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The English Translation of *Huangdi Neijing* by Maoshing Ni from the Perspective of the Thick Translation

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ABSTRACT

The global interest in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) continues to rise, and the international dissemination of TCM classics has become increasingly significant. The *Huangdi Neijing*, as a core book within the TCM knowledge system, holds immense theoretical and practical value. Its accurate and in-depth translation is vital for advancing the development of TCM abroad. Due to cultural differences and constraints, the medical concepts and knowledge in the *Huangdi Neijing* may be challenging for readers from diverse cultural backgrounds to comprehend and accept. Therefore, additional interpretation of the original text is inevitable, which embodies the thick translation of the original text. Thick translation goes beyond mere linguistic conversion; it involves enriching the translation with background information, knowledge explanations, and logical cohesion to help readers better understand the original text. This paper, guided by the theory of thick translation, examines the application of thick translation in Maoshing Ni's English version of the *Huangdi Neijing*. By summarizing and categorizing the features and types of thick translation in this English version, this study endeavors to demonstrate the role of thick translation in presenting the uniqueness of TCM knowledge in the global context, revealing how thick translation enhances the accessibility and acceptance of TCM classics in the global context, bridges the gap between TCM and other cultures, and contributes to the broader dissemination and development of TCM worldwide, with an aim to provide valuable insights for the effective international promotion of TCM.

Keywords: *Huangdi Neijing*; Traditional Chinese Medicine Knowledge; Thick Translation

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1. Introduction

Huangdi Neijing, as the earliest and most influential medical classic in China, encompasses not only diagnostic methods for diseases and symptoms, etiology and pathogenesis, principles and methods of treatment, and acupuncture techniques, but also integrates the rich achievements of cross-disciplinary knowledge, including philosophy, astronomy, meteorology, biology, geography, mathematics, and psychology and so on. The deep integration of this knowledge has made *Huangdi Neijing* highly valued by medical experts worldwide, attracting the attention of experts from other disciplines as well. As its academic value is increasingly recognized by the international community, more and more international medical specialists and scholars have begun to focus on and translate this work to make it known to international readers.

Many English versions of *Huangdi Neijing* have been released since 1995. Among them, the translation by Maoshing Ni, a Chinese-American practitioner, is particularly noteworthy. Ni, who grew up in a traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) family, learned TCM from his father at a young age, and went on to study it in China before working and teaching in the United States. His English version of *Huangdi Neijing* has sold well on Amazon and received numerous reader reviews. According to a 2023 survey conducted by Xu Xueying and her student at Zhejiang University on nine popular English versions of *Huangdi Neijing*, Ni's translation received quite positive feedback from readers. Furthermore, regarding video modality diffusion, Ni's translation has the highest number of views, totaling 15,603 ^[1]. Maoshing Ni is highly regarded for his deep expertise in disease treatment and health regimens through the application of TCM. Along with language conversion, his translation incorporates adaptable elaboration of TCM knowledge. By adopting thick translation strategies, he renders the profound knowledge of TCM more accessible, thereby enhancing its readability and international influence.

2. Literature Review

Huangdi Neijing is a seminal book in the Chinese medical system that has maintained a high academic reputation since its emergence. The scope of studies associated

with *Huangdi Neijing* is extensive, including pure medical domains such as traditional Chinese medical theory and clinical diagnosis, as well as interdisciplinary fields. Within this spectrum of research, the English translation studies of *Huangdi Neijing* are outstanding. This field involves the translation of culturally loaded words, professional terminology, rhetorical devices, metaphorical expressions, and other elements, drawing on a diverse range of translation theories and targeting different versions of this classic work.

From the linguistic perspective, linguistic studies on the English translation of *Huangdi Neijing* include a wide range of topics, encompassing corpus linguistics and cognitive linguistics. Yang Yu and Chen Xiao (2023), for example, explore the translation of emotional terms in *Huangdi Neijing* with prototype category theory ^[2], proposing a systematic set of translation principles and strategies that provide a new approach for the translation study of classical Chinese terminology. Zhang Miao (2023), based on corpus research, analyzes the strategies translators use for the semantic exploitation of metaphor in two translated texts of *Huangdi Neijing*: *Suwen* and the factors affecting the level of semantic explicitness in metaphor translation ^[3]. Meanwhile, Lu Dechao et al. (2024) discovered that the translation of Qi in Ilza Veith's version relies primarily on free translation ^[4], supplemented by annotations and omissions, and identify the cases of mistranslation to assess the accuracy and readability of the translated version.

