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Cultural Arts Research and Development

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ARTICLE

Chinese Literary Works in Myanmar

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ABSTRACT

A growing number of Chinese literary works have been translated and distributed to different nations as China's relations with other nations deepen. Since translation is important for cross-cultural communication, Chinese literary works have been translated into several languages, including Burmese. In this paper, the author presents the history of the dissemination of Chinese literary works in Myanmar. Furthermore, the author discusses the status of the translated Chinese literary works, the reasons or events behind the challenges encountered in the process of disseminating them in Myanmar, and the nature of the relationship between China and Myanmar based on this literary exchange. In this research the author provides in-depth research of Chinese literary works translated into Burmese spanning over five different periods of time, starting from the early years of formation Sino-Myanmar relationships up until the present time. Each period is characterized by specific publications, for instance; translations during the Early Period include travelogues and medical books; Colonial Period (1885-1948) includes translations of revolutionary and pure literature; the Postcolonial Period (1948-1962) includes translations of political literature; translations during the Military Government Period (1962-2010) mostly include folktales, travelogues, children's literature and martial arts novels; and translations during the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Period (2010–Present) mostly include Chinese contemporary literature. The aim of this paper is to provide a deeper understanding of the history of Chinese literary translation in Myanmar.

Keywords: Chinese Literature in Myanmar; Translation History; China and Myanmar Relations; Chinese Literary Works

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ARTICLE INFO

Received: 10 March 2025 | Revised: 10 May 2025 | Accepted: 19 May 2025 | Published Online: 30 May 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55121/card.v5i1.327>

CITATION

Myint, H.H., 2025. Chinese Literary Works in Myanmar. *Cultural Arts Research and Development*. 5(1): 19–35. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55121/card.v5i1.327>

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1. Introduction

China and Myanmar have a long history of contact and close regional ties. Their relationship can be studied economically, culturally, geographically, religiously, or historically. However, *this paper focuses on* the literary exchange between these two countries. There is a significant amount of Chinese literature translated into Burmese, especially in recent years.

Translation has strengthened the dissemination of Myanmar literature and also the rich substance of this literature has contributed to enriching literary translation. According to Lefevere Andre ^[1], translation is a rewriting of the original text. Burmese author U Htin Gyi also states that “translation is the process of converting information from one language to another” ^[2]. This phenomenon proves that “translation is a bridge for cross-cultural communication and an important channel for disseminating foreign knowledge” ^[3]. Research on the translated Chinese literature in Myanmar will provide more details about the history and interaction between the two countries, and it may also help in the further development of their relationship.

Some Chinese and Burmese scholars have already done some research on the topic of translation of Chinese literary works in Myanmar. Here are some examples. In *The Spread of Martial Arts Culture in Myanmar: Taking ‘The Condor Heroes’ as an Example* ^[4], Kong Qingdong and Huang Jiaojiao primarily examine the parallels and divergences between the fields of Chinese martial arts film production and the underlying literary values. Liu Lihong postulated the qualities of Min Thu Wun’s novels and poetry in *An Analysis of Min Thu Wun’s Literary Creation Characteristics* ^[5]. Xia Kangda, Wang Xiaoping, and others also discussed the examination of various Chinese works of literature in Myanmar between the late 1920s and the early 1930s in their *A Survey of Chinese Literature Research in the 21st Century Abroad—A Survey of Chinese Literature Research in Myanmar* ^[6], and gave a thorough introduction to a few of Mya Than Tint’s translations of Chinese literature. Li Mou and Yao Bingyan’s *On Chinese Literature in Myanmar* only lists a small number of Chinese works of literature that have been published in Myanmar ^[7]. Some of the most recent research was Zhu Min’s *A Study on Du Guangmin’s Creative Treason in the Myanmar*

Translation of Red Sorghum ^[8], analyzing the phenomenon of “creative treason” in the translation from three perspectives: ethno-linguistic (dialects, folk songs, profanity, etc.), symbolic (red sorghum, animal imagery), and cultural (the rural culture of Northeast Gaomi Township). As a case study, the research explores strategies for handling culturally defaulted words and cultural imagery in cross-cultural transmission. Zuo Zhengheng in *A Study on the Translator’s Creative Treason in the Myanmar Translation of Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* ^[9], adopts Professor Xie Tianzhen’s theory of “creative treason” as the theoretical framework and examines Du Guangmin’s Burmese translation of *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* from the perspective of “translator’s creative treason.” The study provides an in-depth analysis of this phenomenon in the translation process. Moreover, it is noteworthy that there is developing research regarding the introduction, dissemination, translation, transmission, and reception of Chinese literary works in various Southeast Asian countries, including the Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Thailand ^[10–18].

The English version of General Ba Shin’s paper *History of Burmese Literature and Chinese Literature Materials* was specifically translated into Burmese in Dr. Than Tun’s *Brief History of Myanmar*, edited by Dr. Than Tun and published by Kant Kaw Myaing Publishing House in July 2011. People would not have known Myanmar had scholarly articles on Chinese literature if Dr. Than Tun had not mentioned it in his book. This article can be described as the first study of Chinese classical literature aimed at understanding the history of Burmese literature through the study of Chinese classical literature. It also mentions the titles and synopses of Chinese classical literature works, and it goes on to analyze some books that can be used for studying or compiling Burmese history. For example, Chen Menglei’s *Integration of Ancient and Modern Books*, published in 1726, is the largest and most voluminous book in terms of information. Although this book contains no information about Myanmar, it is useful for Burmese researchers. Furthermore, Dr. Than Tun stated in Chapter 119 of Gu Zuyu’s (1631–1692) *Tu-shih-fang-yi-chi-yao* and Chapter 100 of his monograph *Huiyao*, the first historical book in China *Tang Huiyao*, that there are many historical materials from the Pyu Kingdom (the former name of My-

anmar) that are invaluable to Burmese historians. In terms of monographs, Burmese author Ye` Htet's edited *Chinese Philosophy and Typical Literary Path* briefly describes the study of Confucius, Mencius, Lu Xun, and Guo Moruo ^[19]. Maung Htin introduced the four major masterpieces and poetry translations of Chinese literature in his own simplified version of *The History of Chinese and Japanese* ^[20], but both had certain limitations in their perspectives.

Although these works are valuable, more needs to be done, especially now that there is a dearth of research on the spread of Chinese literary works in Myanmar. For instance, since 1983, there has been no new research done by Chinese scholars on this topic. In the case of Burmese scholars, they merely described or introduced important Chinese literary works and notable figures and did not delve into the topic of translation of Chinese literature in Myanmar. Interestingly, there is an important work called *Brief History of Ancient Translation in Myanmar*, discussing the use of four languages (Pyu, Burmese, Mon, and Pali) and writing methods employed in the translation during the Bagan Dynasty ^[2]. However, it did not mention Chinese literature translation in Myanmar.

