegranate flower) composed by Li Guiyu 李桂玉 (CE 1821?–50), the female writer of Qing, which has nearly five million characters. It amazes us to outnumber vastly the other Hindi epic *Mahabharata*, which has about four million words. The interesting phenomenon is attractive enough to command the formulation of a separate project so as to undertake the in-depth comparative research.

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[22] Tan Zhengbi, 1981, p. 1.

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