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***“Transcultural Battlefield: Recent Japanese  
Translations of Philippine History”***

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**Abstract:**

This essay discusses the transnational tensions that emerged in recent Japanese translations of studies of Philippine history. It focuses on an anthology of eight essays written by historians Reynaldo C. Ileto, Vicente L. Rafael and Floro L. Quibuyen, as well as on the Japanese edition of Reynaldo C. Ileto’s seminal text, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910*. By reflecting on the process of translating the works of Filipino scholars into a Japanese context, this essay shows how translation becomes a kind of transcultural intellectual battlefield, revealing the different stakes of Filipino and Japanese writers in their approach to Philippine history.

**Keywords:** translation, postcolonial studies, *pasyon*, Philippine history, Japanese translation, Ileto, Rafael, Quibuyen

## ***Introduction***

This essay discusses the transnational tensions that emerge in recent Japanese translations of studies of Philippine history. It focuses particularly on an anthology of eight essays written by historians Reynaldo C. Ileto, Vicente L. Rafael and Floro L. Quibuyen (Ileto, Rafael and Quibuyen, 2004), as well as on the Japanese edition of Reynaldo C. Ileto's seminal text, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Ileto, 1979; Ileto, 2005), based on my recent experiences with translation projects. By reflecting on the process of translating the works of Filipino scholars into a Japanese context, this essay will show how translation becomes a kind of transcultural intellectual battlefield, revealing the different stakes of Filipino and Japanese writers in their approach to Philippine history.

The first translation project that I undertook was the anthology of eight articles on Philippine historiography by Reynaldo Ileto, Vicente Rafael and Floro Quibuyen. Compiled and edited by myself, it was published in August 2004. This volume, entitled *Firippin Rekishikenkyu to Shokuminchigensetsu [Philippine Historiography and Colonial Discourse]* (Ileto et al., 2004) has been received well. It was well reviewed in *Asashi Shimbun* (*Asahi Newspaper*) in October 2004 and was listed as one of the best postcolonial literatures published in Japan in a December 2004 issue of *Shukan Dokushojin* (*Weekly Readers*), a weekly paper on academic and intellectual books. Another book review came out in *Ajia Keizai* (*Asian Economies*), published by the Institute of Developing Economies, Tokyo in April 2005. The second translation project discussed below is that of Reynaldo C. Ileto's *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Ileto, 1979). I served as co-editor with Hiromu Shimizu, professor of anthropology at Kyushu University. This much awaited Japanese translation finally came out in September 2005 from Hosei University Press, Tokyo (Ileto, 2005).

Perhaps it might be difficult to understand why I was able to work as one of the co-editors of this Japanese translation project of Ileto's *Pasyon and Revolution*, since my specialization is Philippine economic, not cultural, history. I have written two books

-- one on the history of sugar and the other on banking history -- and I am still conducting some book projects in this particular field of research. However, in order to analyze the Philippine National Bank scandal during the First World War in my banking history book that came out in Japanese in 2003 (Nagano, 2003) (it still needs to be translated into English), I delved into the study of politics. That journey also led me to an interest in the ways political rhetoric was invented as colonial discourse and utilized to disguise the truth from the populace in the Philippines while they were an American colony. This expanded area of my research inspired me to collect some provocative essays by Filipino scholars. I decided to make a reader of postcolonial essays on Philippine history for our Japanese audience. It took five of us (myself and four other scholars of Philippine studies in Japan) around three years -- from mid-2001 to August 2004 -- to complete the book.

As for the translation of Iletto's *Pasyon and Revolution*, I had never thought of becoming one of the co-editors or one of the five translators of this project until June 2004. I was rather "coopted" by Hiromu Shimizu to join the translation project after he took up the task as chief-editor in early 2004. This project had come to a dead end after starting more than ten years earlier. I assume no one will contest the fact that Iletto's *Pasyon and Revolution* is one of the most difficult books in Philippine studies to be translated into any language. A quarter of a century after its publication, a Vietnamese edition came out in November 2004 and a Spanish translation project has recently been started. The Japanese translation project started a long time ago but due to various problems did not make much headway until a new translation team was organized in early 2004 by a program officer of the Toyota Foundation. It was this group that I joined as co-editor together with Hiromu Shimizu.

