The Chinese word for ‘translation’ is *fan*, which means “turn over, reverse” (as in the Latin word *vertere*) and also “search, rummage”. Translating a Chinese text, whether a classical or a modern one, a technical or a literary one, means on the one hand to “search” among one’s linguistic and extralinguistic resources; on the other hand it means sometimes to “turn over completely” the text in order to produce an adequate translation. It may happen that to “betray” a text is the only way to be “faithful” to it: in Hunter’s words: “There is little point in translating the text ‘faithfully’ if its message is not communicated to the readers. And translation is, of course, communication, but not at all costs” (“Translation from Chinese: Coherence and the Reader”, 1991, 627).

Translating is often a hard and audacious task to be accomplished, according to George Stainer: “To move between languages, to translate, even with restrictions of totality, is to experience the almost bewildering bias of the human spirit towards freedom” (*After Babel*, 1998, 497).

But the philological understanding of the text and a deep awareness of its linguistic, historical, and cultural background prevent the translator’s bias to freedom from becoming bewilderment and abuse.

The question is: which problems of commensurability and translatability between Chinese and European languages are translators confronted with?

Is there any specificity in Chinese translation and in Chinese language, and if there is any, is it possible and/or necessary to transmit it coherently into the metatext?

Recent tendencies in Translation Studies try to answer some of these questions, in order to enrich the field with new perspectives and to challenge its Western-centric viewpoint.

This conference on Chinese translation aims at exploring these and other features of Chinese translation from both a practical and a theoretical standpoint, and to analyse old and new ways of translating Chinese texts.
Program

9.30 Welcome and opening remarks
Alide Cagidemetrio (Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Università Ca’ Foscari Venezia)
Nicoletta Pesaro (Università Ca’ Foscari Venezia)

10.00 Chair: Fiorenzo Lafirenza
Bruno Osimo (Università Ca’ Foscari Venezia)
Terminology in metalanguage as a possible solution
Attilio Andreini (Università Ca’ Foscari Venezia)
How to establish the text to translate? Some methodological issues in reading Early Chinese manuscripts
Paolo Magagnin (Università Ca’ Foscari Venezia)
The practice of the remainder in translation from Chinese

11.30 Coffee Break

12.00 Chair: Nicoletta Pesaro
Federica Passi (Università Ca’ Foscari Venezia)
Translation, modernity and the past: the case of Zhang Ailing
Michael Berry (University of California, Santa Barbara)
Translation, Transcription, and Being Translated: Reflections on the Challenges of Chinese-English Literary Translation

14.30 Chair: Attilio Andreini
Stefano Zacchetti (Università Ca’ Foscari Venezia)
Medieval Chinese as a Target Language: Translation Strategies in the Early Chinese Versions of Buddhist Scriptures
Sebastian Veg (The French Centre for Research on Contemporary China)
Lu Xun and ‘hard translations’: the specificities of Republican literature
Nicoletta Pesaro (Università Ca’ Foscari Venezia)
The rhythm of thought: some problems of translating syntax in modern Chinese literature

16.00 Coffee-break

16.30 Chair: Sebastian Veg
Noël Dutrait and Liliane Dutrait (Université de Provence)
Between fidelity and betrayal, between constraint and freedom, the choice of pragmatism: the translation of Mo Yan’s novels
Fiorenzo Lafirenza (Università Ca’ Foscari Venezia)
There’s a tense for every activity under heaven: strategies for choosing verbal tenses in literary translation from Chinese

17.30 Final discussion

19.00 Dinner