

2021 4th International Conference on
10/30-31 Taiwanese Literature Translation

Tâi-bûn Gōa-ék Gián-thó-hōe
台灣文學外譯研討會

會議論文集

Conference proceedings
Lūn-bûn-chip

會議主題 / Theme

文學外譯、交流與永續發展

Literary translation, exchange and
sustainable development

主編 / 蔣為文 Editor-in-Chief
Wi-yun Chiung

主辦 /



承辦 /



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NCKU Center for Taiwanese Languages Testing

2021 Tâi-oân Bûn-hák Gōa-èk Kok-chè Hák-sùt Gián-thó-hōe

台灣文學外譯國際學術研討會

The Fourth International Conference on Taiwanese Literature Translation

Lūn-bûn chip 論文集 Proceedings

CONFERENCE PROGRAM
2021 The Fourth International Conference
on Taiwanese Literature Translation
October 30~31

updated (2021/10/24)

第四屆台灣文學外譯國際學術研討會議程
 (若有更動，以會議當天公布為準)

Tâi-oân Bûn-hák Gōa-ek Kok-chè Hák-sùt Gián-thó-hōe

2021年10月30日 (六)				
8:30-9:00	報到 (領取資料) Reception			
9:00-9:30	開幕典禮 Opening ceremony			
9:30-10:00	主持人 Presider	專題演講人 Keynote speaker	專題演講1 Plenary speech 1	地點 Building
	陳麗君 (TÂN Lē-kun)	趙順文教授 (TIŌ SūnBûn)	台、日大學交流之實踐報告 My experience on academic exchange between Taiwan and Japan	88154
10:00-10:20	茶敘 Coffee break			
10:20-12:00	論文場次 session: 1			
	主持人 Chair	發表者 Presenters	題目 Paper title	討論人 Discussants
	楊芳枝 (YANG Fang-chih)	MA Sheng-mei	The Subtitle that Wags the Screen: The Untranslated and One Second's Cultural Revolution	楊芳枝 (YANG Fang-chih)
		劉素勳 (Su-hsen LIU)	英譯短篇小說/文學選集裡的台灣/ 文學 Taiwan/Literature in Translation--- Based on the Case Studies of English Anthologies of Taiwan Short Stories and Chinese Literature	楊芳枝 (YANG Fang-chih)
廖佳慧 (Chia-hui LIAO)		譯者的再「聲」: 由《腹語師的女 兒》譯事談臺灣文學外譯 The Revoicing of the Translator - On the Translation of The Ventriloquist's Daughter	楊芳枝 (YANG Fang-chih)	

		Yahia Zhengtang MA	(De)Queering the English translation of same-sex desire in 1990s Tongzhi literature of Taiwan	楊芳枝 (YANG Fang-chih)
12:00-13:00	午餐 Lunch			
12:30-13:00	台語白話字聖經手抄本捐贈典禮 捐贈人:蘇仲超長老 Donation ceremony: Manuscript of Romanized Taiwanese bible Donor: So Tiōng-chhiau			
13:00-13:30	主持人 Presider	專題演講人 Keynote speaker	專題演講2 Plenary speech 2	地點 Building
	蔣為文 (CHIUNG, Wi-vun)	作家 陳明仁 (Tân Bêng-jîn)	異時空 ê 台語文學語言 Languages in Taiwanese literature of different periods	88154
13:30-13:40	茶敘 Coffee break			
13:40-15:20	論文場次 session: 2			
	主持人 Chair	發表者 Presenters	題目 Paper title	討論人 Discussants
	鄭邦鎮 (TĒ ⁿ Pang- tìn)	李壬癸 (Paul LI)	Problems of translating Formosan native songs	江文瑜 (Wen-Yu CHIANG)
		林虹瑛	戒嚴下出版的日漢對譯《華麗島詩 集-中華民國詩選》初探 A Preliminary Study of the Japanese- Chinese Translation of “Hualidao Anthology-Republic of China Poems selection” under martial law period	江文瑜 (Wen-Yu CHIANG)
		吳淑華 (WU Shu-hua)	比較台俄「蛋」一詞之語言暨文化 意涵 Language and cultural meaning of the word “egg” in Chinese/Taiwanese and Russian languages	張宏宇 (TIU ⁿ Hông-ú)
王遠洋 (Yuan-yang WANG)		華文文學英譯者筆下的文化詞語翻 譯：文法翻譯法重探 Translating Cultural Words in Sinophone Literature: Grammar- Translation Method Revisited	李惠琦 (LEE Hui-chi)	