This re-organized translation project under a new team was composed of two senior scholars and three junior scholars. One junior scholar, Kunio Takano (who did an MA degree specializing Philippine literature at the University of the Philippines, Diliman) successfully translated into Japanese the four Tagalog hymns or *awit* in the Appendix of *Pasyon and Revolution* that Reynaldo Iletto himself did not translate into English. Kunio Takano also translated excellently Tagalog quotations in the six main

chapters of the *Pasyon* book. In this case we translated Iletto's English translation of Tagalog *pasyon* text or *awit* into Japanese as our rule while checking Iletto's English translation very carefully with the original Tagalog text. Without this sophisticated translation of the older Tagalog *pasyon* or *awit* poetry into Japanese, I might have faced serious difficulties producing a Japanese translation of Iletto's analytical English language prose. Involving multi-disciplinary approaches from history, anthropology, and religion as well as intellectual history, philosophy and critical literature, I think that translating Iletto's *Pasyon and Revolution* might be seen as indicative of the broader nature of Philippine Studies in Japan.

Looking back to the late 1970s (already more than a quarter of a century ago), when I studied at UP Diliman, we observed a kind of "translation boom" of Philippine history books in Japan. This was because the publishers Imura Cultural Enterprise, a subsidiary of Keiso Shobo in Tokyo, started to specialize in Southeast Asian books and the Toyota Foundation initiated a translation project of books on Southeast Asia. This was also the time that Southeast Asian Studies emerged in Japan. With or without Toyota Foundation funds, books in translation on the Philippines came out one after another in the short time span of 1977-80: Jose Rizal's two novels of "*Noli*" and "*Fili*" (Rizal, 1978; Rizal, 1979); Teodoro A. Agoncillo's *A Short History of Filipino People* (Agoncillo, 1977); Renato Constantino's *The Philippines: A Past Revisited* and *The Continuing Past* (Constantino, 1978-80); and the anthology of Constantino's various essays on Filipino nationalism (Constantino, 1977). Also in the early 1970s, the abridged Japanese translation of Gregorio Zaide's *Philippine Political and Cultural History* was published (Zaide, 1973). We also had the wonderful professional Japanese translation of Antonio de Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* (Morga, 1966) published in the middle 1960s. The 1980s witnessed a fairly large number of translations of Philippine books, particularly novels. However few significant efforts were made from the 1980s throughout the 1990s to translate Philippine historiography, perhaps except Nick Joaquin's *The Aquinos of Tarlac* (Joaquin, 1986). Only one-half of the first volume of Teodoro Agoncillo's *The Fateful Years* was translated (Agoncillo, 1991). In this context, the Japanese translation of Reynaldo Iletto's *Pasyon and*

*Revolution* was especially important. As co-editor and one of five translators, I am very happy to inform you here that it came out in good shape and I have already received various messages from scholars who are very appreciative that they are able to read Ileta's *Pasyon* in Japanese language. They say that it has captured the profound meanings of the original texts.

### ***What is Translation? : Anthology of Postcolonial Essays***

With this background, I would like to discuss here how the translation came to be based on my past experiences in translation as a “transcultural intellectual battlefield.” However, before talking about “what is translation?” we must review the issues of why we should translate in the first place and how we should choose the materials for translation. Why should we translate some essays or books from one language into other languages? The simplest answer to this question is of course that some essays or books written in some foreign languages cannot be understood by important potential audiences so in order to make them understandable, translation from one language to another is indispensable. Needless to say, however, if some essays or books written in foreign languages are not important in certain societies, they should not be translated. By just thinking of this simple question, we see that translation or the act of translation is a matter that deeply involves the peculiar cultural milieu of the language used for translation. That is to say, even if some essays or books are popular in the country where they are originally published, they might not be received well or might not be understood in certain countries where they are translated. Thus, the selection of the materials for translation is a matter that involves the certain peculiar cultural milieu of the language used for translation.