In this paper, the author presents the history of the translation and dissemination of Chinese literature in Myanmar. Furthermore, the author also discusses the status of the translated Chinese literary works, the reasons or events behind the challenges encountered in the process of disseminating them in Myanmar, and the nature of the relationship between China and Myanmar based on this literary exchange. Since a large number of Chinese literary works have just been translated into Burmese in recent years, the author had the privilege to interview some of the translators, publishers, researchers, and readers from Myanmar. This activity is important, as it allowed to gather first-hand stories and information, listen to their personal and professional thoughts, and know some of their inquiries regarding the history of translation of Chinese literature in Myanmar.

This article is divided into three main sections. The first section, "The Dissemination Process of Chinese Literary Works in Myanmar," presents the distribution of Chinese literature in Myanmar during the five historical periods described. In the second section, "The Dilemma and Growth of Chinese Literary Works Under the Govern-

ment System in Myanmar," the author discusses the ways in which different regimes in Myanmar have affected the translation and dissemination of Chinese literature and goes into detail about the different causes of challenges faced while disseminating Chinese literature in Myanmar. Finally, the third section, "The Issue of Translators and Translation," examines the diverse circumstances during the publishing of numerous Chinese translations.

2. The Dissemination Process of Chinese Literary Works in Myanmar

Myanmar's translation history can be broadly divided into five periods: the early period of Myanmar (early years–1885), the colonial period (1885–1948), the postcolonial period (1948–1962), the military government period (1962–2010), and the period of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (2010–present). Within these periods, we can see the development and progress of the China-Myanmar relationship in terms of literary exchange. There has been a large collection of translations and introductory materials from academic circles in China and Myanmar, as well as various newspapers and publishing houses in Myanmar. It was discovered that over 460 Chinese works of literature have been translated and published during various periods ^[21]. Chinese-Myanmar literature translations can be divided into five categories: pure literature (i.e., short stories, novels, poems, and essays), revolutionary literature, political literature, Chinese folktales, and Chinese martial arts literature.

2.1. The Early Period of Myanmar (Early Years–1885)

The long China-Myanmar relationship has laid the foundation for the dissemination of Chinese literary works in Myanmar. It has been determined that "the historical relationship between China and Myanmar can be traced back to the 2nd century BC" ^[22]; "From the 1st century BC to the 13th century AD, Sino-Myanmar relations were primarily characterized by commercial and cultural exchanges" ^[23]. The relationship and communication between these two nations have gotten closer ever since. "Since then, the relationship and communication between the two nations have continued to deepen. This exchange began during the

Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD) and reached its peak during the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD), when Chinese poets frequently praised the beauty of Burmese songs and dances in their works.” For instance, the Tang Dynasty writer Bai Juyi penned a unique poem titled *Pyu Music* (骠国乐 *Piao Guoyue*). *Piao Guoyue* is the earliest classical poetry work in Chinese literary history that chronicles the cordial relations between the Tang Dynasty and Pyu (Myanmar). In this poem, one can see cultural exchange between China and Myanmar, as well as discover the histories of both countries. With the development of China-Myanmar relations and increasingly close cultural exchanges after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, the geopolitical connection between the two countries has been increasingly valued. On January 29, 1989, this poem was translated by Min Thu Wun, the father of Burmese literature. It is most commendable that Min Thu Wun still retained the seven-character form of the poem in his translation.

The Burmese-born Chinese historian U Yi Sein wrote about this important period of China-Myanmar relationship. In his work *Journey of the Pyu Ambassador to China* (originally written in 1977 and later published in 2005), U Yi Sein took the *Pyu Music* as an important example to illustrate the close and amicable diplomatic relationship that has existed between China and Myanmar since the Tang Dynasty. Additionally, he recounted when the old Chinese capital, Chang’an, hosted a dance performance in 802 AD by a group of 35 envoys from Pyu.

According to Song Dynasty (960–1279) historical records, China was visited by envoys from the Bagan Dynasty on several occasions^[22]. A distinguished Burmese monk named Shin Ditha Pamauk travelled to China during the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368) to meet Kublai Khan for a negotiation about the compromised relationship between the two countries. He documented his travels to China as well as the trade between the two countries in 1285 on an inscription known as the “*Shin Ditha Pamauk Inscription*.” This inscription is regarded as the oldest Chinese travelogue in Myanmar. It is currently on display in Myanmar’s Bagan Ancient History Museum. Throughout this paper, the author refers to travelogues with the intention of showing their role in the history of the China-Myanmar relationship. However, these travelogues are not works of

translation.

China is also actively supporting related works, activities, or institutions in order to foster cultural exchange and dissemination between the two nations. There is also a goal for the development of competent translators. Burmese language schools were established in the early 15th century to teach Burmese, as recorded in the “Ming History–Official Records III,” stating:

The Siyi Pavilion, the first foreign and ethnic minority language school in Chinese history, was founded in Nanjing in 1407 during the Ming Dynasty. At the beginning of its establishment, the Siyi Pavilion started to teach the Burmese language and hired Burmese people as teachers, which became the earliest record of China hiring Burmese teachers to teach Burmese in China^[24].

But prior to the 19th century, there were not many cultural exchanges between China and Myanmar because of technological constraints. For instance, it was only in 1816 that a truly large-scale development began in terms of printing and disseminating information. It was made possible by the arrival of the first printing press in Myanmar in 1816, sent by the British Serampore Mission. This increased Myanmar’s printing capacity and indirectly encouraged the infiltration of foreign literature and the growth of native literature. It also contributed to the continuation of the centuries-old poetic writing tradition. Translation of Chinese literature also developed quickly during this period.

Another important translation in 1869 was the translation and interpretation of a Chinese medical text *Chinese Medical Guide* (中国医药指南 *Zhongguo Yiyao Zhinan*). It was translated by Nga Satkan and Nga Lawtone, interpreted by the literary minister U New`. This translation also encouraged the advancement of the Myanmar medical community and had a significant impact on the advancement of translation. Certain traditional medical practices were passed down from the reign of King Mindon to later times. These practices were passed down to members of the royal family and, finally, to the general populace of Myanmar.

In summary, the publications in Myanmar during this early period can be categorized as travelogues and medical books.

