



THE STATE OF THE STUDY OF ANCIENT CHINESE LITERATURE IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract

This article analyzes the level and current state of the study of ancient Chinese literature in Uzbekistan, as well as the formation of Sinology in Uzbekistan, the contributions of prominent scholars and translators, the theoretical analysis of the translation of ancient Chinese literary works into the Uzbek language is conducted.

Keywords: Chinese literature, ancient China, Eastern literature, literature textbooks, school education, world literature, art of translation, cultural dialogue.

Introduction

Ancient Chinese literature is considered one of the oldest and richest treasures of human culture. Chinese literature was formed in the 11th–6th centuries BC, It began with works such as the Shijing (Book of Poetry) and the Shujing (Book of History), and with its philosophical depth, poetic beauty, and epic scope, it constitutes an important part of the world's literary heritage. The teachings of Confucius, the philosophy of Taoism, the poems of the Tang dynasty poets Li Bo and Du Fu, and the classic novels have left an indelible mark on Chinese and Asian culture.

Chinese literature encompasses a millennia-long history – from dynastic archives to the Ming Dynasty's vernacular novels. During the Tang period (618-907), woodblock printing, and in the Song period (960-1279) Bi Sheng (990-1051) spread written knowledge through movable type printing. The modern writer Lu Xun (1881-1936) was an influential voice of the bayhua literature. This literature was largely shaped by the influence of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, and includes important works such as the "Shijing" (Book of Poetry) and the



*Modern American Journal of Linguistics,
Education, and Pedagogy*

ISSN (E): 3067-7874

Volume 2, Issue 5, May, 2026

Website: usajournals.org

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"Lunyu" (The Confucian Analects). In its early stages, Chinese literature was formed on the basis of folk oral tradition, which expressed the people's customs, rituals, values, and way of life.

Confucius (551–479 BC) holds a special place in the history of Chinese literature. His teachings played an important role not only in literary but also in political and moral life. The "Five Classics" (Wenzi) compiled by him form the basis of Chinese classical literature. In addition, the founder of Taoism Lao Tzu, Buddhist writings, and historical chronicles also hold an important place in ancient Chinese literature.

Today, the world literature section in school literature textbooks is largely limited to Western European authors (Dante, Shakespeare, Molière, Goethe, Hugo, Dickens) and Russian classic literature (Pushkin, Lermontov, Tolstoy). When Eastern literature is mentioned, it often refers only to the Persian-Tajik (Nawawi, Jami, Hafez), while the unique characteristics of Chinese literature are being overlooked. An analysis of the content of textbooks for grades 5–11 approved by the Republican Education Center revealed that for ancient and Renaissance literature, the works included in most cases are only from Greek-Roman and Western European authors. Thus, Chinese literature, which has the world's oldest and most continuous literary tradition (from the 2nd millennium BC to the present), has been almost completely overlooked in the Uzbek education system. In Central Asia and particularly in Uzbekistan, great attention is being paid to the comprehensive study of foreign literature, especially Chinese literature, and to conducting scientific research on this subject. From this perspective, the purpose of this article is to examine the level of study of ancient Chinese literature in Uzbekistan. The study analyzes the level of study of ancient Chinese literature in Uzbekistan, the history of the formation of the field of Sinology, the contributions of prominent scholars and translators, as well as the state of translation of ancient Chinese literary works into the Uzbek language.

Descriptive-analytical and comparative analysis methods were used in the research. In the first stage, translations into Uzbek of ancient and classical Chinese literature published in Uzbekistan (1960–2025) were collected and analyzed chronologically. In the second stage, the content of the literature textbooks for grades 5–11, approved by the National Education Center, was



examined using content analysis to determine the space allocated to Eastern and, in particular, Chinese literature. In the third stage, based on the collected data, the existing problems were classified, and proposals for their resolution were developed.

The results of the study are presented in the following table, showing the state of translations of ancient and classical Chinese literature into Uzbek language for the period from 1960 to 2025.

