

The Reception of Modern Biography in East Asia: How Washington's Biographies were translated?

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ABSTRACT: This paper examines how biographies of Western great men were received in Japan and China with a focus on Washington's biographies. It is shown that even when the same original text was used, the translation of Washington's biography in Japan is significantly different from its translation in China. In Japan, biographies of Western great men were first introduced by Joyi-ron Jyusha, a group of scholars who advocated "sea defense policy". However, during the Meiji period, biographies of Western great men were translated under the influence of the "historic view of civilization"; as a result, these biographies were often treated as success stories in civilized societies and were translated into novelistic writings. By contrast, in China biographies of Western great men were generally regarded as histories of Western countries and were often translated by preeminent scholars of the day, who tended to translate the original text precisely and with particular emphasis on historical facts and details. In both Japan and China, features that emerged in the early stage of the reception of modern biography had important effects on the establishment of the genre in these countries. Therefore, to understand the process by which modern biography in East Asia was established, it is important to examine its early stages. The results obtained in this study help to understand this process; they may also contribute to the research of an important subject: the establishment of modern historical scholarship in East Asia.

KEYWORDS: modern biography, modern history, East Asia, Washington's biographies, translation of Western biographies

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1. Introduction

This paper examines how biographies of Western great men were received in Japan and China with a focus on Washington's biographies.

By the late 19th century and the early 20th century, biographies of Western great men had exerted profound influences in Japan and China. In the late Tokugawa period of Japan and the late Qing Dynasty of China, societies in both countries were still based on feudalism, and neither Chinese nor Japanese intellectuals had much interest in Western history. For example, there was nearly no scholarship on Western history in Japan in the early 19th century. However, in the mid-19th century, intellectuals in East Asia, facing increasing diplomatic and military pressures from Western countries, started to seek knowledge about Western countries (Minamoto 1993). Naturally, the East Asian scholars started with gathering knowledge about world geography. During this process, biographies of great men in Western countries, whose names were frequently mentioned in geography books, caught the eye of these intellectuals.

For example, in 1845, Mitsukuri Genpo (箕作阮甫), a Japanese scholar of "Dutch study", published *Seishi Gaiden* (西史外伝), the first biography of Westerners in Japan. This anthology is a collection of the biographies of Washington (話聖臥東), Napoleon (那卜列翁), Peter the Great (伯德琢), Catherine I (加太理那初世), Mahomet (馬哈默得), and various other Western great men. According to Ozawa (1966), the book is a compilation of related materials gathered when Mitsukuri Shogo (箕作省吾), Mitsukuri Genpo's son in law, was editing *Konyo Zushiki* (坤輿図識), a comprehensive book of world geography.

In the mid-19th century, intellectuals in East Asia still had very limited knowledge about the history of Western countries. Therefore, biographies of Western great men served as an important source of knowledge for progressive intellectuals who were particularly interested in the establishment of modern nation states and the evolution from feudalism to modern civil societies (Liu 2007, Xiong 1994). Historical facts, notions, and thoughts described in these biographies were important tools to understanding the Western world. In this sense, it is not exaggeration to say that biographies of Western great men played the role of the earliest textbooks of modern history and modern politics (Zhu 2003, Dong 2009).

Moreover, when biographies of Western great men were first introduced into East Asia, not only was the content of the works new to the intellectuals at that time, but also the form was unprecedented. In East Asia, biography was the most important form of historical narration. The "official history" of a dynasty is a collection of biographies of emperors and loyal retainers (Moloughney 1992). Moreover, to prepare historical materials for the official history of a period, historians often first wrote copious amounts of biographies of people living in that dynasty. However, these biographies are very different from the biographies of the modern era in that the older East Asian dynastic biographies were usually very short and

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focus primarily on a person's birth, family, and career. Above all, the aim of such biographies was neither to tell a story of a person nor to draw a vivid picture of his era but to provide a succinct summation of the main facts and achievements in the subject's life (Kashima 2006).

After biographies of great men in Western countries were introduced into East Asia in the 19th century, intellectuals in Japan and China gradually recognized the differences between traditional biographies and these modern Western biographies (Okubo 1988). East Asian scholars not only translated Western biographies of great men but also started to write biographies for great men in their own countries using this new style. One notable example is Liang Qichao (梁啟超), who translated biographies of great men in Western countries, wrote biographies of reformers in his time, and called for a revolution of historical scholarship (Yang 2003, Xia 2002). Therefore, during the establishment of modern historical scholarship in East Asia, biographies of Western great men played an important role.¹

The biographies of George Washington were particularly influential in both Japan and China, as Washington was admired in both countries as the founder of America, a politician of high virtue, and a great military leader. In China, the most influential biography of Washington was *Huashengdun Quanzhuan* (華盛頓全傳) (1886), which was a translation of Washington Irving's *The student's Life of Washington* by Li Ruqian (黎汝謙) and Cai Guozhao (蔡國昭).² In Japan, there were approximately 8 different biographies of Washington produced during the Meiji period. Among them, *Tsuzoku Washington Den* (通俗和聖東傳) by Naganuma Kumataro (長沼熊太郎) was another translation to Washington

¹ In present-day China, biography is often mentioned as "biographical literature", which is generally treated as a form of novel. Nevertheless, biography literature can still be largely based on historical facts. An interesting case that well illustrates the complex relation between biography literature and history is *Liu Zhidan* (『劉志丹』). In 1960s, the publication of *Liu Zhidan* caused the downfalls of thousands of high rank officials including Xi Zhongxun, the vice prime minister at the time and the father of the current Chinese president Xi Jinping. For a study about *Liu Zhidan*, see Ishikawa (2010). See also Guo Jiuling (2009-1), Guo Jiuling (2009-2), Yang Zhenglun (2009), Gu Yeping (2004), and so on for studies of biographical literature.