2.2. The Colonial Period (1885–1948)

With the “Certificate of Appointment” from the Chinese Revolutionary League headquarters, Wang Qun arrived in Myanmar from Tokyo, Japan, in April 1908, and the Myanmar China League Branch was formally founded in Yangon^[25]. Through the *Guanghua Daily* (光 华 报), the Myanmar chapter of the Chinese Revolutionary League disseminated revolutionary literature and its concepts in Myanmar. From that point on, overseas Chinese in Myanmar started to hear about Sun Yat-sen’s revolutionary ideas. Later on, with the establishment of the Communist Party and the democratic movement, revolutionary literature inevitably made its way to Myanmar. “1920s movements were mainly rural, Saya San rebellion was conclusive evidence enough. The 1938-39 nationalism began with urban population, but the school strikes and the peasants’ marches and continued activities of the peasants, of conferences of the ABPO, and the enlistment of the fighters in the Underground of the 1940s showed conclusively that at last the urban and the rural, the educated, and the working class and peasant, became united in one single-minded movement and struggle. The BIA was the best evidence for it.”^[26] As a result, the introduction of the Chinese revolutionary literature served as an important ideological element in the elevation of national sentiment both among the rural and urban population. The *Yangon Daily Newspaper* first appeared in Myanmar in November 1921 and was subsequently renamed as the *Yangon New Daily Newspaper*^[27]. Chinese left-wing literature translators such as Thakhin Soe, Thakhin Aung Than, Thakhin Kyaw Swe, etc. were introduced to patriotic young people in Myanmar by Chief Editor Chen Shoujin (Burmese name: Tate Guan)^[27], through the Nagani Book Club. Thus, the earliest stages of development of translation of Chinese political and revolutionary literature were introduced during the colonial period (1885–1948).

Revolution can be used to implement reform and modernization, and literature also plays a pivotal role. It can be referred to as revolutionary literature. An important work in this category is Hantharwaddy U Ba Yin’s *China-Myanmar Revolution* (1904). Although this book is not a translation of a Chinese literary work, its importance lies in the fact that it introduces the four wars between China

and Myanmar.

Political literature depicts a political life that reflects political ideas and emotions with an ideal-denying nature^[28]. During this period, the translation of political literature by Sun Yat Sen includes Thakhin Ba’s *Sun Yat sen: Chinese Political Leader* (孙中山 —— 中国政界领袖 *Sun Zhongshan: Zhongguo Zhengjie Lingxiu*) (1929), Thakhin Ba’s *New Political System of China* (中国的新政体 *Zhongguo de Xin Zhengti*) (1929), U Nu’s *Three Principles of the People* (三民主义 *Sanmin Zhuyi*) (1938), and others. These Chinese political literature works are translated into Burmese.

On December 12, 1939, Myanmar Prime Minister U Nu (1907– 1995) participated in the visit of the Myanmar Friendship Delegation to Chongqing, led by U Ba Lwin (1892– 1968). After this trip, and owing to the fact that he is a literary figure, U Nu wrote a book about China called *Wartime China* in 1939. It is noteworthy that he also did an English-Burmese translation of Edgar Snow’s *Red Star Over China*. Its translation sparked a subsequent upsurge of translation in Myanmar, particularly of Chinese literature. The purpose of the first section of this book is to introduce with the history of the Chinese Revolution and to familiarize with the Chinese Communist Party. It is also referred to as the standard reference work on the Chinese Revolution. The translation of this book spurred yet another wave of translations in Myanmar, especially of literary works related to the Chinese Revolution.

The most significant translation was *Camel Xiangzi* (骆驼祥子 *Loutuo Xiangzi*) by Thet Toe in 1946. Along with the translation of Edgar Snow’s book, the translation by Thet Toe also served as the beginning of translating and introducing authentic Chinese literature into Myanmar. In other words, Thet Toe’s translation of *Camel Xiangzi* paved the way for future Chinese literary translations. The image of “Xiangzi” in the work reflects the life stories and tragic fate of Myanmar’s lower-class people during the period of mixed warfare. Thet Toe is also regarded as a pioneer in the translation of Chinese literature in Myanmar.

In summary, during the colonial period, publications can be categorized as revolutionary literature, travelogues, and pure literature.

2.3. The Postcolonial Period (1948–1962)

The Chinese literary development in Myanmar began

during the postcolonial period (1948–1962). Following Myanmar’s independence in 1948, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar’s Embassy was founded in Nanjing in the People’s Republic of China^[27]. Burmese writers started traveling to China as their friendship and cultural exchange with China grew deeper. Some returned from China and wrote books about their experiences there, while others translated Chinese literary works into Burmese. With the help of diplomatic contacts between the two nations, the scope of introduction and translation was further broadened. The translations of Chinese literature, accompanied by some introductions, gained prominence during this time. Works by well-known writers, such as Lu Xun, Lao She, and Ye Zi, have been introduced to Myanmar. Pure literature, revolutionary literature, and political literature published in Myanmar during the postcolonial period has all been integrated into the nation’s reform initiative. Through translation and introduction, a number of Chinese writers’ works progressively made their way into Myanmar’s literary canon. In any case, these translations paved the way for the flourishing and further introduction of Chinese literature in Myanmar.

It is crucial to mention, that Lu Xun’s translations did not survive the end of the Second World War because of the tumultuous times in Burma. The new regime was eager to learn from the experience of other countries to build a civilized system and cultivate a national character, as a result, Lu Xun once again gained the attention of the people. Right after Myanmar’s independence, Lu Xun’s works reemerged as complete translations.

Wang Jiaping’s *The Spread and Influence of Lu Xun’s Literary Legacy in Southeast Asia* (2014) provides a more systematic overview of the spread and influence of Lu Xun’s works in Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, and Myanmar. In the chapter titled “Myanmar”, he states, ‘In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Lu Xun and his works also attracted the attention of the Burmese literary community’^[29]. The spread of Lu Xun’s work in Myanmar began in 1953 with the translation and publication of Lu Xun’s *The True Story of Ah Q* by the Burmese writer Maw Win^[30]. There are several reasons why Lu Xun’s works were not available in Myanmar before the independence.

Colonial Censorship and Priorities (Before 1948):

1. Until 1948, Myanmar (then Burma) was under

British rule. Colonial authorities often censored or discouraged revolutionary or politically sensitive literature, especially works that promoted anti-imperialism or socialist ideas similar to Lu Xun. His writings were influential in Marxist and leftist movements in China, so the British colonial regime would likely have seen his work as subversive, which may have discouraged or prevented its translation or dissemination.

2. Language and Cultural Focus Pre-Independence:

During colonialism, education and literature in Myanmar were heavily influenced by British models. As a result, there was a limited Interaction with Chinese Literature. Despite a significant Chinese population in Myanmar, there was limited cultural or academic exchange between China and Myanmar.

3. Impact of World War II (1939–1945):

During World War II, Myanmar was a major battleground between Allied and Japanese forces. The country was devastated by war, making cultural and literary activities—including translations—nearly impossible.

4. Post-Independence Ideological Shift (After 1948):

After independence in 1948, as socialist ideology gained ground in Myanmar, there was a growing interest in anti-imperialist and revolutionary literature from Asia, as a result, Lu Xun’s works were studied and translated.

By the early 1950s, the newly established People’s Republic of China began promoting Lu Xun’s work as part of cultural diplomacy. This could have influenced Burmese intellectuals to take interest in his work.