Title of the work	Author	Translator	Year
"The King's Road"	Lao She	Miraziz A'zam	1983
"The Seaside Village"	Ba Jin	S. Ahmad	1979
"The Red Woman"	Mo Yan	Khurshid Dostmuhammad	2013
"Merciless City"	Lu Xun	Ozod Sharafiddinov	1960
"White Dog, Black Dog"	Han Shaogong	Usmon Azim	1995
Pu Songling's Novels	Pu Songling	Ziyamuhammedov Jasur	2012
The Land of Musallas	Mo Yan	Amir Fayzullo, Sevara Alijonova	2018
"The Horseman"	Zhang Wei	Muhammad Ali	2002
Chinese Cultural Holidays	Traditional	Nargiza Ismatullayeva	2006
Conversation and reflections	Confucius	Nargiza Ismatullayeva	2010

"Dream of the Red Chamber" (by Cao Xueqin) and "Journey to the West" (author Wu Cheng'en) have not been found during the research on their translation into Uzbek – these works have either not been fully translated into Uzbek to date, or information about the translation is not available in public sources.

It should be noted that translator Ilhom Qosimov is one of the most active specialists in translating ancient Chinese philosophical and literary heritage into Uzbek. His translations include: "Confucius. Wisdom" (2010), "Confucius. Discussion and Commentary" (2013), "Ancient Chinese Wisdom" (translation-anthology, 2014), "Mencius. A Lesson in Wisdom" (2015), "The Teachings of the



***Modern American Journal of Linguistics,
Education, and Pedagogy***

ISSN (E): 3067-7874

Volume 2, Issue 5, May, 2026

Website: usajournals.org

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Yellow Dragon: Great Wisdom from Small Stories" (translation-anthology, 2015), "Daodejing" ("The Book of Dao and Virtues", 2020), "Chinese Sages" (translation-anthology, 2024).

Anonymous (traditional/collective) literature

Title of the work	Author	Year
"Chinese Folk Tales"	Traditional	1975
"Chinese Myths"	Traditional	1981
" Anthology of Chinese Poetry"	Various Authors	1987

The results above show that although samples of ancient and classical Chinese literature have been translated, there are still many spiritually nourishing works that have not yet been translated. The number of Chinese language learners is increasing, but there are few specialists who know wenyan (ancient Chinese) and are also familiar with Uzbek literary studies. A large portion of the existing translations have been done as indirect translations through Russian, which does not allow for the full preservation of the original work's spirit and poetic beauty. Another problem is that there are very few fundamental studies, textbooks, and manuals in Uzbek on ancient Chinese literature; the majority of existing sources are in Russian, which hinders the development of research in the Uzbek language. In the context of the strengthening strategic partnership between Uzbekistan and China, positive changes are also expected in the field of studying ancient Chinese literature. In this regard, the following proposals are put forward: First, the training system for personnel must be improved – this includes expanding exchange programs with Chinese universities, sending Uzbek students to China for doctoral studies in Sinology, and enhancing local master's degree programs. Second, it is advisable to establish a state program to translate and publish the best examples of ancient Chinese literature directly from Chinese into Uzbek. Third, it is necessary to dedicate more space to ancient Chinese literature in school and higher education programs, expand topics dedicated to Chinese literature in the field of world literature, and develop specialized methodological guides. Fourth, digital technologies—such as social media, podcasts, and online courses—can be used to introduce classical Chinese literature to a wider



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audience. Fifth, it is necessary to strengthen research in the field of comparative studies of Uzbek and Chinese classical literatures, which will not only bring the two cultures closer but also allow for a new perspective on both literatures.

In conclusion, the history of the study of ancient Chinese literature in Uzbekistan has been an integral part of the cultural and moral dialogue between the two peoples since the era of the Great Silk Road. While the foundations of sinology were laid during the Soviet era, institutional development reached a new stage in the years of independence under the leadership of the Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies. At the same time, a shortage of qualified specialists, a scarcity of scientific literature and fundamental research, and quality issues with mediation translation, which is conducted mainly through Russian, are significantly hindering the development of this field. Including ancient Chinese literature in school textbooks is not just an introduction to a foreign culture, but an expansion of the young generation's spiritual and intellectual worldview and a strengthening of national identity on a global scale. This process cultivates high humanistic virtues in young people and lays the foundation for future strategic cooperation. Starting with the 2026-2027 academic year, it is appropriate to include a "Chinese Classical Literature" section in the textbooks, featuring excerpts from the "Daodejing," poems by Li Bo, and folk tales. After all, "Literature is the strongest bridge between peoples."

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