² Washington Irving, *The student's Life of Washington: Condensed from the Larger Work of Washington Irving, for Young Persons and for the Use of Schools*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1870. The original text of *Huashengdun Quanzhuan* was thought to be Irving's *Life of Washington*, because Li Ruqian mentioned that the original text is "耳汾華盛頓所撰。佐治華盛頓全傳". However, after comparing *Huashengdun Quanzhuan* with various editions of *Life of Washington*, Morioka (2014) found that the original text should be *The student's Life of Washington*. *The student's Life of Washington*, which has 76 chapters, is a shortened version of *Life of Washington*, which has 199 chapters. *Tsuzoku Washington Den* did not mention the original text; however, through text comparison, Morioka (2014) shows that its original text is *The student's Life of Washington* too. For a detailed discussion, see Morioka (2014), which is probably the first study that mentions *The student's Life of Washington*.

Irving's *The student's Life of Washington*.³ As Li Ruqian and Cai Guozhao were in Japan when they were translating *The student's Life of Washington*, they had likely read *Tsuzoku Washington Den* (Xiong 2012). Nevertheless, although *The student's Life of Washington* is the common original text for both *Huashengdun Quanzhuan* and *Tsuzoku Washington Den*, there are many differences between the two translations.⁴

The present paper aims to examine the process of the reception of modern biography in East Asia. To do so, I compare biographies of Washington in Japan with biographies of Washington in China. Differences found among these texts provide important clues to understanding how intellectuals in East Asia in the 19th century translated and internalized modern biographies.⁵

Even when the same original text was used, the translation of Washington's biography in Japan is significantly different from the translation in China.⁶ In Japan, biographies of Western great men were first introduced by Joi-ron Jusha (攘夷論儒者), a group of scholars who advocated "sea defense policy" (海防論).⁷ However, during the Meiji period, biographies of Western great men were translated under the influence of the "historic view of civilization" (文明史觀). As a result, these biographies were often treated as success stories in civilized societies and were translated into novelistic writings. In China, biographies of Western great men were generally regarded as histories of Western countries and were often translated by preeminent scholars of the day, who tended to translate the original text pre-

³ *Tsuzoku Washington Den*: 『通俗和聖東伝』(上下), 長沼熊太郎訳, 為永春水解, 鮮齋永濯画, 南部利恭, 1873.

⁴ Throughout this paper, titles of Chinese books are translated into English according to Pinyin; for example, 華盛頓全伝 is translated into *Huashengdun Quanzhuan*. Titles of a Japanese books are translated into English according to Romaji; for example, 通俗和聖東伝 is translated into *Tsuzoku Washington Den*.

⁵ The establishment of modern biography in East Asia was closely related with the reception of Western historiography. Morioka (2014) examines the establishment of modern biography in China with a focus on the interactions among biography and historiography. For a study of biography in Japan in the context of historiography, see, for example, Okubo (1988). The present paper examines the establishment of modern biography through a micro view, which approach is complementary to historiographical studies.

⁶ Xiong (2012) and Pan (2005) are extensive studies on writings about Washington in the late Qing Dynasty. However, unlike the present paper, these studies mainly examine the figure of Washington created by these writings, with a focus on its influence on the Xinhai Revolution in 1911. In these studies, no particular attention was paid on *Huashengdun Quanzhuan* or on the reception of Western biographies. In contrast, the present paper aims to show the process by which modern biography was received and internalized; moreover, the present paper also examines the difference between the reception of modern biography in Japan and in China.

⁷ "Joi-ron Jusha" (攘夷論儒者) is also referred as "Joi-ron sha" (攘夷論者). Following Ozawa (1966), the present paper uses "Joi-ron Jusha".

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cisely and with particular emphasis on historical facts and details.⁸

Studies of biographies in East Asia in the 19th century are still few despite the importance of the subject. The present paper is probably the first study to directly address the



Figure 1: *Tsuzoku Washington Den* (Collection of the Toshoryo-Bunko)

⁸ In the 19th century, the boundaries among “novel”, “biography”, and “history” were much more ambiguous than they are today. Morioka (2014) examines the interaction between biography and historiography in the late Qing Dynasty. The inter-influence between novel and biography will be the task of the author’s future research.

question of how modern biography was received in East Asia. The results proffered in this paper may also contribute to the research of the establishment of modern historical scholarship in East Asia.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 is a general description of various biographies of Washington in Japan during the Meiji period. Section 3 takes a brief look at various writings about Washington in China in the late Qing Dynasty. Section 4 compares *Tsuzoku Washington Den* and *Huashengdun Zhuan* with the original text, *The student's Life of Washington*, and identifies the differences between the Japanese and Chinese translations. Section 5 discusses the implications of the results obtained in Section 4. Section 6 offers concluding remarks.

2. Biographies of Washington in Japan

It is difficult to identify the first article about Washington in Japan. *Seishi Gaiden*, published in 1845, describes Washington's life in one of its chapters in the second volume. To my knowledge, this reference is probably the first writing about Washington's life in Japan. Mitsukuri Genpo, the author of *Seishi Gaiden*, was a "Dutch study scholar" (蘭学者). At that time, through Dutch merchants in Nagasaki, stories about the French Revolution and legends of Napoleon's military success were known to some Japanese; however, detailed accounts of Western history had not yet entered Japan (Nomura 2001). Moreover, Dutch study scholars' main concern was national defense; their interest in biographies of Western great men did not stem from their curiosity about Western history but from their interest in military affairs in foreign countries (Okubo 1986).

In the Meiji period, interest in Western great men increased quickly during the dramatic modernization reform and more Western biographies were translated (Komiya 1987). Among these new texts, biographies of Washington in the Meiji period are listed in table 1.

Published in 1870, *Washington Gunki* (華盛頓軍記) by Suzuki Biken (鈴木弥堅) is the first detailed biography of Washington in Japan; the account comprises three volumes and starts from Washington's childhood.⁹ Suzuki Biken named himself as a translator, but he did not indicate the title or the author of the original text, making identifying the original difficult. In 1887, *Washington Gunki* was republished under the title of *Eiri Washington Gunki* (絵入華盛頓軍記) with newly added illustrations. The content of *Eiri Washington Gunki* is almost the same as *Washington Gunki* (1870), but Nengou (年号), the Japanese calendar based on dynasties, is replaced by the Western calendar; moreover, while *Washington Gunki* uses traditional bookbinding style and has three volumes, *Eiri Washington Gunki* uses

⁹ *Washington Gunki*: 『華盛頓軍記』(初編上下, 2 編上下, 3 編上下), 鈴木弥堅訳, 大和屋喜兵衛, 1870.