15:20-15:40	茶敘 Coffee break			
15:40-17:40	論文場次 session: 3			
	主持人 Chair	發表者 Presenters	題目 Paper title	討論人 Discussants
	康培德 (Peter KANG)	Thilo Diefenbach (蔣永學)	台灣文學在德國：以選集為例	陳麗君 (TÂN LĒ-kun)
		Pavlna Krámská	Discovering Intertextuality in Taiwanese Literature by Czech Readers	林蒔慧 (LIN Shih-hui)
		KWON, Hyeok-rae (權赫來)	The Study of Taiwanese Folk Tales and Fairy Tales Published in Japanese before 1945: From the perspective of post-colonialism and cultural communication	康培德 (Peter KANG)
PHAN Thị Thu Hiền		Translation and research of Taiwanese literature in Vietnam viewed from east Asian perspective: an interdisciplinary approach, combining academic and applied literature	蔣為文 (CHIUNG, Wi-vun)	
18:00-19:30	晚宴 banquet for presenters and discussants			

2021年10月31日(日)				
8:50-9:10	報到(領取資料) Reception			
9:10-9:40	主持人 Presider	專題演講人 Keynote speaker	專題演講3 Plenary speech 3	地點 Building
	蔣為文 (CHIUNG, Wi-vun)	Tạ Duy Anh 越南作家謝維英	新書《與中國為鄰》有感 New book launch: Neighboring China	88154
9:40-10:00	茶敘 Coffee break			
10:00-12:00	論文場次 session: 4			
	主持人 Chair	發表者 Presenters	題目 Paper title	討論人 Discussants
	蔣為文 (CHIUNG, Wi-vun)	LÊ Thị Bảo Châu (黎氏寶珠)	簡談漢源成語在越南文中的「越 化」現象以及成語翻譯的相關問 題 A Discussion on the Modified	BUI Quang Hùng (裴光雄)

			Chinese Idioms in Vietnamese and Problems in Vietnamese-Chinese Idioms Translation	
		TRẦN Thị Lan (陳氏蘭)	華翻越譯本中語詞與文風過於口語情形之探討——以大眾媒體及公家機關的翻譯文本為例 A Study of Words and Style of Writing in Mandarin to Vietnamese Text by Taiwanese Public Media and Governmental Agencies	BÙI Quang Hùng (裴光雄)
		PHẠM Ngọc Thúy Vi (范玉翠薇)	台灣文學在越南的譯介 Taiwanese literary works translated and published in Vietnam	TRẦN Thị Lan (陳氏蘭)
		LÊ Thị Duong	21世紀以來台灣文學在越南的譯介 Văn học dịch Đài Loan ở Việt Nam (20 năm đầu thế kỉ XXI)	PHẠM Ngọc Thúy Vi (范玉翠薇)
		PHẠM Thị Hương Quỳnh	Comparison of literary history between Taiwan And Vietnam	PHẠM Ngọc Thúy Vi (范玉翠薇)
12:00-13:00	午餐 Lunch			
	論文場次 session: 5			
	主持人 Chair	發表者 Presenters	題目 Paper title	討論人 Discussants
13:00-14:40	廖淑芳 (LIAO Shu-fang)	陳榮彬 (CHEN Rong-bin)	「入世」的文學，改寫的文學史：《台灣文學英譯叢刊》24周年省思 Worlding Taiwan Literature, Rewriting Its History: Writing for the 24th Anniversary of Taiwan Literature: English Translation Series	廖淑芳 (LIAO Shu-fang)
		李詩憶 (LEE Shih-Yi)	沃土在南方：試分析東南亞國家的台灣文學外譯現象—以馬來西亞為主 Analyze the phenomenon of Taiwanese literature translation in Malaysia	蔡惠名 (CHHÒA Hùi-bêng)
		ĐẶNG Thị Thái Hà	Waves of romance novels and the adaptation of Chiung Yao's works in Vietnam	莊佳穎 (CHUANG Yin C.)