Furthermore, applying specific translation theories to the study of *Huangdi Neijing* is critical to its English translation study. For example, Liu Cheng et al. (2022) implement Medio-translatology to study the English translation of culturally loaded words in *Huangdi Neijing*, reveal the deep meanings behind cultural images and analyze the factors influencing information loss and deformation in English translation ^[5]. Comparative analysis of different versions is also an important part of the English translation study of *Huangdi Neijing*. By comparing the translation strategies and styles of different translators, researchers can evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each version and propose suggestions for improvement. In this regard, Jiang Xing (2021), in accordance with the ecological translation theory, analyzes the characteristics of the English translation strategies used in the versions by Maoshing Ni, Li

Zhaoguo, and Zhu Ming ^[6], concluding that Maoshing Ni used a domestication strategy, Li Zhaoguo used foreignization, and Zhu Ming used a combination of domestication and foreignization. Xiao Ye and Min-hua Dong (2017) analyze different versions and research achievements of the English versions of *Huangdi Neijing* ^[7]. The authors try to summarize the translation style, purpose, content and other features of each version, and point out each translation's weaknesses, strengths, or significance. Besides, Feiyu Shen (2024) compared English versions of Maoshing Ni and Paul Unschuld from the Perspective of Cultural Communication ^[8].

In summary, the English translation of *Huangdi Neijing* involves multiple dimensions, including linguistics, translation theory, and comparisons of different translations. Although scholars have previously studied the English translation of *Huangdi Neijing* by Maoshing Ni, these studies have primarily focused on cultural communication and are made from the perspectives of domestication and foreignization. This paper, based on the theory of thick translation, delves into the English translation of *Huangdi Neijing* by Maoshing Ni, analyzing how the translation integrates information and knowledge into the text to provide an in-depth explanation of TCM knowledge. It then summarizes and categorizes the characteristics and types of thick translation, as well as its effects on the cross-cultural dissemination of Traditional Chinese Medicine knowledge, aiming to offer insights into the international development of Chinese medical classics.

3. Linguistic Adaptation Theory and Thick Translation

Translation is often seen as a cross-cultural communication activity conducted within a specific historical and cultural context. Translating means comparing cultures. Translators interpret source-culture phenomena in the light of their own culture-specific knowledge of that culture, from either the inside or the outside, depending on whether the translation is from or into the translator's native language and culture ^[9], which means the purpose of translation is transforming the deep meanings of the original text into new ideas or emotional expressions that another language can carry. However, due to cultural differences, target readers inevitably experience the strangeness of the

translated text. To narrow the gap between the original and the target text, translators tend to provide additional cultural knowledge by annotations. Although annotations are commonly used as an auxiliary means, in-depth research and theoretical discussion on annotations have been relatively lacking in the past.

It was not until 1993, inspired by anthropologist Clifford Geertz's concept of thick description theory (1973) ^[10], who borrowed this term from the British philosopher Gilbert Ryle (1971), the American scholar Kwame Anthony Appiah introduced the concept of thick translation ^[11]. According to Appiah, thick translation refers to a translation that aims to be of use in literary teaching; and here it seems that such 'academic' translation, the translation that seeks with its annotations and its accompanying glosses to locate the text in a rich cultural and linguistic context, is eminently worth doing ^[12].

Appiah believes that the thick translation can help readers appreciate and comprehend the culture of the source language by helping them hold both the literal meaning of the original text and its cultural connotations. Translators reconstruct the historical context in which the source text was produced through various annotations and commentary, allowing target readers to better understand the uniqueness and depth of the source culture and why the original text was worth translating.

Classics annotations are a typical manifestation of thick translation, and sinologists often employ a "translation with notes" to translate Chinese classics. In translation practice, thick translation aims to increase translation quality by incorporating many related contents, which enables readers to better understand the source text. However, overwhelming annotations in the target text may lead to complex text layout and a surfeit of contents. This may hinder readers' reading process as well as impair the target texts' fluency. Therefore, Cao (2013) pointed out that adding commentary and footnotes to translations is a form of "overt thick translation" when necessary, yet it will cause interference in reading ^[13]. Therefore, there should be a limit to adding footnotes and endnotes in translation. In fact, to make the original text with rich explanations and cultures in the context while minimizing interruptions to the reader, a form of "covert thick translation" can sometimes be employed. "Covert thick translation" refers to the

addition of explanatory words in the translated text that are implied but not explicitly stated in the original text, based on a correct judgment of the target readers' cognitive context. This makes the translation closer to the original, or rather, makes the impact of the translation on the target readers more similar to that of the original on its intended audience. In addition to adding explanatory words, the author believes that incorporating explanatory sentences and clauses within the translated text is also a form of covert thick translation.

Maoshing Ni's English version of *Huangdi Neijing* integrates annotations into the main text of the translation, which improves the readers' reading experience by incorporating traditional Chinese medical knowledge into the text without degrading its fluency. For beginners or English-speaking readers with a strong interest in TCM, such an attempt is undoubtedly of great value.

Furthermore, Maoshing Ni's English translation serves as a significant case study for research in pragmatics. Hickey's (1998) elaborated on pragmatic phenomena in translation practice^[14]. Developments keep on proliferating as translation merges with other disciplines to provide exciting new opportunities for research in the pragmatics of translation, contributing novel perspectives that manifest themselves with the merging of disciplines^[15]. By applying Jef Verschueren's Adaptation Theory (1999) as the theoretical framework^[16], we can clearly see how translators dynamically adjust their strategies in cross-cultural communication. This theory emphasizes that language use is an ongoing process of selection and adaptation across four dimensions: contextual adaptation (e.g., balancing academic rigor with readability for general readers), structural adaptation (e.g., reconstructing TCM-specific syntax in English), dynamic adaptation (e.g., modifying annotation depth based on readers' habits), and salience of adaptation (e.g., reinforcing cultural concepts through glossaries).

