

Recreating the Images of Chan Master Huineng

A Systemic Functional Approach to Translations of the Platform Sutra

by Hailing Yu

DESCRIPTION:

The book applies systemic functional linguistics (SFL) to the comparison of four English translations of the Platform Sutra (1930, 1977, 1998 and 2011) in the field of translation studies. The Platform Sutra is an ancient Chan Buddhist text that records the public sermons and conversations of the Chan master Huineng (638-713).

The focus of the book is on the image of Huineng recreated in each translation. The book integrates quantitative and qualitative analyses, adopting corpus linguistic tools such as SysFan, SysConc, and Wmatrix, with its methodology applicable in future studies. The analyses of the four translations are conducted from the perspectives of verbs of saying, personal pronouns, Mood and Modality, multimodality and evaluation, and textual complexity, which are within the ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions of SFL respectively. Both the recreating of images and the lexicogrammatical choices are further interpreted by taking the context of translation (Field, Tenor, Mode) into consideration.

The book provides an appropriate way to combine systemic functional linguistics with translation studies, highlighting the relationship between language, culture and translation. It also raises the question concerning the status of translated texts as the basis of scholarly research in the English world.

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ISBN:
9781781797969 (hb)

PRICE:
\$100.00 (hb)

PUBLICATION DATE:
01 April 2019 (hb)

BINDING:
Hardback

SIZE:
6 x9

PAGES:
224

ILLUSTRATIONS:
17 figs.

PUBLISHER:
Equinox Publishing

IMPRINT:
Equinox Publishing

READER INTERESTS:
Language and Linguistics



Distributor of Scholarly Books

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