5. The 1953 Translation:

This time reflects post-independence intellectual freedom to explore Asian voices, as well as growing socialist and anti-colonial sentiments aligning with Lu Xun’s themes. This time was also when good Chinese or English editions of Lu Xun’s work were available in Myanmar. In summary, Lu Xun’s works weren’t translated into Burmese during the colonial and World War II periods due to colonial suppression, war, and lack of focus.

It is worth noting that around this time, Dagon Taryar finished translating Lu Xun’s short story *My Old Home* (故乡 *Guxiang*) and published it in *Taryar* magazine. *My Old Home* is a novel that presents a morally and socially corrupt rural life in China. It describes the experiences and feelings of “me” (i.e., Lu Xun) returning to his old home

through three timeframes: the old home in his memories, the old home in reality, and the old home in the future. By comparing the old home in three different timeframes, the character Run Tu is used to express the social roots of the suffering of rural Chinese people's lives. After reading *My Old Home*, one can understand that a person's heart can change. As Lu Xun states, "Home was always like this", the only difference is that his heart has changed. Run Tu's heart has changed, but "home" remains the same. Both history and people's hearts are meaningless repetitions. Everything can change, and of course, people's hearts can also change. Who can blame Run Tu, and "I" can blame anyone, but "this has always been the case"—it is unchangeable.

Mya Than Tint translated this novel and included it in the book of world-famous novels because this novel immediately reminds people of the rural society before Myanmar's independence. At that time, Myanmar society was the same as in *My Old Home*, all people lived a very difficult life. It was a feudal society a few decades ago, which is now a history. *My Old Home* was published in 1950 and soon sold out; it has since been reprinted several times. Other works by Lu Xun have been continuously translated and published, including Myo Win's translation of *The True Story of Ah Q* (阿Q正传 *A Q Zhengzhuàn*) (1953), Mya Than Tint's translation of *Diary of a Madman* (狂人日记 *Kuangren Riji*) (1957), and Min Thu Wun's translation of *Night Journey* (夜行记 *Yexing Ji*) (1958). Peng Ding'an, a renowned Lu Xun scholar, famously remarked, "Reading Lu Xun is reading China"^[31]. Lu Xun's writings have taught readers in Myanmar about Chinese history and culture. Although he expressed criticism of the old society and longing for a new one, his works still fully showcase the traditional culture represented by various thoughts and conceptual forms of the Chinese nation throughout the millennium-long history of China. In other words, as he provides inspiration for people to reflect and contemplate a new life and society, he is still able to present the old life and society. Some of his works highlight China's cultural legacy and social history, highlighting the suffering and aspirations of the Chinese people. For example, *A Madman's Diary* (狂人日记 *Kuangren Riji*) critiques societal injustices and unwholesome conditions in China's feudal society. *New Stories* (故事新片 *Gushi Xinpian*) interprets

traditional Chinese culture and the real circumstances of the Chinese people. So, Lu Xun's writings have taught readers in Myanmar about Chinese history and culture. At the same time, the popularity of Lu Xun's works in Myanmar aided the growth of Burmese literature. During a speech at the Chinese Writers Association and other organizations "20th Anniversary Commemorative Conference of Lu Xun's Death", Burmese writer U Thein Phay Myint states,

Lu Xun has played a hugely inspiring role in promoting the growth of modern and contemporary writers in the Burmese literary community. As an example, in the process of constructing our new Myanmar, we will take on the literary task of Lu Xun. Lu Xun lends his pen to the cause of international friendship and peace, and we will do our best to consolidate friendship and peace, as Lu Xun has done^[32].

For example, Lu Xun's *The True Story of Ah Q* had a significant impact on Myanmar's literary community. Burmese writers have not only translated this work, but they have also emulated it. As some scholars have described, Maung Htin's 1947 novel titled *Nga Ba* is inspired by this work of Lu Xun^[7]. It is important to point out that Maung Htin's novel came later than the translation of Lu Xun's work. But it is highly possible that he read the English version even before the translation came out. In addition, *The True Story of Ah Q* is the first work by Lu Xun to be included in the textbooks for master's students of two Myanmar's foreign language universities, namely Yangon University of Foreign Languages and Mandalay University of Foreign Languages.

Lu Xun's delayed reception in Myanmar, where his translations only emerged post-Second World War, underscores how literary dissemination is contingent on historical exigencies. However, his eventual influence was profound: Maung Htin's *Nga Ba* (1947) explicitly adapted Lu Xun's archetype of Ah Q to critique Burmese feudalism under the colonial rule. The protagonist's moral victories and his tragicomic subjugation echoed Ah Q's, revealing universal pathologies of oppressed societies. This synergy between Lu Xun's cultural criticism and Myanmar's post-colonial literary renaissance exemplifies literature's role in societal transformation. Some Chinese and Burmese scholars have already done some research on Lu Xun's *The*

True Story of Ah Q and Maung Htin's *Nga Ba*. In 2021, Lu Wenbin and the author co-published a research paper titled *The Dissemination and Influence of Lu Xun's Works in Myanmar: A Case Study of Maung Htin's Nga Ba* ^[33]. This paper specifically examines the reception of Lu Xun's works in Myanmar, with a focus on how Maung Htin adapted Lu Xun's *The True Story of Ah Q* to create his seminal novel *Nga Ba*. In 2024, Zhao Jing's Master's thesis, "*A Comparative Study on the Artistic Expression Techniques in Nga Ba and The True Story of Ah Q*" ^[34], conducts a systematic comparison of the two works, analyzing their thematic concerns, characterizations, narrative structures, and linguistic styles. This comparative approach not only elucidates the shared and distinct literary strategies employed by Maung Htin and Lu Xun but also reveals the profound social critiques embedded within both texts. Through such analysis, we gain a clearer understanding of how realist literature engages with societal realities and human destiny, transcending national and cultural boundaries. But these two articles do not necessarily demonstrate how *Nga Ba* localizes Lu Xun's critique of feudalism to address British colonial hierarchies, a pivot central to Myanmar's 20th-century literary nationalism.

Many other works of Chinese revolution literature were also translated into Burmese during the postcolonial period. For example, Min Aung and Hla Oo translated Yuan Jing and Kong Jue's novel *New Heroes of the Children* (新儿女英雄 *Xin Ernu Yingxiong*) in 1949. The Burmese author Maung Maung Tin translated Zhou Libo's *Storm* (暴风骤雨 *Baofeng Zhouyu*) in 1951. *The Light of Fire Before* (火光在前 *Huoguang Zaiqian*) was translated by Thakhin Mya Than in 1956. Min Kyi's translation of *The Battle in My Heart* (战斗在我人心里 *Zhandou Zai Wo Ren Xinzang Li*) by Jin Kui and Fan Ruoyou was published in 1958.