Let me give some concrete examples. I have mentioned that one of my recent translation projects was an anthology of eight articles on Philippine historiography by Reynaldo Ileta, Vicente Rafael and Floro Quibuyen (Ileta et al., 2004). Why did I choose these particular eight essays? I wanted to create an anthology of the works of these three authors who have provided provocative and penetrating discussion on Philippine history.

## **Part I: From the Historiography on the Philippine Revolution to the Critique of Orientalism**

Chapter 1: Reynaldo C. Ileto, "The Revolution of 1896 and the Mythology of the Nation State" in *The Philippine Revolution and Beyond vol. 1 (Papers from the International Conference on the Centennial of the 1896 Philippine Revolution)*, edited by Elmer A. Ordoñez, Manila: Philippine Centennial Commission, National Commission for Culture and Sports, 1998, pp. 61-71.

Chapter 2: Reynaldo C. Ileto, "Lecture 2: Knowledge and Pacification: The Philippine-American War," *Knowing America's Colony: A Hundred Years from the Philippine War*, Philippine Studies Occasional Paper Series no. 13, Center for Philippine Studies, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 1999, pp. 19-40.

Chapter 3: Reynaldo C. Ileto, "Lecture 3: Orientalism and the Study of Philippine Politics," *Knowing America's Colony: A Hundred Years from the Philippine War*, Philippine Studies Occasional Paper Series no. 13, Center for Philippine Studies, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 1999, pp. 41-65. The translation for this volume is based on its revised version in the *Philippine Political Science Journal*, vol. 22, no. 45 (2001), pp. 1-32.

## **Part II: American Colonialism and Cross-Cultural Experiences**

Chapter 4: Vicente L. Rafael, "Chap. 1: White Love: Census and Melodrama in the US Colonization of the Philippines," *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History*, Durham, N.C.: Duke University press, 2000. The only part of the discussion on the 1903 Census (pp. 19-39) is translated.

Chapter 5: Vicente L. Rafael, "Chap. 2: Colonial Domesticity: Engendering Race at the Edge of Empire, 1899-1912," *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History*, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000, pp. 52-75.

Chapter 6: Vicente L. Rafael, "Chap. 4: Anticipating Nationhood: Identification, Collaboration, and Rumor in Filipino Responses to Japan," *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History*, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000, pp.103-121.

### **Part III: Changing Images of Jose Rizal**

Chapter 7: Floro C. Quibuyen, "Chap. 2: "Rizal and the Revolution," *A Nation Aborted: Rizal, American Hegemony, and Philippine Nationalism*, Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1999, pp. 41-72.

Chapter 8: Floro C. Quibuyen, "Chap. 10: Remaking Philippine History," *A Nation Aborted: Rizal, American Hegemony, and Philippine Nationalism*, Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1999, pp. 275-302.

With the publication of his *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Ileto, 1979), Reynaldo C. Ileto explored a new horizon in the historiography of the Philippine Revolution and established his international scholarship. Vicente L. Rafael, in his *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule* (Rafael, 1988), succeeded in his ambitious attempt of introducing poststructuralist theories in his analysis of colonial society. These two Filipino historians have been significantly influential since the 1980s not only in Philippine studies, both at home and abroad, but also in Southeast Asian studies in general at the international level. In recent years, by the publication of *A Nation Aborted: Rizal, American Hegemony, and Philippine Nationalism* (Quibuyen, 1999), Floro Quibuyen, a provocative political scientist, vigorously challenged the deconstruction of the images of the national hero Jose Rizal that became prototyped during the American colonial period. All three scholars have continuously been engaged in enthusiastic and penetrating research on Philippine historiography, politics and culture. This is the reason why I chose the works of the above three scholars for the translated anthology.

Why did I choose the above eight selections in particular? This question actually involves the Japanese cultural or intellectual milieu. Japanese society and culture is undergoing great change today particularly in terms of American influence. Americanization has been stronger than ever in the past five years. "Globalization" has aided in the recovery of the Japanese economy and by doing so it has weakened the Japanese postwar democracy paradoxically. However, looking back at Japanese history



over the past sixty years since World War II, it's only since the early 1980s that the United States has made a decisive impact on Japanese society and culture, and particularly on education. This means to say that we had historically much stronger European (German, French and British) influence in the academic and intellectual world until the end of the 1970s. As part of the generation that did their undergraduate and graduate studies at universities mostly in the 1970s, I see the great gap between the pre-1970s and post-1980s generations in terms of ways of thinking and cultural background in Japan, although up to now we still have a strong influence by French or German philosophy and intellectual history. With this mixed background of Japanese academia I chose the above eight essays.