		Salinee Antarasena	Regret Keeper and Marañasati	莊佳穎 (CHUANG Yin C.)
14:40-15:00	茶敘 Coffee break			
15:00-17:00	論文場次 session: 6			
	主持人 Chair	發表者 Presenters	題目 Paper title	討論人 Discussants
	張學謙 (TIU ⁿ Hák-khiam)	洪銘謙 (HUNG Ming-chien)	台灣戲劇在泰國的發展與展望 The Development and Prospect of Taiwanese Drama in Thailand	張學謙 (TIU ⁿ Hák-khiam)
		Ahim Tân (陳永鑫)	台語方言腔口 kah 相對應 ê 英語 翻譯方式初探 A Preliminary Study of the Taiwanese Dialects, Accents and Idiolects and the Corresponding Ways of English Translation	蘇鳳蘭 (SU Huang-Lan)
		林豪森 (LIN Hao Sen)	雙重他者之聲下的台灣海洋民族 文學：以《海浪的記憶》中法文 譯本為例 Tao's Taiwanese ocean literature in the voices of the Two Others: a case study of Memories of the Waves in Chinese and French translation	Ahim Tân (陳永鑫)
		蔡詠洳 (Chhòa Éng-iok)	Ùi Gí-giân Kéng-koan kap Bûn-hòa Chú-thé-sèng Khòa ⁿ Tâi-oân Bûn- hák Gōa-ék (1990-2016) lâi-té ê Tâi-gí Lâng-miâ kap Tē-hō-miâ The Transliteration of the Taiwanese Names and Place Names in Translated Taiwan Literature (1990 to 2016) In View of Linguistic Landscape and Cultural Subjectivity	張學謙 (TIU ⁿ Hák-khiam)
Lîm BûnCheng		台文文學外譯—台文筆會翻譯計 畫 ê 運作	林裕凱 (LÎM Jū-khái)	

			Translation of Taiwanese Literature into foreign languages: The Operation of Taiwanese Pen Book translation program	
17:00-17:10	閉幕典禮 Closing ceremony			

**REGRET KEEPER AND MARAÑASATI: NEW POSSIBILITY FOR
THE MARKETED PRODUCTION OF TRANSLATED BOOKS
WITHOUT THE CHAMELEON QUALITY**

ANTARASENA Salinee 唐美

Silpakorn University THAILAND Assistant Professor

Abstract

While the coronavirus pandemic has affected countless industries, with the death toll still on the rise globally the funeral industry, on the other hand, is thriving. In the case of Thailand, where deaths and aging population have long outpaced births, the business market size of the funeral business has continuously growth, dated as far as in the reign of King Rama V, and it is unlikely that this business is going to halt its great strides any time soon. This is because particular “death customs” are unique to Thailand's culture, in which funeral rites are the most elaborate of all the life-cycle ceremonies.

Before the pandemic, there was an inevitable transition from paper to electronic books in the book-buying market, and Thailand already experienced a boom in sales of e-books. From the consumer's side, this is due to convenience and price factors; from the publishers, the lower costs of paper, operations, warehouse and distribution. As a result, in line with the increasing number of smart-device users, the market for e-books in Thailand has grown consistently. The production of translated books is no exception. Nevertheless, there has been an exception to this trend in the case of Thailand, to keep a traditional paper version of one type of the book—a tribute memory book (a.k.a Cremation Book). Unlike other types of books, tribute memory books have never been replaced by the technology.

By nature, translating literary texts involves a process of cultural transfer that requires more than simple search for a semantic equivalent, but also the translator who are not only bilingual and bicultural, if not multicultural. Cultural are also among major factors that could hinder the marketed production of translated books. One translated book from Taiwan "Regret Keeper" (遺憾收納員) seems to overcome these challenges.

This study discusses the sales annual revenue of the funeral business and the growth of e-book business in Thailand and then analyses the factors how this translated book not only overcomes the cultural constraints but also fit in very well with the key concept of Thailand's display for final merit-making, *Marañasati* (mindfulness of death). The study ends with suggestions how this could lead to brighter future of the marketed production of translated books, especially from Taiwan authors.