Ni's translation exemplifies the practical application of these theoretical dimensions. Through strategies such as using intratextual annotations to provide cultural context, rewriting complex concepts to align with target cognitive frameworks, and preserving key term transliterations to maintain cultural distinctiveness, the translation effectively demonstrates the dynamic linguistic choices made by the

translator to achieve successful cross-cultural communication. This work not only expands the boundaries of Adaptation Theory in the translation of specialized classical texts but also validates its explanatory power. It establishes a new paradigm for the cross-disciplinary application of linguistic theories, thereby broadening the scope and practical relevance of linguistic research.

4. Materials and Methods

This study employs an integrated research approach that combines close reading, discourse analysis, and inductive statistics to systematically investigate the translation of TCM knowledge in Maoshing Ni's English version of the *Huangdi Neijing*. First, inductive statistics is utilized to quantify the presence of TCM knowledge within the translation, establishing a data-driven foundation for further analysis. Next, close reading facilitates an in-depth textual examination, revealing subtle interpretations of TCM concepts. And discourse analysis explores the cultural logic and communicative significance embedded in the text, unveiling deeper cultural connotations associated with TCM knowledge. Based on these analyses, the study identifies and categorizes the distinctive features of thick translation in this work and evaluates the cross-cultural dissemination effects of TCM knowledge.

Throughout the research process, careful consideration is given to the cultural background, aesthetic preferences, and cross-cultural acceptance of international readers, underscoring the innovative integration of TCM culture into global culture. Ultimately, through a comprehensive analysis of Maoshing Ni's translation, this study aims to construct a coherent, systematic, and distinctive framework for TCM translation, offering valuable insights for the global dissemination of Chinese medical classics.

5. Results

Unlike employing footnotes and endnotes for explanation in translation, Maoshing Ni's version of *Huangdi Neijing* embedded supplementary knowledge into the main texts. The entire book consists of 81 chapters, with only 9 endnotes, and the rest are integrated into the main texts. This knowledge is mainly categorized into four types:

background knowledge supplementation, terminology explanation, logical relationship consolidation, and related knowledge expansion. For example, in the translation of the first 10 chapters the frequent application of thick translation can be shown in **Table 1**.

From **Table 2**, it can be seen that in the process of translating *Huangdi Neijing*, Maoshing Ni has added an

amount of information to the original text. Among them, the expansion of related information is the most, with a total of 63 instances, while the supplementation of background knowledge is the least, with a total of 14 instances. This paper will take the first 4 chapters as an example to conduct a deep analysis of the specific application of the four types of annotations.

Table 1. Distribution of Types of Thick Translation in the First 10 Chapters.

Type	Number
Background Knowledge Supplementation	14
Terminology Explanation	35
Logical Relationship Consolidation	48
Related Knowledge Expansion	63

Table 2. Distribution of Types of Thick Translation in Each Chapter.

Type	Background Knowledge Supplementation	Terminology Explanation	Logical Relationship Consolidation	Related Knowledge Expansion
Chapter 1	1	8	4	
Chapter 2		1	3	8
Chapter 3		10	5	10
Chapter 4		3	3	10
Chapter 5	2	4	13	14
Chapter 6	2	3	3	1
Chapter 7	3	4	4	10
Chapter 8			3	1
Chapter 9	4	2	8	8
Chapter10	2		2	1

6. Discussion

In Maoshing Ni's English translation of *The Huangdi Neijing*, he provides extensive expansions and explanations for various types of TCM knowledge, as evidenced by the data presented above. To systematically and thoroughly analyze these additions, the author has carefully examined the translated text and related materials, categorizing them into four types. These categories reflect different perspectives and levels of understanding regarding how TCM knowledge is handled in translation, as well as the cultural connotations and academic value embedded within them.

In the subsequent discussion, representative examples from each category will be analyzed in detail to offer readers a more intuitive and comprehensive understanding of these four types of knowledge expansion. This analysis will highlight how these examples are expressed in both

the original text and the English translation, exploring the underlying TCM theories, the cultural contexts, and the challenges and strategies involved in cross-cultural communication. By delving deeply into these examples, it aims to reveal the unique features of Maoshing Ni's translation of *The Huangdi Neijing* in conveying TCM knowledge, as well as its implications and reference value for the cross-cultural dissemination of Chinese medical classics.