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Table 1. Writings about Washington in Japan in the 19th century

Year	Tattle	Author	Author of the original text
1870	Washington Gunki 華盛頓軍記	Suzuki Biken 鈴木弥堅	
1870	Saigoku Risshi Hen 西国立志編	Nakamura Osanao 中村正直	Samuel Smiles 斯邁爾斯
1872	Seiyo Eiketu Den 西洋英傑伝	Yamauti Tokusaburo 山内徳三郎	Edward Fraser
1872	Kinse Shidan 近世史談	Yoshida Kensuke 吉田賢輔 Sudo Tokiichiro 須藤時一郎	
1872	Beikoku Shi 米国史	Shibue Tamotu 渋江保	
1873	Tsuzoku Washington Den 通俗和聖東傳	Naganuma Kumataro 長沼熊太郎	
1873	Kakoku Eichi Shiryaku 各国英智史略 続編卷之上	Seki Yoshitaka 関吉孝	
1873	Seiyo Oshie no Tue 西洋教の杖	Kaji Tameya 加地為也	
1873	Meriken Shi 米利堅志	Oka Senjin 岡千仞 Kono Michiyuki 河野通之	George Payn Quackenbos 格堅勃斯
1876	Seiyo Domo Kun 西洋童蒙訓	Kaji Tameya 加地為也	
1883	Beikoku Kakumei Shi 米国革命史:自由軍談 初編	Honda Shozo 本多省三	
1885	Kaigai Meitetsu Kan 海外名哲士鑑	Kikuchi Takenobu 菊池武信	Robert Chambers 張罷斯
1887	Eiri Washington Gunki 絵入華盛頓軍記	Suzuki Biken 鈴木弥堅訳	
1887	Jiyu Kifu Washington Kunko Ki 自由旗風華盛頓勲功記	Nakamura Toyonosuke 中村豊之助	
1887	Sekai Eiketu Den 世界英傑伝	Uchida Yahachi 内田弥八 Shimao Iwataro 島尾岩太郎	
1887	Gashukoku Shi Chokuyaku 合衆国史直訳	Ashida Tukao 蘆田東雄	George Payn Quackenbos クアツケンボス

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Western hardcover bookbinding and has only one volume.¹⁰

Saigoku Risshi Hen (西国立志編) by Nakamura Masanao (中村正直) was also published in 1870. The original text is Samuel Smiles's *Self-Help*. While not a biography, this book successfully disseminated the image of the self-made Western great man among the



Figure 2: Drawing of a monument in honor of Washington (華盛頓が芳名を表す碑の図) in *Tsuzoku Washington Gunki* (Collection of the Toshoryo-Bunko)

¹⁰ *Eiri Washington Gunki*: 『絵入華盛頓軍記』, 東洋漁人編, 清輝閣, 1887.

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Japanese; thus, it not only had great influence at the time but also affected the style of biographies in later years (Okubo 1988).

In 1872, *Seiyo Eiketsu Den* (西洋英傑伝) by Yamauchi Tokusaburo (山内徳三郎), a translation to Edward Fraser's book, was published. The fourth volume of *Seiyo Eiketsu Den* includes *America Daitoryo Washington No Den* (亜墨利加大統領華盛頓之伝), which is a biography of Washington.

In 1873, *Tsuzoku Washington Den* (通俗和聖東伝) by Naganuma Kumataro (長沼熊太郎) was published. Naganuma Kumataro mentioned that this book is a translation, but he did not give the title or the name of author of the original text. According to the introduction of this book, Naganuma Kumataro planned to publish 40 volumes; however, only the first and the second volume are currently extant, and it is not clear whether the other volumes were ever published.

In 1887, *Jiyukifu Washington Kunko Ki* (自由旗風華盛頓勲功記) by Nakamura Toyonosuke (中村豊之助) was published.

The biographies of Washington mentioned above were published during the Meiji period and were all translations of foreign books. Nevertheless, except for *Seiyo Eiketsu Den*, where Yamauchi Tokusaburo mentioned the title of the original text, none of the other biographies provided identifying information about the original texts.

3. Biographies of Washington in China

This section will examine biographies of Washington in China. Table 2 is a list of writings about Washington in the late Qing Dynasty, including biographies, geography books, and history books.¹¹

According to Xiong (2012), the first biography of Washington in China is *Huashengdun Yanxing Zuilue* (華盛頓言行最略), which appeared in *Dongxiyang Kao Meiyue Tongji Zhuan* (東西洋考每月統記伝), a periodical issued by foreign missionaries, in 1838. After that, Wei Yuan's (魏源) *Haiguo Tuzhi* (海国図志), Liang Tingnan's (梁廷枏) *Heshengguo Shuo* (合省国説), and various other books mentioned Washington's achievements and his important role in American history. After Chinese intellectuals gained a better understanding of American history, they showed more interest in Washington, who was uniformly described as the founder of the United States and a great leader with high virtue (Xiong 2012, Fang 2005).

Among these writings, *Huashengdun Quanzhuan* (華盛頓全伝), published in 1886, is the first detailed biography of Washington in China. The work is a translation of Washington Irving's *The student's Life of Washington* by Li Ruqian (黎汝謙) and Cai Guozhao (蔡国昭). It differs from other writings about Washington in many ways. First, in contrast to other

¹¹ Table 2 is a part of a table in Xiong (2012).

