

FEATURES

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CTN: How it Started; How it Grew

An interview with Prof. Jane Lai

Part 2

If the **previous issue** was a recount of CTN's history from a broad perspective, part two of the interview features Prof. Lai talking CTN on a more personal level.

The Translation Seminar Series has become a signature event of CTN and has been attracting attention from students, scholars and practitioners in the field, both locally and overseas, after it is made an online event in 2019. Before your retirement in 2004, you attended every single face-to-face seminar held and sometimes even served as the moderator. A highlight of the seminars was the vivid discussions during the Q&A session. Could you share with us some interesting/memorable moments – of the Translation Seminars or of the Centre in general?

I am so glad that the pandemic has turned a bad situation into a good opportunity, to enable a fun face-to-face event for a relatively small gathering to go online and reach a much wider audience. In their earlier incarnations, the seminars introduced new theories to the audience, explored treasured minutiae in great works, gave a chance to try out new ideas, or shone a new light on recalcitrant problems to reveal them as the key to a new thesis. Naturally, many good-natured arguments abound, and surprises were many. Discussions spilled into convivial dinners at the Renfrew Restaurant downstairs. A rousing toast for a successful doctoral defense cheered up many despondent souls; and cracking a bottle, even of cider bubbly, in celebration made all the hard work of publishing a new book worthwhile. Students gained confidence and all shared the camaraderie in the stimulating, yet non-confrontational, probing Q&A sessions.



As the Founding Director of CTN, do you think CTN has fulfilled its objectives in the past three decades? (available here: <https://ctn.hkbu.edu.hk/our-story/>)

Though CTN never developed into a university press back-to-back with hundreds of translator translating the never-ending stream of world knowledge, I am content that CTN has done well. It has helped to nurture hundreds of undergraduate and many postgraduates who now occupy significant academic positions in tertiary institutions and the world of bilingual business. It has published translations, series, and research papers. More significant works led by the late Prof. Martha Cheung include *An Oxford Anthology of Contemporary Chinese Drama* (Oxford, 1997) and *An Anthology of Chinese Discourse on Translation* (Vol 1, Routledge, 2006) and (Vol 2, Routledge, 2017). The Drama Anthology is an unprecedented collection of plays culled from Beijing, Taiwan and Hong Kong translated into English, to mark, for future historians, the development of drama in these places at the historical moment of 1997. The Discourse Anthology is even more significant in that it is the first and only well researched discussion of Chinese translation, translated into English, and discussed in the perspective and style of contemporary Western translation discourse. Both these works show well how the CTN had worked with scholars in other disciplines and promoted their research and our own.



How does it feel to see the Centre remain relevant for so long?

It feels good to see the Centre survived for so long. It feels even better to see it remain relevant for so long, because it means neither the times, nor the Centre, nor our people have stood still.

What was the role you expected CTN to play in the context of Hong Kong or in the field of translation? Do you see any changes in that role today?

There is a possibility that English may play a less prominent role in Hong Kong, but other languages may gain in importance. New adaption may become desirable. It takes no prophet to mention that translation needs to see its own development in the rapid changes in AI.

What advice would you offer future directors of the Centre on sustaining the viability and relevance of the Centre?

People do best in what they know they can do best. I would not presume to guess.

If you could speak with the current president of HKBU on the importance of the Centre, what would you say?

I would wish the current president, the university and all the people in it, the best of the best.

Prof. Jane Lai with her awards – “Silver Jubilee Award – Distinguished Translators Award” (2009) and “Lifetime Achievement Awards” (2023), both from the Hong Kong Federation of Drama Societies.





A very warm end-of-year greetings to friends and supporters of the Centre of Translation! It has been my honour this semester to serve as the Centre's interim director following the impactful four-year tenure of Prof. Min-hua Liu from 2019 to August 2023. I would like to take this opportunity to convey my gratitude and appreciation to Prof. Liu for her tremendous contributions to the Centre. Her energetic leadership left the Centre in excellent shape, with a vibrant and well-attended online research seminar series, a much-enhanced social media presence, and a dynamic ongoing tradition of community consultation work in translation.