6.1. Background Knowledge Supplementation

Huangdi Neijing is a historically traditional Chinese medical classic, and its profound medical concepts and abundant content pose challenges for many readers. For English readers, the distinctions between traditional Chinese and Western medicine increase the difficulties of understanding Chinese medical classics. Maoshing Ni, by

providing rich TCM knowledge and the background of this book, reduces the barriers caused by cultural differences, allowing non-Chinese readers to better understand the concepts and theoretical foundations of TCM, and to appreciate the value and significance of *Huangdi Neijing* from a broader perspective. For instance, regarding the introduction of the theory of *Five Phases and Six Qi*:

其生五，其气三。数犯此者，则邪气伤人，此寿命之本也。《生气通天论》

The universal yin and yang transform into the five earthly transformative energies, also known as the five elemental phases that consist of wood, fire, earth, metal, and water.

“These five elemental phases also correspond to the three yin and the three yang of the universe. These are the six atmospheric influences that govern the weather patterns that reflect in changes in our planetary ecology. If people violate or disrupt this natural order, then pathogenic forces will have an opportunity to cause damage to the body”^[17].

The number “five” here refers to the “Five Elements” of nature, namely metal, wood, water, fire, and earth, which are also known as the “Five Movements” or “Five Phases” in TCM. The “three” refers to the two energies of *Yin* and *Yang*, which can be further divided into three *Yin* and three *Yang*, namely *Taiyin*, *Shaoyin*, *Jueyin*, and *Taiyang*, *Yangming*, *Shaoyang*, and the six *Qi*. The concept of the *Sixiang* of *Yin* and *Yang*, also known as *Tai Shao Yang Yin*, originates from the *Book of Changes*, and is a renaming of the secondary *Yin* and *Yang*, where the *Yang* within *Yin* is called *Shaoyin* (or sometimes referred to as *Shaoyang*), the *Yin* within *Yin* is called *Taiyin*, the *Yin* within *Yang* is called *Shaoyang* (or sometimes referred to as *Shaoyin*), and the *Yang* within *Yang* is called *Taiyang*. In this way, the names have been simplified^[18]. The concept of *Five Movements* and *Six Qi* originates from the *Huangdi Neijing* and is a very important theory in TCM, revealing the close relationship between the rules of change in the natural world and the health status of humans. The core of this theory is to summarize the changes in all things in the universe into five basic elements and the changes of *Yin*

and *Yang*. There are seven major chapters in the *Huangdi Neijing* that specifically discuss the *Five Movements* and *Six Qi*. Therefore, a correct understanding and application of the theory of *Five Movements* and *Six Qi* are of great significance for a deep understanding of the holistic concept of TCM, diagnosing diseases, and formulating treatment methods.

Maoshing Ni’s translation demonstrates a thorough comprehension of traditional Chinese medical theory and consideration for the target readers. Instead of directly translating the numbers, he added background knowledge related to the *Five Movements* and *Six Qi*, specifying that “five” refers to metal, wood, water, fire, and earth; “three” represents three *Yin* and three *Yang*, as well as the relationship between the *Five Movements* and *Six Qi* and nature. This preserves the original text’s contents while also assisting readers in comprehending the ancient Chinese medical philosophy of the *Five Movements* and *Six Qi*. Another example is when discussing the regimen for spring:

春三月，此谓发陈，天地俱生，万物以荣，夜卧早起，广步于庭。《四气调神大论》

The three months of the spring season bring about the revitalization of all things in nature. It is the time of birth. This is when heaven and earth are reborn. During this season it is advisable to retire early. Arise early also and go walking in order to absorb the fresh, invigorating energy. Since this is the season in which the universal energy begins anew and rejuvenates, one should attempt to correspond to it directly by being open and unsuppressed, both physically and emotionally”^[17].

This part mainly discusses the regimen in spring. There are clear distinctions between the traditional Chinese regimen and the modern methods in the West. The modern regimen focuses on calorie counts, nutrition, and balance, while the traditional Chinese regimen emphasizes the harmony of the body and organs, the cycles of the seasons, and the balance of the five flavors. Regarding exercise, the modern perspective prioritizes physical activity, valuing the shape of the body, whereas traditional Chinese health

practices value the impact of stillness on the shaping of both body and spirit, as well as morals and ethics. Traditional Chinese medicine approaches health from a holistic standpoint, and modern medicine concentrates on precise control at a part and microscopic level ^[19]. Because of these conflicting ideologies, a literal translation of spring health preservation may not resonate with target readers, who may find it hard to accept the idea of adjusting health strategies in accordance with seasonal changes.

Maoshing Ni's translation of this line included an explanation of the background information in addition to accurately expressing the original meanings. He noted that spring is a time of renewed energy and revival in nature, and as part of this natural world, humans should adopt a lifestyle that conforms to the rule of nature by maintaining harmony and joy in both body and mind. Adjusting one's mental and physical state in line with nature is not just a natural order-following lifestyle, but an effective way to maintain health and well-being. Such translation helps target readers better comprehend the philosophy of traditional Chinese medicine that emphasizes harmony with the natural rhythms of life.