Mao Zedong was a popular figure at the time in Myanmar, and many of his works were translated by Burmese writers. The list includes: Thein Phay Myint's translation of *On New Democracy: Mao Zedong's Teaching* (新民主主义论——毛泽东的教导 *Xin Minzhu Zhuyi lun: Mao Zedong de Jiaodao*) in 1949, Aung Linn's translation of *On the Sino-Japanese War* (论中日战争 *Lun Zhong Ri Zhanzheng*) in 1952, Gong Yaung's translation of *On the People's Democratic Dictatorship* (论中日战争 *Lun Zhong Ri*

Zhanzheng) in 1952, Hla Oo's translations of *Mother Sacrifice* (祭母文 *Ji Muwen*) in 1954 and *Mao Zedong's Stories and Legends* (毛泽东的故事和传说 *Mao Zedong de Gushi he Chuanshuo*) in 1954, and Thakhin Mya Than's translation of *On Contradictions* (矛盾论 *Maodun Lun*) in 1954. Since no political literature was published during the first two periods, the post-colonial era in Myanmar can be considered the beginning of such literature, which we can also call the "Political Literature Movement".

2.4. The Military Government Period (1962–2010)

The Military Government period (1962–2010) is regarded as the golden age of Chinese literature in Myanmar. At that time, the literature translations not only included Chinese classical literature, Chinese revolutionary literature, Chinese political literature, and travelogues, but also works that can be categorized under Chinese folktales and Chinese martial arts literature.

The translation and introduction of Chinese literature suffered greatly during this period, but it is still arguably the golden age due to the fact that it is during this time that a lot of Chinese literary works appeared in Myanmar in the forms of translations and other genres. Moreover, as more Burmese writers and academics traveled to China, they wrote travelogues based on their personal experiences and observations. Some of these works are: Nawaday II's *China record* in 1963; Maung Tar Pan's *A Journey to China* in 1976; Kyaw Aung's *Hong Kong Spring Night* in 1989; Dr. Maung Maung Nyo *Travel China Record* in 1992; Dr. Maung Maung Nyo, Htilar Sis Thu, Maung Su Shine, Win Phay (Monywa), Tin Htwo, Kyaw Aung, and other writers co-authored *The Road to Chinese Literature* in 1992; Maung Thu Hlaing's *Buddhist Tooth Relics and literature in China* in 1993; Maung Khin Htun's *China Excursion* in 1993; and others.

The relationship between China and Myanmar in terms of literary exchange was lively during this time period. It was marked by not just the frequent visits of Myanmar writer groups to China, but also an increasing number of translations of Chinese pure literature. Burmese translators such as Min Thu Wun, Mya Than Tint, and Maung Htin have made significant contributions in this regard. After visiting China in 1962, Min Thu Wun trans-

lated Chen Yi's *Seven Poems of Visiting Myanmar* (访缅甸诗章七首 *Fang Mian Shi Zhang Qi Shou*). In 1962, Mya Than Tint also wrote a biography of the legendary poet Du Fu after his return from China, titled *Chinese Scholar Du Fu* (中国文人杜甫 *Zhongguo Wenren Dufu*). After returning to China, Maung Htin translated three Chinese works of pure literature: Lu Xun's *Rise and Death* (起死 *Qisi*) in 1964, Lao She's *Embracing the Grandson* (抱孙 *Baosun*) in 1964, and Bai Xingjian's *Biography of Li Wa* (李娃传 *Liwa Zhuan*) in 1965. Moreover, two of the four Chinese classic novels have also been translated into Burmese, including Mya Than Tint's translation of *Dream of the Red Chamber* (红楼梦 *Hong Loumeng*) in 1988 and Tekkatho Nay Lin Aung's translation of *Journey to the West* (西游记 *Xi Youji*) in 1995.

Under the military regime, one of the goals was to improve the standard of education while also pursuing peace and development. Ensuring the development of children was an essential component of raising the educational standard of the nation. With this goal, Burmese people have started to pay attention to children's literature. Although Burmese writers have begun to translate children's literature from other nations, this article is primarily concerned with the spread of Chinese literature, and literature from other countries is not currently featured. Translations of old Chinese folktales gained popularity during this time. Chinese folktales are cultural carriers that present Chinese folk life and spread the emotions of the Chinese nation^[35]. The list includes: Win Maw Oo's translations of *Selected Works of Traditional Chinese Classics* (中国传统古典选 *Zhongguo Chuantong Gudian Xuan*) in 1965 and two volumes of *Chinese Rural Stories* (中国农村故事 *Zhongguo Nongcun Gushi*) in 1968, Maung Khit Htun's translation of *Chinese Fables And Anecdotes* (中国寓言故事 *Zhongguo Yuyan Gushi*) in 1992, U Moe Myint's translations of *Tales From Scenic Guilin* (桂林传奇 *Guilin Chuanqi*) in 1992 and *Chinese Folktales* (中国民间故事 *Zhongguo Minjian Gushi*) in 1994, Kyi Kyi Mar's translation of *China Stories* (中国故事 *Zhongguo Gushi*) in 1994, Nay Win Myint's translation of *The Three Men Who Smashed Their Earthenware* (寓言集 *Yuyan Ji*) in 1995, and U Moe Myint's translation of *Folk Tales From China* (中国民间故事选 *Zhongguo Minjian Gushi Xuan*) in 1999. With the help of these books, kids can develop their language skills, learn

how to communicate, become wiser, and become better at understanding and resolving personal issues. They can also learn how to appreciate the cultural heritage of China. Children's books are essential for teaching young readers to respect other people's cultures.

During this period, a group of Burmese left-wing intellectuals and authors was formed. Most of them were heavily influenced by Chinese left-wing literature. An example is Myo Win's translation of *Harvest* (丰收 *Fengshou*), which first came out in 1963. *Harvest* is an original work by Ye Zi, who described here the difficult lives of Chinese farmers since they were taken advantage of by the rulers. This particular detail of the story inspired Myo Win to translate the work. Since there is a similarity between the lives of Burmese and Chinese farmers during the colonial period, he thought that this book may encourage the Burmese people's desire for revolution because it is a form of revolutionary literature. More importantly, the Burmese readers will gain valuable insight from this book, i.e., the peasant revolution was sparked by a financial crisis, and for there to be a revolution, there must be communication between the government and the populace^[36].

Other revolutionary literary works were widely welcomed by Myanmar readers. This includes Myanmar Alin Sein Win's translation of Liu Shude's *Bridge* (桥 *Qiao*) in 1965, Taung Twingyi U Ko Ko Gyi's translation of Zhou Libo's *The Great Changes in the Mountains and Towns* (山乡巨变 *Shanxiang Jubian*) in 1965, Maung Nay Win's translation of Xu Guangyao's *Little Soldier Zhang Ga* (小兵张嘎 *Xiaobing Zhang Ga*) in 1965, Maung Si Thu's translation of He Jingzhi and Ding Yi's *The White Haired Girl* (白毛女 *Bai Mao Nu*) in 1966, Soe Myaing's translation of Mao Dun's *Midnight* (子夜 *Ziye*) in 1966, and Kyaw Hlaing's translation of Guo Moruo's *Revolutionary Poet Qu Yuan* (屈原 *Qu Yuan*), etc.