Table 2. Writings about Washington in China in the 19th century

Year	Tattle	Author	Author of the original text
1838	Huashengdun Yanxing Zuilue 華盛頓言行最略		
1838	Meilige Heshengguo Zhilue 美理哥合省国志略	Kao Liwen 高理文	Bai Zhiwen 裨治文
1844	Yinghuan Kaolue 瀛寰考略	Xu Jiyu 徐繼畬	
1844	Heshengguo Shuo 合省国說	Liang tingnan 梁廷枏	
1848	Yinghuan Zhilue 瀛寰志略	Xu Jiyu 徐繼畬	
1852	Haiguo Tuzhi 海国图志	Wei Yuan 魏源	
1855	Shaonian Washingtun Xinglue 少年華盛頓行略		
1857	Huashengdun Zhuan 華盛頓傳	Jiang Dunfu 蔣敦復	
1874	Milijian Zhi 米利堅志	Oka Senjin 岡千仞 Kono Michiyuki 河野通之	Quackenbos 格堅勃斯
1881	Huashengdun Xiaozhuan 華盛頓小傳		
1882	Wanguo Tongjian 万国通鑒	Xie Weilou 謝衛樓	
1886	Huashengdun Quanzhuan 華盛頓全傳	Li Ruqian 黎汝謙 Cai Guozhao 蔡国昭	Washington Irving 洱汾·華盛頓

writings that are merely short introductions to Washington, *Huashengdun Quanzhuan* is a full-length biography that counts 97 chapters. At the time of this biography's publication, books in this style were very rare in China, and such a biography had never before been seen. Secondly, as discussed in the sections below, the translation in *Huashengdun Quanzhuan* is

very precise, another rarity for the time. In many senses, *Huashengdun Quanzhuan* is the first modern biography in China.

Li Ruqian, the main author of *Huashengdun Quanzhuan*, was a diplomat and a niece of Li Shuchang (黎庶昌), a famous diplomat in the late Qing Dynasty. In June 1882, Li Ruqian came to Japan on the staff of Li Shuchang and stayed in Japan until 1884 as the consul in Kobe. In 1887, Li Ruqian journeyed to Japan again and stayed for three years as the consul in Yokohama. Li Ruqian associated with Kang Youwei (康有為) and Liang Qichao and supported their Bianfa Movement (變法運動).

In 1896, Chapters 1 to 9 of *Huashengdun Quanzhuan*, was reprinted as a serial in *Shiwubao* (時務報) from volume 1 to volume 11 under the title of *Huashengdun Zhuan* (華盛頓傳). Edited by Liang Qichao and Wang Kangnian (汪康年), *Shiwubao* was an influential publication advocating for the Bianfa Movement. It is well known that Liang Qichao, who called for a revolution of historical scholarship (史學革命), was one of the founders of modern historical scholarship in China (Matsuo 1999). He was also the creator of modern biography in China (Xia 2002), for he not only translated many biographies of Western great men but also wrote many biographies himself, including *Biography of Li Hongzhang: A History of Important Events in China in 40 Years* (李鴻章: 中國四十年来大事記). Hence, reprinting *Huashengdun Quanzhuan* in *Shiwubao* could not have been a coincidence; Liang Qichao must have recognized the importance of *Huashengdun Quanzhuan*.

4. Comparisons among *Tsuzoku Washington Den*, *Huashengdun Zhuan*, and *The student's Life of Washington*

In the introduction of *Huashengdun Zhuan*, Li Ruqian explained why he chose to translate Washington Irving's *The student's Life of Washington*.

華盛頓者。合衆國開創之君也。泰西人士。數近古豪傑、必稱華盛頓拿破崙二人。壬午春。汝謙隨使外洋。與彼都人士。議論今古。涉獵繙譯諸書籍。聞華盛頓名。而苦無以考其生平事跡。徧求諸書肆。迄未之得。其年六月。汝謙忝任日本神戶理事官。事少公閒。繙譯多暇。廼命譯官蔡君國昭。購得近代合衆國學士耳汾華盛頓所撰。佐治華盛頓全傳。閱其書詳實簡潔。西人多稱之。遂令蔡君按日繙譯。凡三年而畢完。

Washington was the first president of the United States. Westerns often make mention of Washington and Napoleon as the greatest men in recent history. In the spring of 1882, I joined a diplomatic trip to overseas. In conversations with people there about ancient and modern history, several translated books were mentioned. I knew Washington's name, but did not have the materials to study of his life and work. I looked for related books in bookstores but could not find one. In June, I was assigned to the consulate in Kobe, Japan, where there was not much work and translators had plenty of spare time. So I asked Cai Guozhao, a translator in the consulate, to buy

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a copy of the biography of George Washington written by American scholar Washington Irving. I read this book and found it to be comprehensive and concise, which was highly evaluated by many westerners. Therefore, I ordered Mr. Cai to translate it day by day. It took us three years to finish the translation.

That is, he knew that Washington was the founder of the United States but could not find a biography of Washington. During his stay in Japan as the consul in Kobe, he finally obtained *The student's Life of Washington* and found it to be an excellent biography. In the three years that followed, he translated this book into Chinese with the help of Cai Guozhao, also on the staff of the consul in Kobe,

In Japan, biographies of Washington published in the Meiji period did not mention Washington Irving's *The student's Life of Washington*; hence, it was thought that there was no translation of the book at that time. However, given that Li Ruqian bought this book in Japan, it is quite possible that some Japanese intellectuals at that time may have read and translated *The student's Life of Washington* as well. To substantiate this conjecture, I compared the texts listed in Table 1 with *The student's Life of Washington* and found that Naganuma Kumatarou's *Tsuzoku Washington Den* is very likely a translation of *The student's Life of Washington*. Detailed discussion on this issue is provided in another paper. Below, I compare *Tsuzoku Washington Den*, *Huashengdun Zhuan*, and *The student's Life of Washington* by means of some examples. I will show that although both translations are generally faithful to the original text, some interesting differences exist between the two translations, indicating that Japan and China received modern biography in different ways.

4.1 Descriptions of Washington's birth and family

First, we compare the descriptions of Washington's birth in *The student's Life of Washington*, *Tsuzoku Washington Den*, and *Huashengdun Zhuan*.