This semester, the Centre's seminar series highlighted the rapid advancements in machine translation while also underscoring the enduring value of scholarly research into 'traditional' translation activities, past and present. We were privileged to host Prof. Robin Setton and Dr. Siu Sai Cheong, whose timely seminars on machine translation addressed opportunities and challenges in applying this technology in professional translation scenarios. We were also delighted to host Dr. George Mak, who discussed Bible translation in early modern China, and Dr. Anna Ponomareva, who gave a lecture on the English translations of the Russian classic Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*. Overall, this semester's series was a testament to the multifaceted and ever-evolving nature of translation studies as a field.

With digital tools and methods gaining increasing prominence in academic teaching and research, the Centre was excited to serve as the key organiser of a full-day workshop on 'Digital Research Methods in the Arts and Humanities' with a particular emphasis on translation studies in early December. We were thrilled to have Dr. Julie McDonough Dolmaya from York University lead the workshop, captivating an audience of forty colleagues and research postgraduate students from HKBU and beyond. Her richly informative workshop sessions provided invaluable insights and inspiration for newcomers and those already acquainted with digital tools and methods.

As 2023 draws to a close, may I extend my best wishes to you all for a joyful Christmas and a peaceful and fulfilling year ahead. Do stay tuned for updates from the Centre on the events we have in store for 2024!

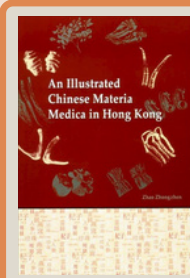


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Preserving and Passing on Chinese Medicine — Hong Kong's Timeless Cultural Heritage

The development of Chinese medicine in Hong Kong dates back to the city's foundation in the 19th century. Times have changed, yet the pursuit of well-being has not. Chinese medicine has weathered challenges presented by the external environment, and remains the go-to therapy for many locals. Over the last few decades, it has also gained popularity among various communities across the globe thanks to experts' relentless work in modernizing, standardizing, and promoting Chinese medicine.

Over the years, CTN has spared no effort in promoting this time-honoured cultural gem among non-Chinese speakers. Our first engagement in this regard was back in 2003 with the production of the English edition of *An Illustrated Chinese Materia Medica in Hong Kong* from the Chinese manuscript (《香港中藥材圖鑑》) prepared by the School of Chinese Medicine of HKBU, while the English subtitling project for the “HKBU Chinese Medicine Online (《浸大中醫在線》)” talk show on YouTube was completed as recently as August last year.



Available [here](#)



Available [here](#)

The latest project to which CTN contributed is the English translation of *The Fragrant Tangerine & Wellspring - Hong Kong Chinese Medicine Cultural Conservation and Heritage* (《橘井傳香 — 香港中醫藥文化保育與傳承》), a book published in September 2023 by the Hong Kong Registered Chinese Medicine Practitioners Association (HKRCMP) with the support of the Chinese Medicine Development Fund. Incorporating interviews with scholars, practitioners, charity directors, business executives and other stakeholders in the profession, it provides a comprehensive documentation of the Chinese medicine landscape in Hong Kong from different perspectives.

This community project was by far the largest in scale among those CTN has taken on in recent years. A total of six translators, comprising CTN members as well as students from HKBU Translation Workshop supervised by Dr. Janice Pan, worked diligently over three months to deliver the final output. Our undergraduate students were exceptionally thrilled to gain hands-on experience from such a meaningful commissioned task.



Available [here](#)

The ebook is now available for free, while the printed version will be donated to Hong Kong Public Libraries and local universities, colleges and Chinese medicine education institutes, as well as distributed to Chinese medicine organizations worldwide through the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies. As Prof. Feng Jiu, Permanent President of HKRCMP and the Editor-in-Chief of the publication puts it in her Foreword, [the book] “aims to promote the development and transmission of Chinese medicine culture through a candid, accessible telling of profound human stories, disseminated to the world through various channels”. The publication of this bilingual version is essential to “spreading the fragrance of Chinese culture around the world”.