During the Military Government period, several political events occurred, including the "Myanmar Military Coup" in 1962, the "High School Questionnaire Sale" in 1962, the "Myanmar Anti-Chinese Incident" in 1967, and the "8888 Movement" in 1988. These events gave rise to publication censorship. But the translations of Chinese martial arts literature were not subject to review and could be published without censorship. On the surface, martial arts novels appear to be about chivalrous deeds and martial

performance, but on a literary level, this genre describes heroes, and their actual value resides in the history and culture that are the background of these stories. These masterpieces not only depict love but also various facets of human nature, with significant historical and cultural implications^[4]. As a result, Chinese martial arts literary works gained prominence, replacing revolutionary and political literary works. Interestingly, the three Chinese martial arts masters, Jin Yong, Gu Long, and Liang Yusheng, were made known to the Burmese readers during this time through translations.

2.5. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar Period (2010–Present)

Translation and introduction of contemporary Chinese literature has increased in Myanmar between 2010 and the present. This is due to the implementation of several Chinese literary translation and publishing projects, the Nobel Prize award to the Chinese author Mo Yan, and other factors. Also, the 1991 Nobel Prize in Peace award to Aung San Su Kyi made Burmese readers more interested in literature and other creative works. Publishing houses in Myanmar have also started investigating the potential market for Chinese novels, methodically releasing works by well-known authors. Contemporary Chinese novels have been translated and promoted in Myanmar through cooperative efforts between the Chinese government and the country's commercial operations. Thus, Chinese translation works have taken many forms during the Republic of the Union of Myanmar's existence (2010–present).

Previously, there were translations of Chinese literature done from English into Burmese. However, during this period, there were developments in direct translation from Chinese to Burmese. An important example here is the Burmese translator Taw Kaung Min, who translated the following Mo Yan's works: *Wa* (娃 *Wa*), *Wen Cheng* (文城 *Wencheng*), *Xu Sanguan's Blood Sale* (许三观卖血记 *Xu Sanguan Mai Xueji*), *Besieged City* (围城 *Weicheng*), and others.

Over 40 translators have emerged in Myanmar during these five periods, the main translators being Min Thu Wun, Maung Htin, Mya Than Tint, Thaw Kaung Min, Kyi Kyi Mar, Hein Latt, and others. They can also be considered the key figures in Myanmar's literary scene. Moreo-

ver, some important novels that were previously translated were chosen to be republished and are now being read in Myanmar. Ultimately, the process of translating and disseminating Chinese literary works in Myanmar, which has been briefly recounted above, proves that Chinese literature has become an important component of the different periods in Myanmar history.

3. The Dilemma and Growth of Chinese Literary Works Under the Government System in Myanmar

Despite the fact that Chinese literature persisted and evolved throughout Myanmar's history, it also faced a number of challenges, including the country's coup on March 2, 1962, which was led by General Nay Win. This administration instituted a system of news and publication censorship that forbade the spread of revolutionary and political materials within the country. The government also gained control over Sarpay Beikman, which has always been the country's primary publishing house. Daily newspapers and weekly magazines were exclusively published by the government during that time. Since General Nay Win's administration, the government of Myanmar has closely inspected all works of literature, particularly those criticizing and defaming the Socialist Party, the government, and scrutinized other works of literature for pornographic content. As a result, individuals who disagree with the government have no publishing rights.

In addition to the publication censorship, there was also a looming environmental and economic crisis during that time. In 1966, Myanmar's rice yield was extremely low, which resulted from the country's deteriorating climate. Despite this problem, the Burmese government still managed to export rice to other nations, which led to a shortage of rice in the country. Indeed, the internal situation in Myanmar was getting worse.

At the same time, China was also experiencing the "Cultural Revolution"^[37]. Numerous red books were widely circulated within and outside of China. Burmese-born Chinese students studying and living in Myanmar also started distributing Chinese red books to Burmese writers, wearing the Mao Zedong badge to "promote the proletarian cultural revolution"^[38]. In 1967, the government of

Myanmar issued an order prohibiting these students from donning the Mao Zedong badge. This order was published in the official newspapers of the country. The order stated that no student was permitted to wear any badge featuring foreign figures on campus^[39]. San Nyut's article titled *The China-Myanmar Incident*, published later in March 4, 2020, recounts that on June 22, 1967, Burmese-born Chinese students at the Chinese Girls' High School persisted in wearing Mao Zedong badges and distributing red books in spite of advice from their teachers. This gave rise to disagreements and conflicts between students and teachers, which extended to Overseas Chinese Middle School and Nanyang Middle School in Myanmar. On June 26, 1967, an event occurred that was known to be the "Myanmar Anti-Chinese Incident". The further development of the translation of Chinese literary works in Myanmar was severely hampered by this incident, which also had an adverse effect on the friendship between China and Myanmar.

On January 26, 2022, I interviewed Tekkatho Phone Kywel, the first martial arts literature translator in Myanmar who was also dubbed as the "master of planting the seed in in field of the translation of martial arts novels" in Myanmar. He recounted how another incident of "high school questionnaire sales" happened in 1962. As the college entrance exam drew near, U Yan Aung offered for sale samples of "*To Pass U Yan Aung*," which contained 14 questions about the upcoming exam. Interestingly, students pass the college entrance exam after reading only his book. Since then, the government of Myanmar has declared the following:

All publishers must register; copies of all publications must be sent to the Review Office in advance. The censorship system imposes strict restrictions on publications. The statement warns that any illegal act will result in criminal penalties, including up to three years in prison^[40].

This suggests that publications are subject to strict limitations set by the censorship system. During this time, Tekkatho Phone Kywel believed that he had to publish books on science or knowledge textbooks, but these textbooks also had to pass the Myanmar Ministry of Education's Review Office. Many professors under Myanmar's Ministry of Education are solely concerned with their teaching duties, having no time to review translation manuscripts. Censorship and the increasingly difficult economic

situation for consumers as a result of the socialist economic plan have led many writers to abandon their writing or translation work. However, it was also around this time that Tekkatho Phone Kywel began translating Chinese martial arts literature, such as Jin Yong's *Condor Heroes* (神雕侠侣 *Shendiao Xialu*) in 1974. The political coup in Myanmar, the anti-Chinese incident in 1967, and the strict censorship system implemented by the government resulted in a brief slump in the publication of Chinese literature after 1974. But the translations of Chinese martial arts novels became more popular than other literature. The popularity of these translated Chinese martial arts novels coincided with the initial wave of martial arts mania in Myanmar.