(*The student's Life of Washington*, Chapter I)

On the 6th of March, 1730, he married in second nuptials, Mary, the daughter of Colonel Ball, a young and beautiful girl, said to be the belle of the Northern Neck. By her he had four sons, George, Samuel, John Augustine, and Charles; and two daughters, Elizabeth, or Betty, as she was commonly called, and Mildred, who died in infancy.

George, the eldest, the subject of this biography, was born on the 22d of February (11th, O. S.), 1732, in the homestead on Bridges Creek.

(*Tsuzoku Washington Den*, Chapter 1)

尚不幸にして其母も。一千七百二十八年十一月廿四日に。壮年も過で天死しかば。夫より三稔すぎで後。古呂根留辺留といふ者の女兒。麻利為となん喚るる処女を。後妻に娶

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りしに。這は一郡に双びなきまで。美人の聞へ高かりしかども。父の教訓に厳なりけん。
 常に深窓の裡を出ず。婦女一通の業は更なり。文筆の道も拙からず。然ば此家に嫁する
 に及びて。夫に仕へて操正しく。前妻の子を寵愛しむ事。咱が産の子に異なる事なく。
 奴婢等をさへ恤みつかひて。宜くその家を納むるうち。此麻利為の腹にも又。男女六個の
 子を設けぬ。其一を是於留慈といふ。次を佐美由留。次を慈與無阿於具師智由無。次を
 智阿礼須とて。此四個は男子なり。又一女の名を恵利佐辺須といへど平生には辺低恵と
 喚べるとぞ。其次の女子をば麻伊留登留登と名号しが。這は幼稚て死せりといふ。偕本伝
 の主とする所の彼は於留慈は。一千七百三十二年二月廿二日を誕辰にして。部羅伊慈苦
 礼江苦の家に生れたり。

Unfortunately, on November 24th, 1728, their mother died before reaching middle age. After three years, Washington's father got remarried to Colonel Ball's daughter Mary. She was the most beautiful woman in the county; however, following her father's teaching, she always stayed at home. Needless to say, she was good at doing woman's work; moreover, she was good at reading and writing. After getting married, she served her husband well, loved her stepchildren as her own children, and was kind to servants and slaves. After the marriage, Mary gave birth to six children: George, the eldest, Samuel, John Augustine and Charles were sons; Elizabeth, also called Betty, and Mildred, who died in infancy, were daughters. George, the subject of this book, was born on the February 22nd, 1732, in the homestead on Bridges Creek.

(*Huashengdun Zhuan*, Chapter 1)

秬於一千七百二十八年。十一月二十四日。卒。葬於祖塋中。他子女尚幼。一千七百三十年。三月六日。乃再娶參將波路之女美利為繼室。年少而美。北方之佳人也。美利生四子。長曰佐治。次曰三苗兒。次曰專柯加斯頓。次曰揸利斯。女子二人。長名衣利沙罷。次名必地。亦名咪兒迭。早夭。佐治於一千七百三十二年。二月二十二日。生於被列治忌溺宅。

Jane died on November 24th, 1728 and was buried in the family vault. Children were still young. On March 6th, 1730, he got remarried to Colonel Ball's daughter, Mary. Young and beautiful, she was a belle of the Northern. Mary gave birth to four sons, George, Samuel, John Augustine, and Charles; and two daughters, Elizabeth, also called Betty, and Mildred, who died in infancy. George was born on February 22nd, 1732 in the homestead on Bridges Creek

First, I will consider the description of Washington's birth in *Tsuzoku Washington Den*. The underlined lines in *Tsuzoku Washington Den* have no correspondent part in the original text; they have been added by Naganuma Kumataro. However, except for these added lines, the description in *Tsuzoku Washington Den* is a correct translation of the original text.

The added lines praise Washington's mother in the following way: "*She was the most*

beautiful woman in the county; however, following her father's teaching, she always stayed at home. Needless to say, she was good at doing woman's work; moreover, she was good at reading and writing. After getting married, she served her husband well, loved her stepchildren as her own children, and was kind to servants and slaves." Clearly, these were female virtues in the Eastern tradition, rather than virtues of women in Western culture.

Next, we turn to the description of Washington's birth in *Huashengdun Zhuan*. This is a surprisingly precise translation of the original text. Details such as names, years, and places are all translated without omission, and no comments are added. In the introduction of *Huashengdun Zhuan*, Li Ruqian mentioned that he revised the manuscript five times to ensure its precision and coherence. His meticulous care can be seen even from this short paragraph.

4.2 Mary's influence on Washington's character

Next, we compare the descriptions about Washington's childhood and his character in the three texts.

(*The student's Life of Washington*, Chapter II)

George, now eleven years of age, and the other children of the second marriage, had been left under the guardianship of their mother, to whom was intrusted the proceeds of all their property until they should severally come of age. She proved herself worthy of the trust. Endowed with plain, direct good sense, thorough conscientiousness, and prompt decision, she governed her family strictly, but kindly, exacting deference while she inspired affection. George, being her eldest son, was thought to be her favorite, yet she never gave him undue preference, and the implicit deference exacted from him in childhood continued to be habitually observed by him to the day of her death. He inherited from her a high temper and a spirit of command, but her early precepts and example taught him to restrain and govern that temper, and to square his conduct on the exact principles of equity and justice.

(*Tsuzoku Washington Den*, Chapter 1)

其時十一歳になれる。是於留慈をはじめとして。幼稚き子供等は母の麻利為が。手元に措て。是が後見を做す程に。既に前にも言へる如く麻利為はその性最正しく物に就て宜く曉り。事に仍て決断なり。然れば夫のなき後も。能く其家を齊へて。他の嘲りを受る事なく。許多なる子を愛育なせど。只その愛に溺るる事なく。教ゆるに仁義礼智をもってし。論ずるに孝悌忠信を以てする。斯の如きの賢母なれば。彼の是於留慈は我が腹に産出したる長子ゆえ。別て可愛く憶ふへきを。余る気色は毫ほどもなく。常々渠に教訓なすにも。第一情欲に陥るなかれ。万般公平に事をせよと。繰返しては諭せしとぞ。

The 11 years old George and other young children were placed under the guardianship of

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Mary. As stated before, Mary was honest, reasonable, and good at making decision. After the death of her husband, she governed the family well and nobody talked bad about her. Mary loved her children but never spoiled them; instead, she taught them Jingi Reichi and Kotei Chuxin. She was such an excellent mother. Because Washington was her eldest son, she loved him most; however, she never showed that. She repeatedly taught Washington that the most important thing was not to be blinded by desire and to be fair in all circumstances.