It Started, and It Grew— a Personal Tale of Two Cities¹

By Prof. Min-hua Liu

It all started in the early 1990s. I was teaching at the then-newly established Graduate Institute of Translation and Interpreting Studies (GITIS) of Fu Jen Catholic University in Taipei. It was the dawn of professional training of translators and interpreters in Taiwan and GITIS was the first graduate programme established to carry out that mission. At around the same time, and across the Taiwan Strait, Jane Lai of Hong Kong Baptist College (now HKBU) was leading the effort to establish an identity for the field of translation in Hong Kong. She was about to found HKBU's Centre for Translation (CTN). It was a time of creation, and a time of excitement and energy, for both Hong Kong and Taiwan, and for the burgeoning field of translation and interpreting in the Asia Pacific.

My own connection with Hong Kong and HKBU also dates to that time. Eager for visibility and hungry for knowledge and experience, GITIS welcomed a steady flow of renowned scholars from all over the world. A small group of us at GITIS, all bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, were also ready to go out to meet the world. It was at that time when I first met Simon Chau and Jane Lai, already two prominent scholars in the field. Little did I know that I would one day become part of the programme—and history—they created.

Jane Lai and Simon Chau were visionaries. Jane envisaged a centre as “a window to the world”,² which also allowed the world to see through to discover translated works in Hong Kong “previously inaccessible to scholars because of the language barrier”. Simon's vision of a “professional oriented” translation programme was innovative and bold. I was fortunate to have met them when I started my academic career. What I also met were their dreams, deep devotion to the field, and a sense of fearlessness.

And it was this can-do spirit of the Hong Kong people that I inherited as the Director of CTN more than four years ago. The diligence, efficiency, and purposefulness of the people I have worked most closely with have never ceased to inspire me. Working on a team during the process of creating is a privilege. And I have had the privilege of seeing CTN grow in its international visibility—through its highly regarded international conferences, well-attended online Translation Seminar Series, its YouTube channel and this Newsletter. CTN is no longer “hidden” or as Jane described it, “nobody knew we were there nor what we did”.

Next year, CTN will turn 30 years old. It is nothing less than serendipity that this piece of mine is published in the same issue with the second installment of Jane's interview. This ‘meeting’—30 years after our first—will be part of a beautiful memory that I will bring away with me as departing CTN Director.

¹ Partially borrowed from the title “CTN: How it started; how it grew” of the interview with Prof. Jane Lai, published in Issue 6 of the CTN Newsletter.

² All the direct quotes are from “CTN: How it started; how it grew—An interview with Prof. Jane Lai” (CTN Newsletter 6, 2-3).





Unravelling the Complexity of Interpreting: Exploring Technology and Psycholinguistics in Research

By Dr. Nan Zhao

I am delighted to share with you the exciting research that I have been conducting as a Research Fellow at the Centre of Translation, Hong Kong Baptist University. I have a strong passion for exploring the psycholinguistics of interpreting and recently I have been integrating computer-assisted interpreting tools into interpreter training.

In my recent research project, I have been investigating the use of computer-assisted interpreting tools in conference interpreting training and practice. The incorporation of digital tools in interpreting has become increasingly important, and I am dedicated to equipping future interpreters with the necessary skills to thrive in the digital age. I have published papers on interpreting technology and developed a course on "Interpreting Technology" at HKBU to address this need.

As the principal investigator of a research project on innovative technology in conference interpreting, I am excited about integrating technology into interpreting education in groundbreaking ways. This pioneering project is supported by the *Fund for Innovative Technology in Education* from the Hong Kong Government, and it aims to explore innovative approaches to enhance interpreting training using cutting-edge technology.

I have also contributed to various publications in the field of psycholinguistics and language processing. My research on speech disfluencies in consecutive interpreting by student interpreters has shed light on the role of language proficiency, working memory, and anxiety in interpreting performance. Furthermore, my studies on syntactic encoding in written language production, learner corpus research, and the effects of directionality on interpreting performance have enriched our understanding of language processing and interpreting skills.

I am truly honoured to be part of the Centre of Translation as a Research Fellow, and I look forward to sharing more insights and discoveries in the field of interpreting and psycholinguistics. Stay tuned for more exciting updates and research findings from our team at HKBU.