Regret Keeper and Maranasati

New Possibility for the Marketed Production of Translated Books Without the Chameleon Quality

Abstract

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หมายเหตุ: ด้วยผู้จัดงานให้ดาวน์โหลดเอกสารจากหน้าเว็บไซต์ โดยที่ไม่มีค่าธรรมเนียมของเอกสาร

Link: https://ctl.twnku.edu.tw/conf/2021/lunbun/Salinee%20Antarasena_Regret%20Keeper%20and%20Maranasati%20dr%20maia.pdf

death'). The study ends with suggestions how this could lead to brighter future of the marketed production of translated books, especially from Taiwan authors.

1. BACKGROUND

Thailand's printing history in the kingdom started as early as 1796 by the Society of Foreign Missions of Paris (Société des Missions Étrangères de Paris, MEP for short), which had established a presence in the kingdom since the 17th century. In 1796, by Father Arnaud Garnault of the Church of Santa Cruz published “Khâm Són Christang” (Thai: คำสอนคริสตัง; literally, 'book of Christian teachings'), in which Thai language was romanised. The first Thai-script printing press was introduced in 1831 by an American missionary Dan Beach Bradley, who brought a wooden press from Singapore to Bangkok from Singapore and subsequently published the kingdom's first Thai-language newspaper, The Bangkok Recorder. Bradley also developed a Thai typeface that became widely used, and oversaw the production of many of Thailand's early printed works. Since then, local governments, and commercial publishers began establishing their own printing presses. Today, there are around 2,000 printing houses and more than 5,000 of printing presses companies, fully integrated, with paper manufacturing, graphic arts design, pre-press houses, various printing systems and post-press houses. The continual growth of Thailand's printing industry results from the country's climate itself which favours large-scale eucalyptus plantations grown in the country to supply this industry. National Forest Policy has also encouraged commercial plantation and reforestation of fast-growing trees, especially Eucalyptus due to its ability to grow successfully in a wide range of environments in most parts of the country. Thailand Board of Investment (BOI) also offers a wide range of tariffs for projects that meet national development objectives.

However, the notable potential in practical wood production did not coincide with potential growth of book production, and thus leaving enough room for imports of textbooks, magazines, special high-quality paper and other special printed products whereas the exports of Thai books translated from Thai language into foreign languages have never become a heavy presence on the bookshelf. The number of translated novels is even far less. The University of Rochester's Translation Database tracked the original works of fiction and poetry published in the U.S. in English translation since 2008 reported

that Japanese literature has led the translated work-count, with 363 books, followed by Chinese, with 254, and Korean, with 141. Thailand, however, has a grand total tally of five, the number far below those of the country's close neighbours including Indonesian (18), Hindi (12) and Vietnamese (9).

The world is a big place and undoubtedly, with translation, books will transcend boundaries. Yet, the translation of Thai literature has been off the radar, not even starting to delve into the struggle for shelf space and profit. Instead, some studies pointed out that Thai Literature struggles to find its voice and slim pickings for Thai translated works could be the result of the country's lack of grand narrative. Consequently, when Westerners look toward Asia for cultural sophistication they understandably focus on China, India, Japan. Additionally, literary diversity among Thai readers is also slim and because most Thai readers are often stuck with the familiar plots, books that cater to niche readers are not deemed to make as much profit and thus, are available in smaller number. To complicate this issue further, people who are fluent in both Thai and English are numerous, but very, very few are fluent in them in the literary sense, and even less are interested in literary translation work. In contrast, there are collectives of translators with perfect command of Mandarin language and unbound love for literary works.

1.1 Opportunities Abound: Trends Influencing the E-book Market Size

Fast forward to a few years before the start of pandemic in 2020, technical development and sophistication of reading devices that provide a similar experience to that of reading an actual book was the key factor driving the global e-book market. Thailand was no exception. With the adoption rate of e-book reader and mobile internet, the increased network speeds and lower mobile data costs, the public embraced the breadth and variety of reading choices available to them, making e-Books permanent additions to their lifestyle while maintaining interest in print format books despite the conventional carefully-calibrated publication schedules.

Digital education and immersive learning systems also have a fair share to stimulate the growth of the e-book market size. Major factors driving the mobile learning market size are growing mobile and smartphone penetration across the globe and increasing demand for digital education. This incredible continued growth seemed to

show no signs of slowing down, with e-book industry as one of the most lucrative investment and a continued growth trajectory in the kingdom.