(*Huashengdun Zhuan*, Chapter 1)

時佐治華盛頓年才十一。同母弟妹均幼。所遺產業。其父囑交其母管理。俟其長成。乃照分授。其母誠實可信。奩具分明。公心任事。治家有方。人皆敬服。佐治華盛頓雖屬長子。然與諸子皆視同一律。不顯分厚薄。華盛頓承義方之訓。少小居心。即光明正直。

That time George Washington was eleven years old; his brothers and sister born by Mary were all very young. His father asked Mary to manage family property until they grew up. Mary was an honest and trustable person; she managed the property well, dealt all fairly, governed the family well, and was respected by all. Although George Washington was her eldest son, she did not treat him specially; all children were fairly treated. Taught to behave righteously, Washington was fair and honest from a child.

The original text states that Mary managed the property properly and governed the family well. Additionally, it describes how Mary loved Washington and how she educated him.

In *Tsuzoku Washington Den*, Mary's good governance of the family and her love, strictness, and fairness toward Washington are described as in the original text; however, Mary's management of the property and the methods she used to educate Washington are not mentioned. Moreover, the underlined sentences have no corresponding descriptions in the original text. The first underlined sentence mentions Jingi Reichi (仁義礼智) and Kotei Chuxin (孝悌忠信), which are typical Confucian values. Obviously, Naganuma Kumataro explained Washington's character according to the tradition of Eastern countries. The second underlined sentence states that Mary frequently taught Washington to suppress his own desire and to be fair with others. Here again, the spirit of fairness is explained according to Eastern values, and Mary's influence on Washington is particularly emphasized.

These changes to the original text are in line with Naganuma Kumataro's comments on Mary discussed in Section 4.1; in fact, throughout *Tsuzoku Washington Den*, similar comments appear frequently. These differences between *Tsuzoku Washington Den* and the original texts indicate that Naganuma Kumataro, like most Japanese intellectuals at that time, lacked the viewpoint of modern history and tended instead to explain Washington's character in the context of traditional Eastern values.

Next, we turn to the corresponding part in *Huashengdun Zhuan*, where the description of Washington's character is very concise. Nevertheless, most facts mentioned by the original text, including Mary's good management of the family property, are retained in

Huashengdun Zhuan. In contrast to *Tsuzoku Washington Den*, no comments are added by the translators.

4.3 Washington's character when he was a schoolboy

When Washington was a schoolboy, he was respected by his schoolmates for his fairness and honesty. Descriptions of this episode in biographies are as below.

(*The student's Life of Washington*, Chapter II)

Above all, his inherent probity, and the principles of justice on which he regulated all his conduct, even at this early period of life, were soon appreciated by his schoolmates; he was referred to as an umpire in their disputes, and his decisions were never reversed. As he had formerly been military chieftain, he was now legislator of the school; thus displaying in boyhood a type of the future man.

(*Tsuzoku Washington Den*, Chapter 1)

殊更に是於留慈は。母の教訓を厚く守りて。仮初の戯れにも偽りらしき言を吐かず。物
ことさら ぜを るじ はほ おしへ あつ まも かりそめ たわむ いつわ ことば は もの
 として公平に。做さずといふ事ならざれば。学友もみな感服して。朋友の中争論なさば。
こうへい な こと がくゆう かんぷく ともだち うちそうろん
 何時も扱ひを頼まるるに。渠が事を捌ける時は。誰とて異論を演るもなく。粹立刻に和議
いつ あつか たの かね こと さば とき だれ いろん のぶ ことたちどころ わぎ
 せしといふ。実に鷺雛は卵のうちより。其声諸鳥に起たりと。寔に奇しき少年にとそ。
げ らん たまご そのこえしよちょう た まこと しく しやうねん

Washington strictly followed his mother's teaching. Even when he was playing, he had never said anything untrue, or had done anything unfair. His schoolmates all respected him. Whenever there was a dispute, they always asked Washington to arbitrate. Once Washington arbitrated, they would have no objection and the matter would be settled instantly. There is an old saying that a Phoenix has an incomparable voice from hatch; just like that, Washington was very outstanding even in childhood.

(*Huashengdun Zhuan*, Chapter 1)

同学少年。咸推重之。或有争端。則為之剖判。各得其情。始推作学長。繼推為館中
 立律。雖在童年。已志趣不凡矣。

Schoolmates all respected him. Whenever there was a dispute, Washington would arbitrate for them properly. He was endorsed to be a student leader, and then a legislator of the school. Although still in childhood, he already exhibited an outstanding character.

Tsuzoku Washington Den generally follows the descriptions in *The student's Life of Washington*: Washington's probity and fairness was appreciated by his schoolmates, and they respected his judgment as umpire. However, the fact that Washington was a military chieftain and then a legislator of the school was not mentioned; instead, in the second underlined sentence, a common Japanese saying is quoted to describe Washington's extraordinariness. Moreover, in the first underlined sentence, the formation of Washington's character

was attributed to the education that he received from Mary.

In contrast, *Huashengdun Zhuan* states all of the facts more objectively: Washington was respected by schoolmates, made proper judgments in disputes, became a military chief-tain, and then became a legislator of the school. No additional comment is added.

4.4 Different features exhibited by *Tsuzoku Washington Den* and *Huashengdun Zhuan*

Because of limited space, we are not able to complete a more detailed comparison between *Tsuzoku Washington Den* and *Huashengdun Zhuan*. Nevertheless, through the examples discussed above, it is clear that these texts exhibit some different features.