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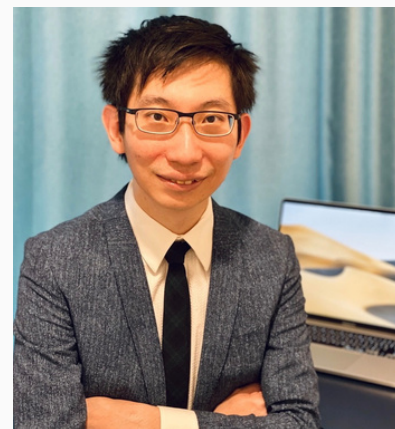
28 Sept 2023

Artificial Intelligence and Financial Translation

Financial translation has always been a service in high demand in Hong Kong as virtually all documents published in the financial sector are bilingual. The industry has steadily incorporated the use of translation technologies, such as translation memories, machine translation and terminology databases in daily tasks over the years. However, with artificial intelligence (AI) developing at a tremendous pace, financial translators are poised to capitalize on such advancements to deliver better outputs in a more efficient manner.

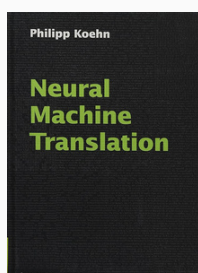
In this seminar, Dr. Siu Sai Cheong provides an overview of financial translation in Hong Kong and gives a brief account of the latest developments in AI. He then demonstrates four AI-driven translation applications he developed, and illustrates how they address challenges presented by the limitations of conventional translation tools to enhance translation quality.

To watch this seminar, please visit [here](#).



SIU Sai Cheong is an Associate Professor in the School of Translation and Foreign Languages at The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST). He is the Programme Director of the Bachelor of Translation with Business and the Master of Arts in Translation (Computer-aided Translation) of HKUST. His research interests include translation and interpreting technology, AI for the creative industries, computer-aided translation and natural language processing. He has also received public funds for different projects, including "Machine Translation of IPO Documents" and "A Hybrid Approach to the Translation of Government Press Releases".

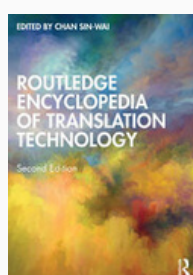
Background readings



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Siu, S.C. (2023). Deep learning and translation technology. In S.W. Chan (Ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Technology* (2nd ed., pp. 797-817). Routledge.

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25 Oct 2023

Annotations Still Matter: The National Bible Society of Scotland's Annotated Proverbs in the Mandarin *Union Version* (1933)

This seminar was based on the article "The Mandarin *Union Version*, a Classic Chinese Biblical Translation", published in a special issue of the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* in 2020. This special issue was guest-edited by our speaker, Dr. George Kam Wah Mak.

To avoid sectarian controversy and with the belief that the Bible was self-interpreting, Bible societies in late Qing China historically upheld the "Without Note or Comment" principle in translated Bibles. However, due to cultural and religious discrepancies, as well as their unfamiliarity with Protestantism, their Chinese audiences found plain biblical texts difficult to understand without the aid of notes or comments. In the second half of the 19th century, missionaries resolved to find a way to strike a balance between adhering to the aforementioned principle and maintaining the effectiveness of preaching. The National Bible Society of Scotland (NBSS) was the first major Bible society to take concrete action by adding simple annotations to explain words alien to non-Christian readers. The first editions of the annotated Gospels and Acts in Chinese were published by the end of 1899. The publications were widely circulated, consolidating NBSS's status at the time.

Despite the success of annotated Chinese translations of the Gospels and Acts, it was peculiar that no other annotated Books (Old and New Testaments included) could be found except for the Book of Proverbs, which was not published until 1932. Dr. Mak argues that an annotated translation of Proverbs came to fruition because of the favourable circumstances created by the Mandarin *Union Version* which became the standard biblical text after 1919. Other important factors included the availability of capable and trustworthy annotators, and Chinese people being accustomed to proverbial teachings. He cited several examples from the 105 annotations in the 1933 edition to illustrate how the background of characters, figurative expressions, and cultural differences were explained, before reaching the verdict that annotations made this Proverbs edition a useful evangelistic tool for Protestant missionaries in China.