In addition to providing a background introduction to TCM-related knowledge, Maoshing Ni also gave a refined explanation of the rationale for this book. As in the first paragraph of the original text:

乃问于天师曰：“余闻上古之人，春秋皆度百岁，而动作不衰。”《上古天真论》
During his reign, Huang Di discoursed on medicine, health, lifestyle, nutrition, and Taoist cosmology with his ministers Qi Bo, Lei Gong, and others. Their first discussion began with Huang Di inquiring, “I’ve heard that in the days of old everyone lived one hundred years without showing the usual signs of aging”^[17].

The *Huangdi Neijing* profoundly explores the harmonious coexistence between human and nature. The content of this book is mainly presented through dialogues between the Yellow Emperor and his officials, such as Qi Bo and Lei Gong.

Maoshing Ni, when translating this book, did not in-

troduce the background of the *Huangdi Neijing* separately but chose to integrate it into the narrative of the text. This method allows readers to gradually appreciate the context in which the book was written without additional explanation, thus focusing more on the profound medical concepts and philosophical thoughts contained in the text.

Through this type of thick translation, Maoshing Ni's translation provided insight into the depth and scope of TCM culture, enabling readers to know its profoundness and breadth.

6.2. Terminology Explanation

The medical terms in the *Huangdi Neijing* often carry cultural connotations and professional meanings. For readers who are not familiar with traditional Chinese culture, these terms can be difficult to understand. During translation, Maoshing Ni has provided detailed explanations of the complex medical theories and pathological knowledge behind these terms. This method encourages readers to fully understand the TCM concepts while also improving their ability to appreciate the meanings of Chinese medical terminologies. For example, in the introduction of *Yin-Yang* channels:

五十七，阳明脉衰，面始焦，发始堕。《上古天真论》
At thirty-five years the yangming/stomach and large intestine channels that govern the major facial muscles begin to deplete, the muscles begin to atrophy, facial wrinkles appear, and the hair begins to thin ^[17].

The Yangming channel, in terms of channel pathways, originates from the head and face and has a branch that connects with the heart, thus establishing the connection between the Yangming channel and the head, face, and heart. Therefore, the weakening of the Yangming channel can also lead to facial aging. At the same time, the Yangming channel is also collectively referred to as the Foot Yangming Stomach Channel and the Hand Yangming Large Intestine Channel. Yangming represents the most powerful manifestation of Yang Qi. When the stomach's Yang energy is sufficient, it can promote absorption; when the large intestine's Yang energy is sufficient, it can

promote digestion. Hence, the strength of the Yangming channel is directly related to the body's digestive and absorptive functions. Studies have shown that a deficiency in the Yangming Stomach Channel can lead to an increase in the apoptosis index of aging skin cells, disrupt skin homeostasis, impair its effective barrier function, and ultimately result in skin aging^[20]. Additionally, a weakness in the energy of the Hand Yangming Large Intestine Channel can also lead to skin homeostasis imbalance. Human aging is accompanied by intestinal aging, which in turn accelerates skin aging^[21]. Therefore, the strength of the Yangming channel directly affects the health status of the skin.

The Chinese term *yangming* channel is preserved in Maoshing Ni's translation by first using the pinyin *yang-ming*. He then adds that *yangming* can also be referred to as the stomach and large intestine channels, which helps readers understand more fully the precise locations of these channels. Furthermore, he elucidates the primary function of the *yangming* channel in controlling facial muscles, closely linking this function to the subsequent discussion about how the weakness of the *yangming* channel can lead to skin aging. This method helps readers better understand the original content while also building upon the knowledge of traditional Chinese channels offered in the book.

Besides, in the Art of Life Through the Four Seasons:

此冬气之应，养藏之道也。逆之则伤肾，
春为痿厥，奉生者少。《四气调神大论》
*The philosophy of the winter season is one
of conservation and storage. Without such
practice the result will be injury to the
kidney energy. This will cause wei jue, con-
sisting of weakness, atrophy of muscles, and
coldness in spring, manifesting as paralysis,
wei/flaccid syndrome, arthritis, or degenera-
tion of the bones and tendons*^[17].

In the context of *Wei Jue* disease, the term *Jue* refers to the coldness of the hands and feet, a symptom of *yang* deficiency failing to reach the extremities, known as counterflow coldness. This statement aims to illustrate that violating the principles of winter health regimen may lead to the occurrence of *Wei* syndrome. Here, *Wei Jue* follows the naming principle of main symptom and *Jue*, indicating

a primary and secondary relationship, with the former being the main symptom, which can be interpreted as *Wei* accompanied by *Jue*, a relationship of one being primary and the other secondary^[22]. In specific terms, *Wei Jue* refers to the co-occurrence of *Wei* symptoms, characterized by the weakness and flaccidity of the limbs, and *Jue*, indicating counterflow coldness. Wu (1982) noted that *Wei* is a condition where the liver, which governs the sinews, fails to nourish them, resulting in the weakness of the hands and feet^[23]. *Jue* is the absence of *yang* energy leading to counterflow coldness. This statement further explains the etiology of *Wei* and *Jue*. It points out that *Wei* is caused by the liver, which is associated with the sinews; when the sinews lose their nourishment, symptoms of limb weakness appear. *Jue*, on the other hand, is due to insufficient *yang* energy, leading to the coldness of the limbs.