Tsuzoku Washington Den tends to explain the formation of Washington's character according to traditional values in Eastern countries and places more emphasis on Mary's influence on him. Moreover, *Tsuzoku Washington Den* applies a novelistic style of narration and frequently adds comments. These features can be seen throughout the text.

The translation by *Huashengdun Zhuan* is quite different. It places greater emphasis on facts. Throughout this biography, details of historical facts such as time, place, name, and official rank are translated correctly without omission. The timeline is the same as the original biography, and the narration is concise and objective. Moreover, no additional comment is added by the translators.

Why do *Tsuzoku Washington Den* and *Huashengdun Zhuan* exhibit such distinctive features, even though they are translations of the same original text? This question will be addressed in the next section.

5. The Reception of modern biography in Japan and in China

The different features exhibited by *Tsuzoku Washington Den* and *Huashengdun Zhuan* partly reveal the differences in their historical backgrounds. In the introduction of *Washington Gunki*, a biography of Washington that was published before *Tsuzoku Washington Den*, Suzuki Biken introduced Washington in the following way.

華盛頓夫聖者之匪歟。洋外諸國。澆季之俗互事吞噬。無有寧歲。米利堅之苦苛政亦久矣。華氏一鄉紳耳。固非有兵馬之權。而一時為眾推戴率一旅之眾。能抵勁敵。終使幾萬生靈。脫苛政之軛。其功可謂偉矣。

Washington was comparable to saints. In a world without morals, Yogai countries invaded each other all the time. America had long suffered from oppressive rule for a long time. Washington was a common gentleman who had no military command authority. However, once endorsed as the commander, he led the army to fight against formidable enemies, and finally liberated numerous people from oppressive rule. His achievements were tremendous.

Here, Suzuki Biken used the term “Yogai” (洋外) to refer to Western countries. This term was often used by the so-called Joi-ron Jusha in the late Tokugawa period. This group was composed of Confucian scholars who advocated resistance against aggregations from the West. For example, the term “Yogai” appeared in the title of Asaka Gonsai’s (安積良齋) *Yogai Kiryaku* (洋外紀略) and Muzekoshi’s (無是公子) *Yogai Tsuran* (洋外通覽). Joyi-ron Jusha showed interest in the history of Western countries mainly because they believed that to resist Western countries militarily, it would be important to know these countries well (Ozawa 1966, 1968). Thus, in their writings, introductions about the history of Western countries were always mixed with discussions about “sea defense policy”. Additionally, the title of *Washington Gunki* uses the term “Gunki” (軍記), meaning “military epic”, instead of using “Den” (伝), which means “biography”. Hence, it seems that Suzuki Biken was influenced by Joi-ron Jusha and mainly treated Washington as a military hero who liberated America from colonial rule (Ozawa 1968). It is worth noting that *Washington Gunki* was first published soon after the beginning of the Meiji Restoration. However, when *Washington Gunki* was republished after 18 years, the introduction in the first edition was deleted. This change might reflect the fact that attitudes toward Western civilization had dramatically changed during the Meiji period.

The introduction of *Tsuzoku Washington Den* reads as follows.

国家之所以文明者。自世人之能立其志始。世之所以能立其志者。自読史始。読史也者。天下普通之学。自天子至於庶人。莫不由此而奮発興起。

A country can be civilized only after people can set their aims, and people can set their aims if they read history. Reading history is a beneficial education for all. From the emperor to ordinary people, all can be inspired through reading history.

Tsuzoku Washington Den was published three years after *Washington Gunki*. Comparing the introductions of the two works, the difference is apparent: the introduction of *Tsuzoku Washington Den* does not focus on war; instead, it emphasizes that an individual’s devotion and determination are critical for the establishment of civilization. This change is in accordance with the change in Japan’s attitude toward the West, and its presence may also reveal the influence of Nakamura Masanao’s *Saigoku Risshi Hen*. In the Meiji period, *Saigoku Risshi Hen* was a popular book that taught Western values and morals through stories of Western great men. It was adopted as a textbook in schools and had profound influence at that time.¹² It is quite possible that Nagamura Kumataro re-wrote Washington’s biography

¹² *Saigoku Risshi Hen*: 『西国立志編: 原名自助伝』, 斯邁爾斯 (Smiles, Samuel) 著, 中村正直訳, 須原屋茂兵衛, 1870. The chapters about Washington in *Saigoku Risshi Hen*: 第9編「十二: 話聖東・意爾平吠狗ノ喩」, 第10編「十一 乞林登話聖東借債ヲ懼レシ事」.

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into a success story in Western societies because of the influence of *Saigoku Risshi Hen* on him and on readers.

There are other facts that suggest the influence of *Saigoku Risshi Hen* on *Tsuzoku Washington Den*. In the writings listed in Table 1, Washington's name was translated in three different ways: “話聖臥東” (pronounced as Wa Sei Ga To in Japanese), “華盛頓” (pronounced as Hua Sheng Dun in Chinese and Ka Sei Ton in Japanese), and “和聖東” (pronounced as Wa Sei To in Japanese). “話聖臥東” may come from the pronunciation of Washington in Dutch; it was used in writings by “scholars of Dutch study”, such as *Seishi Gaiden*. “華盛頓” was the original translation of Washington in Chinese. It appeared in writings by Chinese scholars such as Wei Yuan's *Haiguo Tuzhi*. In the late Tokugawa period, scholars in Japan acquired knowledge about Western countries through translating Chinese scholars' writings. The term “華盛頓” was a product of these writings and was adopted by Japanese scholars in their own writings. For this reason, *Washington Gunki* and most biographies listed in Table 1 used the term “華盛頓”. In contrast, Nakamura Masanao's *Saigoku Risshi Hen* used “和聖東”, which may come from the pronunciation of Washington in English; Naganuma Kumataro's *Tsuzoku Washington Den* used “和聖東” as well. This similarity implies the influence of the former on the latter.