Though this translated anthology was basically conceived as a reader of Philippine history for Japanese scholars and students who are interested in Philippine society and culture, strong consideration was also given to the fact that the eight translated essays could fit well within the cultural milieu of Japanese academia that was formerly largely influenced by European philosophy and intellectual history until the early 1980s and now under the strong American influence. For example the Iletto essay on the Philippine Revolution in Chapter 1 has various discussions on Hegel, while his critical essay on American scholarship in Chapter 3 very much goes with Edward Said's critique of Orientalism. We translated Rafael's article on census and race in Chapter 4 but did not include the part on "melodrama" because that part might not attract a Japanese audience. Two other pieces of Rafael's on colonial domesticity and Filipino responses to Japan in Chapters 5-6 are good additions from Philippine studies to the post-structuralist approaches in Western literature. And then Quibuyen's arguments in Chapters 7-8 also fit well with the Japanese intellectual milieu because Quibuyen is very much influenced by Gramsci who is well known and popular in Japan. In fact, some original works of Gramsci in the Italian language were translated into Japanese in the 1960s, much earlier than the English translations that only came out in the 1980s in the United States. From Quibuyen's *Nation Aborted* we chose two chapters that might give us wider perspectives on Rizal and Philippine historiography that could be understandable to a Japanese audience.

As compiler and editor of this translated anthology I edited the eight essay manuscripts of eight essays by myself. It was a difficult and time-consuming job. However, in translation work, the most difficult and time-consuming stage is to write up initially the first draft of the translation text, namely, to translate from the original text into another language however rough the translated texts are. This is the stage wherein we experience the most difficult intellectual act -- to traverse two cultural milieus while interpreting the original text and then making the translation text simultaneously. Of course, this process is not a simple one; we do not simply change one language into another. We have to make translation texts or sentences that could be understandable in the cultural milieu of the language used for translation that are oftentimes different from the original texts.

How can this be done? For me, the challenge of translation is to de-contextualize the original text in its cultural milieu and to re-contextualize it in the translated language to fit with its new cultural milieu. Let me explain this process. As translator, I translated two pieces by myself among eight essays of our anthology. One was Iletto's Orientalism critique for Chapter 3 and the other was Rafael's essay on colonial domesticity for Chapter 5. When I translated Iletto's essay on Orientalism in late 2002, what I thought most important was not the matter of political science or Philippine studies in the United States, but rather the critical academic situation of the humanities and social sciences in Japan. I worried about the new trend of neo-liberalist university education and research introduced by government initiative. Frankly speaking, I often spent more time thinking about it than actually translating Iletto's essay into Japanese.

After finishing the translation of Iletto's essay, I translated Rafael's piece on colonial domesticity from December 2002 until January 2003. This was also a difficult piece to translate in the same degree as Iletto but somewhat different in terms of vocabulary usage and text construction. What most concerned me while translating Rafael's piece was -- unusually for me -- a "domestic matter." A domestic matter here does not mean housekeeping. It rather refers to my husband's professional work at his university. I had never had to concern myself with my husband's work (he is a specialist on Indonesia) since our marriage because both of us as scholars had been conducting

researches independently. However, while I translated Rafael's piece I was particularly concerned with what my husband had to tackle at work -- namely, the backlash that his affiliated research institution seemed to have experienced (though I am happy to report here that it was eventually overcome). Needless to say, the experience of my husband was very much linked with the new surroundings of neo-liberalist university education and research so that two experiences of mine throughout the translation of two pieces of Ileta and Rafael were interwoven.

For this translation volume I also wrote an introduction and the main message from me to our Japanese readers is: "Please do not read it as their history, but read it as our history since both the Philippines and Japan are under the US shadow."

### ***How to Translate Ileta's Pasyon and Revolution***

It was only two-three weeks after I finished proofreading the above-mentioned translated anthology that I started to revise the second translation manuscript of *Pasyon* in late August 2004.