Besides clearly describing the symptoms of *Wei Jue*, Maoshing Ni makes it apparent that the primary signs of *Wei* Syndrome are muscular atrophy, and bodily paralysis and the deterioration of bones and tendons. This shows his extensive awareness of *Huangdi Neijing*'s medical principles by accurately reflecting the condition's primary and secondary relationships and providing the facts in an acceptable amount of detail.

In addition to professional knowledge of TCM, *Huangdi Neijing* encompasses a wealth of interdisciplinary knowledge. Although not strictly within the medical domain, this knowledge is closely related to TCM regimen, etiology, and therapeutic methods, and is crucial for understanding the holistic concept and practical approaches of TCM. Therefore, in translation, expanding on the interdisciplinary knowledge related to TCM can help readers to make sense of the connotations of TCM more comprehensively. This can expand the original text's TCM contents while also assisting readers in realizing that TCM is a system that is closely linked to nature rather than an isolated discipline. For example,

因于寒，欲如运枢。《生气通天论》
*Living in a cold climate, one must take extra
care with one's activities. Just as people
indoors are protected from harsh weather,
the yang qi acts as the walls in a house to
protect the body. It is important to be orderly*

and not allow any openings; pathogenic energy cannot invade if the castle doors are closed^[17].

The concept of “Yun Shu” refers to the rotation of a door pivot within its socket, which is used to describe the self-regulation process of the body’s internal *yang* energy when invaded by cold, aiming to maintain the balance of *yin* and *yang* and warmth within the body. This regulatory process is orderly and rhythmic, neither too violent nor too slow, much like the steady movement of a door pivot. The relationship between a door pivot’s rotation and human health may be difficult for the intended audience to understand. Directly translating “the body’s internal regulation” as “door pivot” might not be sufficient to convey the connection between the two. In translation, a more detailed explanation of this metaphor is needed so that readers can understand its meanings.

In translation, Maoshing Ni compares *yang* energy to the protective walls of a house, and the operation of the door pivot is likened to the body’s internal regulatory mechanism. The operation of the door pivot needs to maintain regularity to prevent the door from being unstable, symbolizing that if the body’s internal regulation is abnormal, it may make it easier for adverse external influences to invade the body, posing a threat to health. By using this metaphor, Maoshing Ni gives readers a clear awareness of the complex ideas of Chinese medical knowledge, highlighting the significance of self-regulation and *yin* and *yang* balance in TCM. Another example is the explanation of the concept of “wind” in TCM:

八风发邪，以为经风，触五脏，邪气发病。
《金匱真言论》

The eight types of wind that occur in nature are abnormal and pathogenic winds, which cause disease. These can affect the body’s channels and collaterals, producing five types of internal wind that damage their corresponding organs. These internal winds are liver wind, heart wind, lung wind, kidney wind, and spleen wind. They are caused by abnormal changes in the four seasons^[17].

“Wind” is a natural phenomenon. In Chinese philosophy, wind is considered a manifestation of *Qi*, closely related to all things in heaven and earth. In *Huangdi Neijing*, there are many instances where Chinese philosophy is applied to TCM. For example, in TCM, wind is seen as a type of *Qi* that affects energy and health. Ancient Chinese physicians used the strength of the wind and seasons in which it occurred to determine the potential diseases it might cause. For instance, “evil wind” is considered as an external pathogenic substance that invades the body through the skin and hair, either lingering on the surface causing exterior diseases or following the meridians to gradually penetrate deeper, causing diseases in the viscera. “Evil wind” invades the body by taking advantage of weakness, meaning it can only cause disease when the body is weak^[24].

Different cultural backgrounds influence traditional Chinese and Western medicine. Western medicine has been developed under the natural science of the separation of human and nature, with atomic theory and elemental theory as its basic theoretical foundations. In contrast, the formation and development of TCM have been deeply influenced by ancient Chinese philosophy, transforming concepts such as vital energy theory, *Yin-Yang*, and the *Five Elements* from Chinese philosophy into the theoretical foundations of medicine^[25]. For the target readers, the internal relationship between the human body and the natural wind may be difficult to absorb. Maoshing Ni, in his translation, focuses on an in-depth explanation of “wind”, explaining its origin, effects on the human body, and types. This clear logic and expansion of knowledge make it easier for target readers to grasp the connotations of the original text.

6.3. Logical Relationship Consolidation

The classical Chinese style used in *Huangdi Neijing* is more concise and implicit compared to modern vernacular Chinese, with intertextual relationships often not explicitly stated. Target readers, however, generally prefer language that is logically tight and clearly expressed. Therefore, adaptive modifications to logical connections during translation can guarantee that the translated content retains its original meaning while also appealing to readers of the target language. For instance,

因于暑，汗，烦则喘喝，静则多言，体若燔炭，汗出乃散。《生气通天论》

In the summer, if too much sweating occurs in the heat, the qi will escape, the breath will become coarse and rapid, and one will feel irritable. These are the symptoms of heat attacking the exterior. "If summer heat attacks and enters the interior, it will affect the mind and spirit, causing delirium, muttering, and fever. In order to relieve these symptoms, the pores must be opened to release the heat"^[17].