Li Ruqian's attitude toward biography was quite different from that of Japanese intellectuals. In the introduction of *Huashengdun Zhuan*, Li Ruqian explained how he tried to translate the original text precisely.

蓋訳書之難甚於自作。譬如伝影写真。必原書之口吻精神。毫髮畢肖。始可以無憾。苟其事同。而神吻之輕重抑揚或不盡似。亦未為善也。是書之成也。余與蔡君可謂勞精疲神。搏心壹志矣。¹³ 雖未必與原書毫髮畢肖。而其事實。要可無舛漏者歟。

Translation is more difficult than composition. Like drawing a portrait, a satisfactory translation has to reserve the style and the spirit of the original book perfectly. If a translation only has the same contents, but does not have the exactly same style and narration as the original text, it cannot be regarded as a good translation. Therefore, to accomplish the translation of this book, I and Cai concentrated thoroughly on this task and were totally exhausted. Our translation may not be a perfect portrait of the original text, but there should be no mistake or omission of the facts.

That is, although translating the original text perfectly was a very difficult task, he succeeded in keeping all historical facts in the original text without omission.

This attitude is also evinced by the explanatory note in the introduction, which explains how official ranks and names of places are translated.

¹³ It is quite likely that 搏 is a typographic error, which should be 搏. “搏心壹志” comes from “普天之下，搏心揖志” in *Shiji: Qinshihuang Benji* (史記·秦始皇本紀).

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一 西人官爵。其等差多與中国不類。其略與中国近似者。則訳以中国官名。其不類者。則仍其原名下注。如中国某官之類。使閱者一目了然。

一 此書地名。凡已見瀛寰志略者。皆仍其旧以便觀覽。其瀛寰志略所無者。則一照西音繙訳。

The ranking system of officers in Western countries is different to that in China. If corresponding ranks exist in China, Western ranks are translated into Chinese ranks; otherwise, Western ranks are kept unchanged with explanatory footnotes added, which help readers to understand Western ranks by comparing them with related Chinese ranks.

As names of places in this book, if they can be found in *Yinghuan Zhilue*, they were translated following *Yinghuan Zhilue*; otherwise, names of places are translated according to their pronunciations in English.

That is, official ranks in the original text are matched with official ranks in China as much as possible, and where no corresponding official Chinese rank exists, official ranks in the original texts are kept unchanged with explanatory footnotes added. The names of places are translated according to *Yinghuan Zhilue* (瀛寰志略) if they are mentioned there; if there is no mention in *Yinghuan Zhilue*, the names of places are translated according to their pronunciation in English. These efforts clearly show Li Ruqian's dedication to translating the descriptions of historical facts in an exact way.

The reason that Li Ruqian emphasized facts and details may be that he treated the biography of Washington as a history of the founding of America. He clearly explained this thinking in the introduction.

是書雖華盛頓一生事蹟。而美利堅全国開創事實。與夫用兵徵餉。制度人物之大致。無不備具。故閱是書。則美国未關以前。既關以後。數十年中之事。皆瞭如指掌。則謂之美国開国史略亦可。

This book is merely a biography of Washington's life and achievements, but it also describes how America was established, how military force was commanded, and how tax was collected. General information about historic figures and institutions were all included. Therefore, reading this book, one can have a good understanding of American history in the year before and after its founding. In this sense, this biography can be seen as a history book of America's founding.

For this reason, in *Huashengdun Zhuan*, details of facts are carefully kept, events are described in chronological order, and historical backgrounds for events are well explained.

The apparent difference between *Tsuzoku Washington Den* and *Huashengdun Zhuan* may also reflect the translators' different social status. Naganuma Kumataro was a novelist and journalist who wrote for ordinary readers, while Li Ruqian was a diplomat as well as a preeminent intellectual from a distinguished family.¹⁴ Hence, it is natural that Naganuma

Kumataro viewed Washington's biography in essence as a success story, while Li Ruqian treated it as a history of America.

6. Concluding remarks

In the above sections, we have discussed how Western biographies were received in Japan and China, with a focus on Washington's biographies. It is shown that even when the same original text was used, the translation of Washington's biography in Japan is significantly different from the translation in China.

In Japan, biographies of Western great men were first introduced by Joi-ron Jusha, who advocated "sea defense policy" in the late Tokugawa period. In the Meiji period, biographies of Western great men were translated under the influence of the "historic view of civilization", and translators often treated these biographies as success stories in civilized societies. However, in China, biographies of Western great men were often regarded as histories of these countries. Translators of biographies were often preeminent scholars of the day who put more emphasis on historical facts in their translations.

In both Japan and China, the translations of Western biographies in the mid-and late-19th century exerted profound influence. In China, Liang Qichao, who reprinted *Washington Quanzhuan* in his *Shiwubao* and translated a large number of biographies by himself, wrote a biography of Li Hongzhang, the most important politician in the late Qing Dynasty. The title of this biography is *Biography of Li Hongzhang: A History of Important Events in China in 40 Years*. Obviously, Liang Qichao treated the biography as a history of China in the late Qing Dynasty. Such perspectives on the role of the biography can be traced back to Li Ruqian.

In Japan, Minyu Sha (民友社), a publishing house directed by Tokutomi Soho (徳富蘇峰), published a large number of biographies of Western great men in the 1890s. Latter, Minyu Sha also published biographies of politicians in East Asia. Compared with biographies in the early Meiji period, biographies published by Minyu Sha put more emphasis on historical contexts. Nevertheless, the style of biographies in the early Meiji period has been more or less retained.

Therefore, to understand the process by which modern biography in East Asia was established, it is important to examine the early stages in this process. The results obtained in this study help to understand this process and may also contribute to the research on an

¹⁴ Because of limited space, the preset paper only compares several paragraphs from *Washington Quanzhuan* and *Tsuzoku Washington Den*. To have a comprehensive view about the reception of Western biographies in both countries, more texts needed to be examined in a more systemic way. This will be the author's future research direction.

important subject: the establishment of modern historical scholarship in East Asia.

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