1.2 Are Printed Books Really Disappearing in Thailand?

Publishers have always strategically expanded into all the markets and formats where readers want to find books. By extending their work as developers, producers and marketers of high-quality content to emerging technologies, publishers are constantly redefining the timeless concept of 'books' when new generation of customer needs easier access and portability. In other words, the publishers would scramble to meet this surging demand by transforming themselves into "content provider" to cater to readers' needs in order to 'read' in different formats.

Before the current Covid-19 pandemic, it had been predicted that the e-book industry would be seeing an increase through the COVID-19 pandemic as the COVID-19 pandemic would force people to stay indoors, and as people would be getting more time at home because of the lockout restrictions and the number of subscriptions would increase. The forecast expected a continued growth of e-books and an annual decline of printed books. In Thailand, bookstores were reported having gone under intense financial strain, with a huge drop of 25% for both magazines and printed books, and subsequently, leading publishing houses such as SE-Ed, Vibulkij, Naiin and Bongkoch started closing some of their retailer stores while shifting to increase their investment in e-books, along with the growth of Professional Generated Content (PGC) and User Generated Content (UGC) from leading e-book application providers such as COL (B2S and MEB), Ookbee, AIS Bookstore, Kawebook and Fictionlog. The best-selling categories for e-books is novels and fictions whereas professional books or books for education are still conventional printed ones. National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission (NBTC) also reported a significant increase of mobile and internet users in Thailand. Although the e-book growth is approximately 3% (THB 600-700 Million), the average number of e-readers in 2021 is approximately 900,000.

However, perhaps in the same way that the notable potential in practical wood production did not coincide with potential growth of book production, it is not unusual to claim that the potential in technical development and sophistication of reading devices,

the continued growth of e-books as well as an annual decline of printed books will not mature to the point that they could threaten physical books with extinction.

In reality, physical books in Thailand still outsell e-books. Unlike the mature book markets in many parts of the world where e-books claim their major price and convenience advantages, e-book purchase in Thailand was not a low-cost alternative to the conventional method of distribution or printed books. New-released works and Bestsellers are also late to be released in digital format. Additionally, when looking deep into the reading devices that first ignited the e-book category, the current range of e-book reading devices—including smartphones, tablets, and dedicated e-readers—has not delivered the quality long-form reading experience needed to supplant print. Other entertainment platforms such as youtube, Netflix and Viu, also have their fair share in the market. This is because e-books were introduced to Thai readers in a different way: In other countries, their readers might be familiar with Kindle, Podcast, or Audiobooks and thus familiarised themselves to enjoy longer texts or entertainment that requires longer time consumption, but in Thailand, it was “Mobile First” as e-readers familiarised themselves to digital entertainment of various forms through their smartphones. This has affected their familiarity to use their smartphones for communication which consumes short time, such as YouTube, Facebook and other social media platforms.

In short, the expected impact of the coronavirus pandemic and lockdowns actually appears to have hurt the e-book segment. More than half of Thai readers (63%) still purchased printed books and nearly half (49%) of the purchase is novel or fiction books. Perhaps this is the reason why most local leading publishing houses are implementing Omnichannel marketing as the current strategy in Thailand. This current trend coincides with the forecast from Thailand Knowledge Park and National Statistics Office in mid-2019, which reported the decline of printed book consumption and the growth rate of e-readers in the observation of reading culture among Thai readers (in 2000 to 2018) which could be continued to thrive in the following years, yet forecasted that the e-book sizzling growth would subsequently ease and the fear that e-books could affect the literary world by supplanting the printed works would not happen.

More interesting, one tradition that has long been so widely practiced in Thailand has also stepped in to gain some market share in this track: Book wreath.

While sending a funeral wreath flower is still a long-held tradition of expressing sympathy to a family of the deceased, in 2018 The Publishers and Booksellers Association of Thailand (PUBAT) reported a pioneer trend of arranging certain types of books as a funeral wreath for funeral ceremony, initially as a response to a huge decline in printed book sales in the earlier years.