After 1978, the relationship between China and Myanmar was suspended, resulting in the diminished popularity and distribution of Chinese revolutionary literature in Myanmar. Two events, i.e., the "U Thant Funeral Crisis" and the "8888 Movement," that happened during the Burmese military administration strengthened the censorship of revolutionary literature. This means that Burmese scholars and writers dared not address revolutionary topics in their literature. If the novels they created or translated had revolutionary themes, they could not be published under the Burmese censorship regime, and certain publications that had already been published were also prohibited. In terms of monographs, the novel *Roadmap* by author Ma Thida, which shows Myanmar's genuine national problems against the backdrop of the 1988 Myanmar "8888 Movement," was only published outside of Myanmar in 2011. In terms of translation, Tekkatho Sein Win's translation of Zhang Lin and Shu Yang's novel *It's Best to Stand and Die* (最好是站着死 *Zuihao Shi Zhan Zhe Si*) was completed in 1968 but was banned due to the controversial themes found in it. Another novel, written by Jack Belden, entitled *China Shakes the World*, was translated by Mya Than Tint in 1978. It was only published in 2023, which is 45 years later. Moreover, Kyaw Aung translated the novel *Hong: The Story of Three Generations of Chinese Women* (鸿: 三代中国女人的故事 *Hong: Sandai ZHongguo Nuren de Gushi*), originally written by Zhang Rong. The publisher of the translation mentions that, "although Kyaw Aung completed the translation of this book on May 11, 1997, it could only be published in 2012"^[41]. This is also owing to

Myanmar's censorship regime over the years.

According to Myanmar's Ministry of Information's website, "the censorship system for all local publishing departments will be abolished from August 20, 2012"^[42]. Hence, in 2012, the books of political prisoners as well as numerous pieces of forbidden literature were completely unbanned and sold on the market. Many Chinese revolutionary and political novels reappeared in the Myanmar market after 2012. The Myanmar literary market began to overflow due to an overstock of books about revolution and politics until 2015^[43], when the People's Government gained office. However, some young people are too preoccupied with their academic and social lives to read literature^[44-45]. This is also one of the reasons why Chinese literary translations are declining in Myanmar. The Myanmar censorship system not only impedes the translation industry of Chinese literature in Myanmar but also impedes the development of Myanmar's publishing sector. Simultaneously, it lowers the reading rate of Chinese novels translated to Burmese readers.

Moe The` Naing, a journalist from The Standard Time Daily, interviewed U San Oo on September 10, 2019. U San Oo, the owner of Sake Ku Cho Cho Publishing House, expressed the sentiment of many Burmese people, which was about their hope for a better era and economic development after the "8888 Movement", so the market sales rate of various books was stronger than before. However, by 1999, Myanmar's economy deteriorated and there had been no improvement, making this period also a period of crisis.

In Myanmar, not just Chinese but also literature from other countries, was studied in relation to the current events. The next generation, however, did not have the chance to read as much as the older generations. This is evident throughout history, such as the revolutionary literature that most readers enjoyed reading throughout Myanmar's post-colonial period in the twentieth century, which has never been reproduced or newly translated and published. Cho Tay Tan Publishing House continued to revise and reprint the popular martial arts literary works of Jin Yong and Gu Long, translated by Tekkatho Phone Kywel, Tekkatho Nay Lin Aung, and Moe Kyaw Thu during the military government, but they did not have the same sales volume as the previous martial arts craze. While there were

several reprints of martial arts literature during this time period, no new publications were written. Although martial arts enthusiasts have newly translated chapters or sections in different types of media, such as Facebook, they have not been published by a publishing house or press.

During the post-colonial and military periods, most fans of revolutionary and martial arts works of literature were young people. There were bookstores everywhere in Myanmar's main and small cities, and many young people frequented them to borrow books. At that time, not everyone in Myanmar had a cellphone or smartphone. Mobile SIM cards were also very expensive, costing 2,000,000 kyat each. Hence, the majority of young people's free time after school was spent reading books borrowed from bookstores.

With the advancement of technology now, many young people in Myanmar prefer to read electronic books rather than printed versions. After Thein Sein became president in 2011, SIM cards were sold for 200,000 Kyats, making it affordable for almost everyone. Because every young person in Myanmar owns and is increasingly using a smartphone, their attention is focused on various media entertainment activities. Moreover, the electronic book business grew rapidly because of the low price. Translators are also relieved of the burden of publication approval, publication costs, and processing times.

Moe The` Naing also interviewed Myey Hmon Lwin, the proprietor and writer of Ngadot Publishing House. The latter stated that following the election in early 2016, the new government supported numerous forms of publication. In contrast to the situation in the past, when many writers were afraid to write about politics, this period saw a shift in the publication and translation of literature on political topics. Indeed, thanks to the support of the new government. Myey Hmon Lwin also mentioned that publishers anticipated electronic books eventually replacing physical ones. But it is surprising that the online sales of electronic books have stagnated and are even falling. This situation resulted from a number of factors, including some individuals sharing electronic books on their social media platforms to grow the number of their followers; there are also websites where people can download the PDF version of best-selling books; and there is a lot of free sharing of these files among book enthusiasts. It is noteworthy

that during this time, there are still no strict rules or laws governing copyright issues. Due to these different forms of free sharing and access to electronic books online, publishers and authors have greatly suffered. Bookstores have also considered reprinting older works that are not found online. Moreover, this situation not only let publishing firms suffer but also negatively impacted lending and tiny bookstores across Myanmar. Since 2012, tiny bookstores have slowly started to disappear. And by the end of 2019, both book lending and tiny bookstores will have completely disappeared.

Due to the advancement of technology, the youth of today are utilizing the internet in many ways, such as connecting to others through Facebook and other social media platforms, playing online games, and watching videos. It was also easy for them to learn about Korean culture, which has greatly influenced Myanmar in the present time. Since Korean is widely spoken in Myanmar, young people are drawn to Korean fashion and style, in addition to enjoying Korean films. Some adult readers in the country also found themselves uninterested in previously published translations of Chinese literary works. As people's interest in books declines, bookstores and publishing firms have suffered. Bookstores were not maintained properly due to the downturn of the book publishing industry, which finally resulted in their closure. For instance, the bookstores and publishing firms that published translations of Chinese literary works were in a difficult position and faced many obstacles.

Although the situation is indeed challenging, bookstores and publishing firms have also taken advantage of the possibilities brought by advanced technology. For example, they established and grew their market online. By reintroducing and promoting physical books on the internet, a stronger market arose in comparison to the past. This means that the market for physical books is expanding and recovering, resulting in the decline of electronic books. Moreover, due to the implementation of copyright registration for electronic books, which is complicated, physical books were preferred as a means of publishing literature.

During the pandemic brought on by COVID-19, the government imposed strict rules on the market, which also affected bookstores. This resulted in the difficulty of selling published works, including Chinese literary works.