George Kam Wah MAK is Associate Head cum Associate Professor of the Department of Religion and Philosophy, Research Fellow of the Centre for Sino-Christian Studies, and Fellow of the David C. Lam Institute for East-West Studies at HKBU. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society in the United Kingdom and the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, as well as Associate Editor of *Ching Feng: A Journal on Christianity and Chinese Religion and Culture*. He is interested in topics on Bible translation and the history of Christianity in China, among others.

Background Reading (Publication)



Mak, George Kam Wah. (2020). "The Old Testament Also Needs Annotations: The National Bible Society of Scotland's Annotated Edition of the Book of Proverbs in the Mandarin *Union Version*", *Journal of the Royal Society*, Volume 30 (1) January 2020: 73 – 91.

My Appointment with *Onegin*: Charles Johnston, Douglas Hofstadter and Stanley Mitchell



Anna PONOMAREVA teaches Russian, Practical Translation from English into Russian (Medical and Scientific), Translation in History and Comparative Literature at various schools at University College London. She is also an Acting Co-ordinator for Russian at Imperial College London where Russian is taught at the Centre for Languages, Culture and Communication. Anna's areas of research are Translation Studies, Russian Language, Pedagogy, Russian Symbolism, Comparative Literature and the History of Ideas.

To watch this seminar, please visit [here](#).

Alexander Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* is considered by many a classic of Russian literature. There are currently no fewer than 36 existing full English translations. Instead of delving into the translated texts themselves, Dr. Anna Ponomareva adopts the methodology of paratextual studies to evaluate the translations as she believes that paratext has its potential to influence the ways in which the text is received.

This seminar focuses on three translations of *Eugene Onegin*, respectively by Charles Johnston (1977), Douglas Hofstadter (1999), and Stanley Mitchell (2008), dubbed by the speaker as three "appropriations" of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*. In other words, the translators introduce their own renditions of *Eugene Onegin* to English-speaking audiences, such that it is impossible for the translators' presence to go unnoticed. Among the three, Hofstadter's paratext stands out in particular, as it forms part of his volume of the actual text. He went so far as to using Pushkin's stanzas to write the Translator's Dedication, fortifying his visibility as a translator or, one could argue, a creator. Dr. Ponomareva concluded that all three translators were visible, albeit to different degrees, in their translations, and in these cases, it is the translators, not the author, who makes the book appealing to readers. This runs contrary to Lawrence Venuti's theories on the translator's invisibility.

Background readings

Johnston, Charles. 1977. *Alexander Pushkin, Eugene Onegin*. Translated by [Sir] Charles [Heburn-Johnston [1912-1986]]. London: Scolar Press.

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Hofstadter, Douglas. 1999. *Eugene Onegin: A novel in verse by Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin. A novel versification by Douglas Hofstadter [1945-]*. New York: Basic Books.

Mitchell, Stanley. 2008. *Alexander Pushkin, Eugene Onegin: A Novel in Verse Translated with an introduction and notes by Stanley Mitchell [1932- 2011]* London: Penguin Books 2008.

Batchelor, Kathryn. 2018. *Translation and Paratexts*. London and New York: Routledge.

Genette, Gérard. 1987. *Seuils*. Paris: Editions du Seuil. [*Paratext: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1997) Foreword by Richard Macksey, Translated by Jane E. Lewin. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.]

Ponomareva, Anna. 2018. "Pushkin's Novel in Verse *Eugene Onegin*: the Emergence of a Key Russian Cultural Text in English". In Kirsten Malmkjaer and Adriana Serban (eds) *Key Cultural Texts in Translation*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins: 131-150.



Artificial Communication: AI and Interpreting



Robin SETTON is a conference interpreter (AIIC 1983–2020, freelance and staff), researcher, trainer, translator and author of dual French and British nationality, working mainly between these languages and from German and Chinese. He holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics (1997), and has been active since 1990 as a trainer and course designer for interpreting schools and institutions in Europe and Asia (Paris, Geneva, Shanghai, Taipei), and more recently, subtitling Chinese independent films. Publications reflect an interest in the interaction between pragmatics, cognition and culture in cross-lingual communication, and include a 1999 monograph on simultaneous interpreting and the co-authored *Conference Interpreting: A Complete Course and Trainer's Guide* (2016).