1.3 E-book Reader Market: Covid-19 Cataclysm

It was not long ago that e-books were foretold as being the doom of the book publishing industry. The report, however, found tepid growth in professional e-books for 2019, and the forecast for 2020 shows declining sales based on COVID-19 disruptions. Although no one has come up with a clear reason for the drop, it is argued that limitations of e-reading devices and “digital fatigue” could be cited as causes of decline in sales of the format, as seen in the percentage of book buyers who want to spend less time on digital devices; and since consumers almost always have the option to read books in physical formats, they are indicating a preference to return to print. More readers seem to have lost ground in reading during COVID-19 disruptions, yet there is potential for young adult fiction and popular genres. Thus, as of now the arrival of eBooks is a little too soon for bookstores to be labelled as a flagship product. Now, things are far from normal and publishers are confronting a new hurdle: how to keep and regain the market share in this industry?

Launched almost at the same time of the incubation period of COVID-19 outbreak, Bibli publishing company and Kawebook, for instance, have been the popular houses of translated novel lovers for printed books and e-books, respectively. Kawebook reported managing around 10,000 to 30,000 readers daily and the translation rate up to THB 250,000 a month. Instead of keeping up with the challenges in e-book markets, the company looked for a fresh start, focusing on translating "mind-bending" novels. Although the translated versions of Chinese and Japanese literary works are infamous for being quite a slow burner, they have rapidly gained popularity in Thailand, now with Hallyu included.

While publishing houses might start seeing all doom and gloom for digital book sales, unique to Thailand alone, there is one type of literary works that comes out

unscratched in this phase of the calamity: A tribute memory book (a.k.a. Cremation Book). Unlike other types of books, tribute memory books have never been replaced by the technology.

2. Literature Review: Funeral Business and Cremation Book

Funerals in Thailand are regarded as the most elaborate of all the life-cycle ceremonies according to Buddhist beliefs, including birth, aging, illness and finally, death. Most Thais are cremated in accordance with a Buddhist ritual. Years long before the Covid-19 pandemic, the business of death was already expensive and booming, with approximately THB 35,000 million per annual. The more respected an individual is the more elaborate the funeral rites. Currently, the full-service funeral, from selecting the coffin to crematorium, could start as high as THB 120,000, which is insanely high when considered with GDP per capita in Thailand.

The callousness of this life passage has made the "a memento of the deceased," including Cremation Book, indispensable to the ceremony. This adds up into the expenses of the ceremony. A leading cremation book collector Likitponsawan (2015) claimed that only in Thailand the cremation books are considered as meritorious conducts for the departed; and hence, provided free-of-charge; in other culture, the biographies or the narratives of notable people are normally recounted by commercial publishers.

Cremation books are personal memorials covering either full or condensed biographies of the deceased and people related to them. Despite biographical information and obituaries typically written by the family of the deceased, the books also serve as a valuable chronicle of history and a rich source of literature and folklore. This notion has been popularised when Prince Damrong Rajanubhap became the head of the National Library in 1915. Therefore, cremation books of most prominent figures, if not all, have been well stored in National Library and Library Resources and Educational Media in many educational institutions. Wanliphōdom (1987) pointed out that cremation books are a treasure trove of historical records. Olson (1992) referred to Thai cremation books as a unique genre of literature.

The dawn of cremation books could date back as early as 1880, the royal cremation of Queen Sunandha in the reign of King Rama V. Since then, Thailand has

upheld the practice of publishing and distributing cremation books. That first cremation book of the country was the book of prayers, including Sutta Piṭaka of the Tripitaka Canon of Theravada Buddhism, and was distributed to temples nationwide.

3. Concepts of Impermanence: Death and Past Regrets

The idea that death is an inevitable destination to all human beings can only be relieved by the acknowledgement that such heart-wrenching day is something universal. That generally limits the choice of cremation volumes to the works of religious or literary interest that reiterates this acknowledgement of life. In the olden days, only aristocrats, the elites and the wealthy could afford the publication of funeral books.

As a way to say thank you to guests, a cremation book was to be given as a memento for each guest. However, depending on the budget of the hosts, the cremation volumes could be printed in editions of a few hundred to several thousand copies. The cremation volume of Queen Sunandha, for instance, was recorded to be made as many as 10,000 volumes. The cremation volumes of other prominent figures such as Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat and Khunying Viboonlak Choonhavan, were recorded to be made in a series of twelve and ten, respectively.