From the beginning, I noticed that the translation of *Pasyon* was far more difficult than the eight essays of the anthology. One of the reasons for this difficulty comes from the fact that *Pasyon and Revolution* is a so-called "one story, one book" that sustains discussions and arguments consistently throughout the entire book. The material in all six chapters is interwoven in the complex structure of the book itself so that to translate *Pasyon and Revolution* into Japanese or any other language requires that we deconstruct the structure of *Pasyon and Revolution* and understand the philosophical and intellectual background of the original author. This consideration is very important because *Pasyon and Revolution* is not only a book of Philippine history but it is also a study of the "philosophy of history."

The most critical roadblock that I encountered at the initial stage of editing the translation manuscript of *Pasyon* was that I tried to revise it in the same way that I did the anthology of eight essays -- but in vain. The method of translation of the anthology of postcolonial essays was, as I have mentioned, to de-contextualize the original text in its cultural milieu and to re-contextualize it in the language used for translation to fit a

new cultural milieu. With the anthology of eight essays, the above method worked well because all the essays were written in the 1990s. There was no need to shift the time period to fit the contemporary cultural milieu in Japan. When we translated the eight pieces into Japanese, we maintained the cultural milieu of the original authors when they wrote the pieces in the 1990s, merely shifting location to the contemporary cultural milieu in Japan.

However, this technique was not possible for the translation of *Pasyon and Revolution*. Why? *Pasyon and Revolution* was published in 1979, a quarter of a century ago, so the cultural milieu which surrounded the original author Reynaldo Ileto was very different from the contemporary period of 2004. To bring Ileto's language in *Pasyon and Revolution* to contemporary readers in Japan, we had to set up four -- rather than two -- dimensions of the translation matrix: two different time periods (the mid-1970s and 2004) and two different cultural milieus (the Philippines and Japan).

How should the task be approached? As one of the translators of Ileto's texts, I decided to go back to the world of the mid-1970s' when Reynaldo Ileto wrote *Pasyon and Revolution*. I did not attempt to locate Ileto's personal situation, but rather (as Japanese translator) to remember the mid-1970s milieu in Japan that I actually saw and experienced as well as to recall my own thoughts and actions at that time. By so doing, as Japanese translator I became the Japanese contemporary of Reynaldo Ileto when he wrote *Pasyon and Revolution* in the mid-1970s.

By setting this matrix, it became possible for me to compare the two epistemological worlds, that is, the one of Reynaldo Ileto when he wrote *Pasyon and Revolution* in the mid-1970s and my own Japanese reality at the same period. For me the translation of *Pasyon and Revolution* was only possible by becoming the contemporary of the original author in this way. During this process, the first thing that I remembered or revisited was my strong interest in intellectual history and the paper I wrote for my undergraduate thesis in the early 1970s on Karl Marx's view of the modern state. Then while revising the translation manuscript from one sentence to the other, or one chapter to another, I continued revisiting my research path and career through my MA and PhD courses to the writing of the PhD dissertation in the 1980s.

The fact that *Pasyon and Revolution* required myself as the translator to take such a long mental journey demonstrates that while it is a book of Philippine history, in essence it is a “philosophy of history.”

Needless to say, to achieve the above systematic method of translation of *Pasyon and Revolution*, I had to pass through various barriers such as mental block. Fortunately with the moral support of my co-editor Hiromu Shimizu, while revising the manuscript of Chapter 3, I was finally able to find the best way to translate *Pasyon* and then I came to see the structure of *Pasyon and Revolution* and to identify the *Pasyon* matrix.