Later on, at the start of the recent coup in 2021, the book market in Myanmar once again deteriorated. Since Yangon is the center of the new political regime and where most bookstores and publishers are located, the operations of different businesses and industries were interrupted. Both the pandemic and the coup had a negative impact on the people of Myanmar. The country's economy suffered dramatically, and the standard of living worsened. With the bad state of the economy, there is incommensurability between the rising cost of living and the falling value of income. Before the coup, the average monthly wage in Myanmar was between 200,000 and 300,000 Burmese kyats (1 RMB is equal to 200 kyats). After the coup, 1 RMB was worth 456-480 kyats. Books that were previously valued at 4,000 or 5,000 kyats before the pandemic and the coup have suddenly tripled in value, making the general public unable to purchase them and book lovers able to purchase only a few. As a result, since the pandemic and the start of the coup, some publishing houses and bookstores have closed, and others have not reopened. A lot of companies are using novel approaches to attract customers by putting together literary-themed events, building coffee shops together, and integrating other creative means. However, a lot of difficulties remain, especially the limited number of readers due to the unstable condition of the market and the rapid growth of internet usage.

Moreover, in this section, Liu Limin's observation in his article, *The Historical Evolution of Myanmar's Printing and Publishing Industry*, is worth mentioning. He states, "due to the low overall living standards and low income of the people in Myanmar, the printing and publishing industry has continuously reduced printing costs and book prices to reduce the burden on readers, resulting in rough paper and poor printing quality"^[46]. This observation confirms what I have mentioned above about how the books published in Myanmar are of low quality, which also makes it impossible to preserve some of them.

4. The Issue of Translators and Translation

Today, the translators of Myanmar highlight the idea that it is the duty of a nation to support them in continuously improving their skills. Since translation is important for the literary and cultural exchange between nations, it

contributes to their growth. As in the case of the translations of Chinese literary works in Myanmar, these became channels for advancing Chinese culture in the country, encouraging cross-cultural dialogue, strengthening ties and understanding between nations, etc. Furthermore, these translations were also beneficial to the advancement of academic cooperation and goodwill between the two nations. More readers are also drawn to Chinese works due to their distinct style and cultural components. Hence, the translations of Chinese works can increase cultural influence and help readers have a deeper understanding of Chinese culture.

In the past, the majority of Burmese translators used to translate Chinese literary works from the translated versions into English since they were not fluent in the Chinese language. This circumstance changed when more scholars went to study in China and returned to Myanmar, which has led to the rise of several young writers and translators. The problem, however, is that there are still few Chinese literary works translated, and the quality of the translation is not good. This is because the returning students did not really study courses or programs related to Chinese literature and translation.

There are other problems pertaining to the translation of Chinese literary works that are worthy of discussion. First, although there are Chinese literature experts who are fluent in both Chinese and Burmese languages, they lack the time and support to conduct translation projects. Second, Myanmar does not offer any translation training programs. As such, they fail to understand “the difference between culture and language, which is an important distinction to be considered during the translation process”^[47]. Moreover, translators must also meet strict qualifications, such as strong competence in both languages and adequate knowledge of their histories and cultures. The third problem pertains to more practical concerns. Not only are translators’ income extremely low in Myanmar due to the bad economy, but there are also instances where inexperienced translators may even cover publishing costs. It is also challenging to remain in this kind of profession. Fourth, there is difficulty in contacting the author or whoever is in charge of the original work. Their permission is important as part of copyright rules or law.

There have not been many translators of Chinese

literary works in Myanmar. In the colonial period (1885–1947), some of these translators are JA Maunggyi, Thakhin Mya Than, Mya Than Tint, and Maung Sithu. After this time until the present time (1948–present), a smaller number of translators has emerged some of the key figures are Hein Latt, Nay Win Myint, and Taw Kaung Min. One of the reasons of this scarcity of translators is the learning style in Myanmar, which is memorization-based education. Graduates and translators alike become mindless factory models when they enter the workforce. People were not taught how to read and appreciate literary pieces, and this means that they are not equipped to conduct translations. Another reason is the British style education that was adopted by Myanmar. No other university has established a Chinese language department with the exception of the National Defense Forces University and Yangon and Mandalay Foreign Language Universities, two reputable foreign language universities in Myanmar. Without attending Chinese tutorials or Confucius classes, students will not have the opportunity to study the language. However, Myanmar’s “British Style Education” has helped students to become more fluent in the English language. Because of this, the majority of Burmese writers and translators are fluent in English and translate Chinese literary works from English to Burmese. Hence, certain translations contain inaccuracies because of not reading the original version of the text in Chinese.

Even Burmese translators, who can be considered Chinese language experts, also encountered difficulties during the translation process. Since the Chinese-Burmese dictionary is incomplete, they will first refer to the Chinese-English dictionary and then again to the English-Burmese dictionary. In this case, layers of meaning are lost. There are also some Chinese-English software or applications, but they are sometimes inaccurate. Additionally, it is difficult to refer to other people’s translations of Chinese literary works because they were lost during the pre-colonial period of Myanmar, where there were a variety of political movements and coups.

Certain translated Chinese literary works are now solely kept in the Myanmar National Library. However, some of them are not available for loan. During the colonial period, the majority of Burmese translations were based on English translations. Because the original Chinese texts

were not consulted, these Burmese translations do not contain important details such as the names of Chinese authors and book titles.

Despite the fact that new translators are emerging in Myanmar, there are still few literary works being translated. This is the case not only of Chinese literary works in Myanmar but also of the literary works of other countries around the world. Also, the quality of translations has not improved. While there are practical and economic factors that affect the quality of translated works of literature, the educational system not being able to fulfill the demand for language competence required in translation projects is another glaring problem. All of these challenges are encountered by Burmese translators as they conduct their translations of Chinese literature. Hence, the growth of Chinese literature in Myanmar seems problematic.

5. Conclusion

The translation and dissemination of Chinese literature in Myanmar has been hampered by the country's several coups, censorship policies, online harm to the country's publishing sector, and scarcity of translators. Understanding the translation and dissemination of Chinese literature in Myanmar, is therefore, a complicated issue. In any case, it should be emphasized how important it is that we translate Chinese and other countries' literature. As Chinese literature has spread in Myanmar, readers can easily acquire cross-cultural communication skills and learn about the history and cultural traits of China. They will also acknowledge the conventional cultural concepts of the country. These translations also serve as useful resources, adding to the historical evidence of the ever-thriving contact between China and Myanmar.

Funding

This work was supported by the Major Project of The 2023 National Social Science Fund of China grant number [23&ZD285].

Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement

The data is unavailable due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Xu Yong for his invaluable post-doctoral guidance and mentorship. I am also deeply indebted to my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Lu Wenbin, for his unwavering support and scholarly direction throughout this research.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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