This sentence describes the physical reactions people might experience during the hot summer and their methods to alleviate them. Translating “汗” as sweating without describing its relationship to symptoms like irritation and panting can cause confusion among readers. Moreover, “烦则喘喝，静则多言，” and “体若燔炭” describe the effects of heat from both emotional and physical states, respectively. The lack of suitable logical links in the translation could perplex readers and make it frustrating for them to understand the rational connection between emotional shifts and physical symptoms.

Maoshing Ni's translation strengthens logical links between these statements. To make the translation more fluent and acceptable, he explains the physiological reasons for sweating and how it interacts with emotion and breath, that is, “if too much sweating occurs in the heat, the *qi* will escape”. Then he explains the underlying causes of these symptoms, “If summer heat attacks and enters the interior, it will affect the mind and spirit”, helping readers understand these seemingly scattered but actually interrelated symptoms, making the paragraph's logical structure more coherent. By doing so, he maintains the original text's idea and makes it simpler for readers to follow the description of how the human body reacts to heat in TCM. With such translation, readers can acquire a better understanding of the original text's profound meanings and appreciate the complex impact of heat on the human body.

Besides using conjunctions and logical clauses to strengthen the logical structure between the statements, Maoshing Ni also integrates TCM knowledge related to the context in his translation. Readers can better hold the reasoning and tenets of TCM while reading thanks to this

supplementation, which also enhances the text's content and strengthens its overall logic. For example,

东风生于春，病在肝，俞在颈项。《金匮真言论》

"In the spring the wind comes from the east. Illness then occurs in the liver channel and rises to the head, causing bleeding from the nose. Acupuncture points on the neck and gallbladder channel should be used for treatment"^[17].

According to TCM, spring is associated with the liver, making it a high-incidence period for liver diseases. In TCM theory, the liver meridian is closely linked to the neck and nape, so acupuncture might be made in this area for treatment. TCM emphasizes a holistic treatment and the interconnection of the meridian system. As a result, readers who are unfamiliar with TCM diagnosis and treatment methods may be acclimated to Western medicine's direct symptomatic therapy, making understanding this therapy, which governs internal organ functioning through the meridian system, difficult. When the original material is translated word for word, it becomes clear that the TCM knowledge and principles involved are difficult to explain.

Maoshing Ni was aware of the differences in treatment between TCM and Western medicine. Therefore, when translating “病在肝，俞在颈项”，he added “rises to the head, causing bleeding from the nose” to supplement the explanation of why liver diseases are treated with acupuncture in the neck and nape area. This clarification strengthens the logical relationship between the text, assisting readers in realizing that when liver function is disrupted, it can affect the meridians of the head, resulting in symptoms such as nosebleeds, as well as making the TCM practice of acupuncture in the neck and nape area seem more reasonable. Another example,

收敛神气，使秋气平，无外其志，使肺气清，此秋气之应，养收之道也。《四气调神论》

This is the time to gather one's spirit and energy, be more focused, and not allow desires to run wild. One must keep the lung

energy full, clean, and quiet. This means practicing breathing exercises to enhance lung qi. Also, one should refrain from both smoking and grief, the emotion of the lungs. This will prevent kidney or digestive problems in the winter^[17].

In this sentence, “使肺气清” refers to maintaining the lung’s purifying function, ensuring the clarity and smooth flow of lung *qi*. In TCM theory, each season has its corresponding health regimen methods. The focus of health regimen in autumn is on emotional peace and tranquility, as well as the cleanliness and smoothness of lung *qi*. Violating this principle may harm individual health. Therefore, the way of health regimen in autumn lies in converging the mind, maintaining emotional stability through appropriate methods to maintain the freshness and the circulation of lung *qi*, which is the key to adapting to the autumn and maintaining health.

When translating “使肺气清”, Maoshing Ni accurately expressed the meaning of the original text and further explained how to maintain the freshness and serenity of lung *qi* through daily habits. The purpose of maintaining lung cleanliness is to prevent potential kidney or digestive system problems that may occur in winter. This coherent translation deepens the meanings of the original text and allows readers to more concretely understand the close connection between humans and nature in TCM, and how the body maintains health by adapting to the changes of the four seasons. His translation specifies the regimen concept of TCM, making it a health practice that is easy to implement, thereby helping readers to integrate the wisdom of TCM into daily life and promote the health of the lungs and overall physical and mental health.

In summary, Maoshing Ni, being acutely conscious of the cognitive differences between the target and original readers when translating, introduced connective words and built on TCM-related knowledge to improve the logical coherence of statements and make the translation more fluent.