What did I see as the *Pasyon* matrix, then? Let me explain it briefly here. The first three chapters of *Pasyon* give us the formulation of several important Tagalog language concepts: "loob" (inner self) in chapter 1, "damay" (compassion or empathy) in Chapter 2 and "kalayaan" (freedom or liberty) in Chapter 3. These three concepts are formulated as the pillars to understand the meaning of "liwanag" (light) in the consciousness of Tagalog people, placing the "liwanag" as the important concept to grasp the "light and darkness" that could be taken as the main motif to see the nature of modernity or the modern world. Another important concept is “tanda” that links to the anticipation of human consciousness and physical action. Then in Chapters 4-6, the dynamism of the changing and transforming of the consciousness of the Tagalog people (or peasants) from the early period of the Revolution until the 1910s are elaborately depicted as the interrelationship or crossing over of the three key concepts of "loob," "damay" and "kalayaan" through Iletto’s painstaking analysis of Tagalog original texts. At the same time, the physical actions of the Revolution of 1896 (and before and after) are described throughout Chapters 2-6 as "lakaran" (journeys or pilgrimages) that should be understood as the parallel physical actions of the peasant to the changing nature of their consciousness. “Anting-anting” (amulets) are also important for protecting all the above action and mentality of Tagalog people.

I understood that the three key concepts of "loob," "damay" and "kalayaan" in *Pasyon* could be juxtaposed to the concept of "patron-client relationship." In this sense, I am wondering if the basic idea that produces these three concepts might come from Martin Buber's philosophy regarding the nature of human relations and communalism,

while the way of understanding the Filipino peasant in terms of the relationship between his consciousness (or mind) and physical actions (as "lakaran") might mainly come from Merlau-Ponty's existential phenomenology. We could also see the strong influence in Ileta's argument from Victor Turner for the adaptation of the concept of "communitas" in peasant movements (Turner, 1974).

Another philosophical path that I have seen in *Pasyon* is the way that Ileta's *Pasyon* has overcome Teodoro Agoncillo's *The Revolt of the Masses* (Agoncillo, 1956) by utilizing the important concept of "history from below." Ileta uses this term "history from below" as the title of Chapter 1 of his *Pasyon* book. The "history from below" concept has been widely acknowledged as originally conceived by the noted English scholar E. P. Thompson in his study of the working class in England. It is also utilized in the famous Subaltern Studies of India. However, during a workshop held in Meiji Gakuin University in 2002, we learned from Ileta that he himself conceived this concept without knowing the work of Thompson or Subaltern Studies when he wrote his *Pasyon*! He reported that he originally conceived the term "history from below" to supersede Agoncillo's *The Revolt of the Masses* (Meiji Gakuin University 2003, 95-96). I came to the conclusion that Ileta is a historical as well as original thinker.

As for the literature that Ileta utilized for writing his *Pasyon*, aside from his vast research on Philippine history, what Ileta must have been interested in or influenced by in order to conceive the theme and construct the structure of *Pasyon* might be, for example: Sarkisyanz's *Buddhist Backgrounds of the Burmese Revolution* (Sarkisyanz, 1965), Anderson's "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture" (Anderson, 1972) and Auerbach's classic *Mimesis* (Auerbach, 1953) or Marx's *French Civil War* (Marx, 1921). Where could we find the presence of Reynaldo Ileta himself in his *Pasyon*? For me it seems to be revealing in the following words of dedication on the front page: "Handog kay Loolee kina Mama at Papa at sa lahat ng dumadamay sa lakarang ito." (Dedicated to Loolee and Mama and Papa and everyone who helped me on this journey.)

### ***Concluding Remarks***

In this essay I have described how I have engaged in two translation projects on

Philippine historiography successively over three years. Through intensive translation work, I came to find that translation is an intellectual act to traverse different cultural milieus and to locate or re-locate the essays or books written in foreign languages in the cultural milieu of the translated language. If the translated materials are written in the contemporary period we need not engage in the so-called time slip; however, if they were written some decades ago, the epistemological setting of the translator should involve shifting the time period, attempting to enter the complex setting of the epistemological world of the original author.

However, what I have illustrated here is the case of translation of works written by foreign authors. What about the translation of works by our same nationals? How should we translate works written by Japanese scholars in Japanese, English or some other languages? Indeed, translation is a challenging and wonderful intellectual engagement. It should also be a political act as Naoki Sakai correctly mentioned (Sakai, 1997). How one chooses the materials for translation reflects the political orientation of the translator him- or herself. It would be extremely difficult to devote such a long time to translating one word to another, if we did not find any scholarly significance in the project. Here is the essence of our energy for translation.

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