3.1 Death Presented as Innocuous (Maranasati)

The cornerstone of Buddhist teaching and practice focuses on the impermanence of all the constituent forms (saṃskāra) which are subjected to three marks of existence (anicca, dukkha and anattā) and death is just one display of these philosophical concepts of impermanence. With this notion, all existent things are transient, and instead of referring to death as “eternal life,” the question of death as well as past regrets has been approached as innocuous, a natural part of the life cycle. This is apparent in the chanting or recitation of Buddhist scriptures during the funeral ceremony, which reminds the audience that when not mindful to this inescapable truth, death can be perceived as an ultimate loss and essentially become a painful fact of life for a living being to suffer. Probably in order to share this concept of impermanence at the deepest possible level, this also explains why the distribution of Buddhist teachings or sermons has never come

to exhaustion, and almost always been the first choice for cremation books in this parting ceremony.

3.2 Maranasati Presented in *Regret Keeper* and Modern Psychology

It is not uncommon to find life-affirming stories from East Asian authors.

Regret Keeper is one among the many good examples that thrash around this undeniable truth of life according to Buddhism: Death and past regrets.

Buddhism considers that when pulling ourselves into memories of the past, regretting over our past decisions could only be self-torture; not to mention when our inactions also tend to be regretted. *Regret Keeper* focused on an unchangeable decision, one that certain characters have already made, and a painful one. Yet, this story fuels its plot by allowing one condition to occur: There is a post office that magically enables the communication, with a few seemingly arbitrary rules, to certain people in the past. With this trick, those certain characters, full of regrets, could 'travel back in time' and involve themselves in examining the past with their present self, re-evaluating their past decisions based on what they had already known. At the end of the story, their emotion of frustrated subsided after the characters acknowledged that when the antecedents of the actions they have foregone could still be rectified.

From Buddhist perspective, each regret is very individual because what each character's regret is based on is what matters to them, what they value: The attachment or clinging (*upādāna*). Casting the time-travel fantasy aside, when the characters could communicate with their past self, judging their past decision with the new information, not the information that they ever had at the time, they could reflect from what they had learnt from their past mistakes, which provides a sort of a guideline for their future behaviour, or 'new' decision, and which frees them from their inability to practice or embrace *upādāna* in their life.

Buddhism posits that a living being can obsess over past mistakes when ruminating nonchalantly on their own thoughts that no one can turn back time to correct past failure or regrets in order to build a happier future (present). Beneath this surface of phenomenological perspective of Buddhism, scientifically the Psychology of Regret also

confirms that when confronted with a bad decision outcome, individuals tend to blame themselves and realize that if only they had acted differently, this outcome would have been better. Yet, Buddhist wisdom illuminates this human condition further by using the concept of impermanence that as impermanence always manifests in time, whatever appears in time appears and vanishes at once. Even present time is ungraspable: as soon as 'present' time occurs, it immediately falls into the past. Therefore, it is pointless to grow attachment to any beings or even the transient nature of change itself. Past memory or regret therefore exists not to be overcome; but to be fully observed.

With this notion, *Regret Keeper* is a profoundly beautiful reminder that all that exists is impermanent and everything that exists shares this nature of vanishing. The concept of impermanence is cherished in the way that the lead characters could obtain their own equanimity when perceiving distressing thoughts of past regrets with a renewal equation.

Using a simpler way to elaborate this complicating concept of impermanence, *Regret Keeper* exploits the psychology of fantasy, a temporary escapism of self-hypnosis, to invite the readers to reconsider failures and past regrets through the eyes and minds of certain characters who initially suffered from the pain of their poor decision, so that they could fully observe that certain moment which binds them to the emotional pain of certain pasts. This refreshing and renewing design of memory is close to a novel BodyMind Approach in modern psychology called Holographic Memory Resolution (HMR), which empowers the emotional victims to become their own source of healing by accessing their painful past memories and helping them to achieve resolution of the painful emotions associated with such events without having to "actually relive" such experiences.

The truth behind this healing approach is that painful experiences in our lives precipitate an "encoding" of the overwhelming feelings, resulting in the storage of "trauma." When we encode a painful experience, we freeze our perceptions to stop the pain and each fragment of our encoded traumas contains a link to the original pain where the primary scene of encoding took place. Amid the encoding, at the moment of "freezing," the impermanence of pain has also become passive. Therefore, by demonstrating our capacity to complete the "negative" or incomplete emotional charge that was locked into the scene, with the necessary corrections, the trauma is accomplished, and we send this corrected image to re-encode that certain painful experience. The result is simple: When

we no longer hold the same emotional attachment to the original scene, we no longer bear the same attachments to the past.