6.4. Related Knowledge Expansion

The *Huangdi Neijing* contains a wealth of knowledge and information. Given the cultural differences between

original and target readers, unexplained original text may make comprehension difficult for the target readers. To help them make sense of the knowledge in the text more deeply and to reduce reading barriers caused by cultural differences, Maoshing Ni has provided certain explanations and expansions on the profound information in translation. For instance,

秋三月，此谓容平，天气以急，地气以明。

《四气调神大论篇第二》

“In the three months of autumn all things in nature reach their full maturity. The grains ripen and harvesting occurs. The heavenly energy cools, as does the weather. The wind begins to stir. This is the changing or pivoting point when the yang, or active, phase turns into its opposite, the yin, or passive, phase^[17].

The meaning of this sentence is “The three months of autumn are called ‘Rong Ping’, a period when the natural scenery is calm and subdued due to the maturation and convergence of all things. At this time, the sky is clear, the wind is swift, and the air is clean.” TCM advocates that one’s diet and daily routines should be in harmony with nature to maintain the balance within the body. This sentence describes the climatic characteristics of autumn. In translation, Maoshing Ni further elaborates on the changes of *Yin* and *Yang*. An explanation can also be provided on why the concept of *Yin* and *Yang* is introduced in relation to the four seasons; the original meaning of *Yin* and *Yang* is light and darkness, which can be felt as cold or heat, thus incorporating the concepts of cold and heat within the *Yin* and *Yang* framework. Due to some incidental reason, likely because of the experience of cold and heat, a connection was made with the four seasons, which are characterized mainly by these changes, and thus the four seasons were included within the *Yin* and *Yang* category. The specific characteristics of cold and heat in the four seasons drive the transformation of *Yin* and *Yang*. Therefore, introducing the relationship between the four seasons and the changes of *Yin* and *Yang* here can help readers understand that climate change and the transformation of *Yin* and *Yang* are complementary. Moreover, since this chapter mainly

discusses the connection between the changes of the four seasons and *Yin* and *Yang*, adding this information can enrich the contents and make the structure of the article more compact and coherent. Another example,

因而饱食，筋脉横解，肠澼为痔；因而大饮，则气逆。因而强力，肾气乃伤，高骨乃坏。《生气通天论篇第三》

“If one overeats, the muscles and blood vessels of the stomach and intestines overexpand and suffer from food retention. This leads to dysentery and hemorrhoids. Overindulgence in alcohol causes the energy to rise to the head. If intercourse is attempted, the energy will not be in the right place and the kidney qi will be drained, causing damage and degeneration of the lower back. When qi is not in the kidneys during sex, the body will draw qi from the bones and marrow”^[17].

The sentence implies that overeating may cause the flabbiness of tendons and vessels, and the dysfunction of the intestinal tract, which can further result in hemorrhoids; excessive drinking may lead to the reversal of the flow of *Qi*, leading to breathlessness; and overexertion may damage kidney *Qi*, giving rise to skeletal damage, especially to high-position bones such as the spine. In translation, Maoshing Ni takes sexual intercourse as an example to explain how overexertion can lead to the depletion of stomach *Qi*, which in turn causes damage to the spine and ultimately harms the body as a whole. Therefore, instead of a literal translation of the original text, he adds a case study, allowing readers to more clearly comprehend how overexertion can harm the body by affecting stomach *Qi*. Such a translation conveys the meaning of the original text, and more importantly, enhances the completeness of the information.

7. Conclusions

The *Huangdi Neijing*, as a traditional Chinese medical text, plays a crucial role in enriching the diverse fabric of the world medical system. To enable the global audience

to fully appreciate this masterpiece requires appropriate translations to bridge disciplinary boundaries. In addition to accurately providing the professional knowledge of TCM, the translation should ensure smooth readability, allowing target readers to easily understand the profound wisdom of TCM. This is undoubtedly a highly challenging task. Thick translation strategies, by adding annotations, can more effectively convey the knowledge of the original text. However, it is also important to avoid too many annotations. Covert-thick translation can more naturally integrate the deep meaning of the original text without adding footnotes or endnotes. This paper delves into the four types of annotation-Background Knowledge Supplementation, Terminology Explanation, Logical Relationship Consolidation, and Related Knowledge Expansion-employed by Maoshing Ni. The four categories of annotations demonstrate his exceptional translation abilities and deep comprehension of TCM knowledge. This translation enables the accurate transmission of TCM knowledge, making the English translation of the *Huangdi Neijing* acceptable to the readers, contributing to its greater acceptance and application in the international medical community.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, X.J. and M.L.; methodology, X.J. and M.L.; software, X.J.; validation, X.J. and M.L.; formal analysis, X.J. and M.L.; investigation, X.J.; resources, X.J.; data curation, X.J.; writing—original draft preparation, X.J.; writing—review and editing, M.L.; visualization, X.J.; supervision, M.L.; project administration, X.J. and M.L.; funding acquisition, M.L. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Data Availability Statement

No new data were created in this study. The data used in this research were collected and compiled by the authors. Due to the nature of the research, the data are not publicly available. However, the data can be made available upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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