To watch this seminar, please visit [here](#).

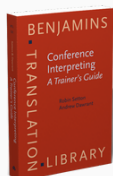
The landscape of machine interpretation was complex even before the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI), and the recent breakthroughs in this field have cast new light on the tension between human interpreters and machines. In this talk, Prof. Robin Setton delved into the challenges and nuances involved in the machine-interpreter interaction by introducing the concept of artificial communication, an attempt to augment or replace human interpreters with automatic systems. He based his analytical framework upon two views of language and communication: the AI-favouring code model, where language is a tool for information exchange and translation a code-based problem-solving task; and the human-favouring pragmatic model, where language is a means of persuasion and translation a multi-level process of inference and optimisation. He argued for the superiority of the latter in accounting for the richness and complexity of human communication, and warned against the potential impact of deploying immature or unsatisfactory AI-based systems on intercultural communication.

Prof. Setton went on to explore the possibility of human-machine collaboration, sometimes seen as an intermediate step or a compromise between human and machine interpreting. By examining the proposals and experiments in this area, such as pre-editing, post-editing, and re-speaking, he came to the conclusion that they were either inefficient, ineffective, and undesirable, or reflected a misunderstanding of, or disregard for, the nature and expectations of interpreting. He further opined that human interpreters have a unique and irreplaceable role in intercultural communication – and should never be reduced to mere assistants or correctors of machines. He proposed criteria and methods for evaluating machine interpreting from a human – instead of a purely technical – a point of view. These included a relevance-based evaluation, which measures the cognitive effects and effort of the translation. He called for more critical and ethical reflection on AI usage, and a more respectful and collaborative dialogue between the different cultures and disciplines involved in language and communication.

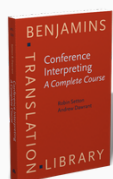
Background readings (Publications)

Relevance Theory and Interpreting:

Setton, Robin and Andrew Dawrant. 2016. *Conference Interpreting: A Complete Course*. (Benjamins Translation Library: BTL 120). Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins. (Pages 10-16 (2.1.4-2.1.8) How verbal communication works)



Setton, Robin and Andrew Dawrant. 2016. *Conference Interpreting: A Trainer's Guide*. (Benjamins Translation Library: BTL 121). Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins. (Pages 473-485 (12.2.2) Overview of Relevance Theory (and interpreting))



Technology and Interpreting:

Fantinuoli, Claudio. *From Assistive tools to Full Automation*. Third HKBU International Conference on Interpreting. Translation Centre, HKBU, December 2022.

Relevance Theory (more in-depth):

Sperber, D. and D. Wilson (1986) *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*. Oxford: Blackwell (2nd edition, 1995).

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Carston, R. (2011a) "Relevance theory." In: *Routledge Companion to the Philosophy of Language*. Eds. G. Russell and D. Graff Fara. London: Routledge.



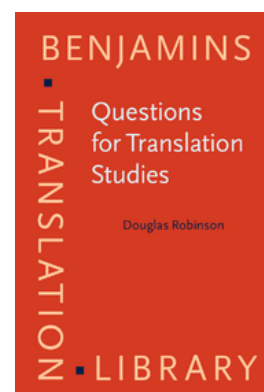
706 RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY FELLOWS

Jun Pan

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Douglas Robinson

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Mark Shuttleworth

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Chuan Yu

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Xu Zhang

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Chunshen Zhu

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Translation Seminars

1. Contemporary Sino-Tibetan Cultural Transfer: Translating the *Tao Te Ching* into Tibetan

Khenpo Dza Tsering Tashi (independent translator)
18 January 2024

2. Community Interpreting in Australia: Policies, Structures, Training, Certification, Industry and Client Needs, and the Profiles of Contemporary Community Interpreters

Jim Hlavac (Monash University)
20 February 2024

3. Topic to be confirmed

Lama Jabb (University of Oxford)
27 March 2024



Visit our website for details on the latest Translation Seminars!

<https://ctn.hkbu.edu.hk/activities/translation-seminar-series/>



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