In this context, *Regret Keeper* takes in some real life settings and twists them by challenging the physiological basis of human memory by allowing certain degree of “holonomic” constraints in which the author is acting as a facilitator to enhance the visualization and sensory access by triggering certain past memories and resurrecting the original feelings of the characters so that they could find the origins in certain trauma memories and resolve the emotions anchored to those past attachments, before ending up reframing the emotional content of memory and returning the focus of life to living fully empowered in the present.

Quiet yet still haunting, *Regret Keeper* does not need to rely on pitiful images or brutal representation of any characters to explore the lamenting time of past regrets even deaths; yet this seedy side of human nature has its obvious religious undertones as a suffering and punishment through the portrayal of certain past attachments as the chain of dependent origination of the character’s drawbacks. As the title suggests, the story has a propensity to grip the reader’s heart and squeeze, yet through simplistic yet effective prose in translation, death in this story is presented as innocuous and while the story does not deny that it is possible for the characters to suffer, once the characters have been able to release themselves from past attachments, then came the cessation of their entire mass of suffering and distress.

This book’s plot is reminiscent of *Maranasati*, one of the key concepts of human life cycle according to Thai beliefs. For Thai people, death can be simultaneously dark and beautiful; certain grieving moments too, each tragic and beautiful in their own way. Set against the backdrop of Taiwan, the author builds tension perfectly throughout the novel, making the reader aware from the first few pages that an examination of the darkness of the human conditions is about to begin. However, each story is not about what happens, and, indeed, very little happens. Instead, the author invites readers to explore an insight into the mind of each narrator. In every story, the narrator needs to find a way to continue their life as best they can whilst not letting their personal life past regrets disrupt their future. Sweet yet sad, with such storyline as backbone, the author also pushes the readers to question how far it is acceptable to “reset” the mind, a beautiful meditation on grief and loss, resulting in both heart-warming and captivating ending. What

makes this story even more fascinating is that through this fictional setting, the connection between the plot and the narrator's "new" life after the "reset" of their mind.

Last year, when the intense Covid-19 situation in Thailand was affecting the country's conventional funeral services, while a handful of translated works was struggling to make their way on bookshelves, *Regret Keeper* appeared as cremation books.

4. The Future of Translated Books as a Memento of the Deceased

Thai funerals are elaborate, with rituals following Buddhist tradition. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has forced the funeral business industry to change their size or scope of practice, or exit the market. Families of the deceased have to contend with the additional trauma of not being able to give them a proper "send off," as funeral arrangements change dramatically: While all possible steps will be taken to uphold respect for the dead, when the waves of daily Covid-19 deaths keep soaring and impending large-scale outbreaks is still imminent, the emphasis inevitably shifts to public health, with closed coffin, social distancing, face masks, live-streaming of funeral services or simpler services with attendance limited to immediate family becoming altered funeral formats across the country.

Before the pandemic, the publication of printed cremation volumes still enjoyed the growth in Thailand, even when the country's e-book business was riding the tablet and smartphone boom and the e-formats eventually supplanted certain types of printed books entirely. In this difficult time of pandemic, this unique culture of Thai tradition to distribute printed cremation books to funeral attendees still survive. Yet, new trend of cremation books started to emerge, arguably a painfully obvious choice to keep up with the pace of the pandemic death, the contemplation in this most meaningful moment has shifted from prepared manuscripts for physical book publication by the families of the deceased to the purchase of printed books already on the shelf—including Buddhist sermons or Thai Buddhism books with serious philosophical depth as well as literary works with the 'slice of life' theme or the consideration of each moment as both fleeting and astonishingly important to deliver certain life lessons.

Today, it is already an incredibly difficult time to put a book out into the world. In the case of Thailand, currently the COVID-19 pandemic impacts are causing novel

disparities in reading habits among Thai readers and are devouring Thai-style Buddhist funeral services, **even** forcing to delay or cancel the services in some areas. Yet, there are still rooms for cremation books, as this etiquette and custom unique only to Thailand is far from dead. Is it not the time now that translated books sharing this insightful theme of Buddhism should relish their increasing volumes and deserve a spot not only on the post-pandemic bookshelf, but a momento of goodwill at parting?

Regret Keeper has already proven that this is not impossible.