
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Capturing the Flow of Culture: A Case Study of the English Translations of Li Bai's Changgan Xing

Jing An

College of Sinology and Chinese Studies, Beijing Language and Culture University, Beijing 100083, China

Corresponding Author: Jing An, **E-mail:** jingan19930804@gmail.com

| ABSTRACT

Translation can be regarded as a communicative process involving three distinct objectives: the original author, the translator, and the reader of the translated text. Each objective situated in different times and spaces. In any communication process, the first and most essential step is to leave a strong impression on the target audience. In the process of translation, the best way to leave a good impression on the reader is by improving the "quality" of the translated text itself which is the core product of the process. Many translation theories are already presented in academic circles, including but clearly not limited to Pound's theory of image poem translation, which regards translation with poems. The concept discussed in this paper also focuses but not limited to poems' translation. Chinese traditional poetry in Tang dynasty is a gem of China's rich and brilliant cultural legacy. Translating poetry in Tang dynasty into English helps foster a deeper understanding of China's cultural traditions in the Western world and tell Chinese stories. Li Bai, one of the greatest poets of the Tang dynasty, authored "Changgan Xing", one of his most representative works. A case study on the English translation of "Changgan Xing" illustrates the importance of "luminous details", for not merely poems' translation, but also other forms. This article proposes a practical approach to improving the "quality" of translations: emphasizing the translator's subjectivity and adding "creative, luminous details" to the translated text. If these details demonstrate high-level translation skills, they can enhance the overall impression of the translation in the reader's mind, contributing to more effective cultural interaction and communication.

| KEYWORDS

Chinese Poetry in English Translation; Flow of Culture; Translation Strategy; Li Bai; Changgan Xing; Luminous Details

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 01 January 2024

PUBLISHED: 10 January 2025

DOI: 10.32996/ijtis.2025.5.1.2

1. Introduction

1.1 New thinking to translation

Translation can be understood as a communicative process involving three objectives that are divided by time and space: the original author, the translator, and the target reader of the translated text. The task of the author is to absorb the culture, thoughts and creativity of their time and place, blending them with his or her own subjectivity to create a text that is worthy of reading and translating. The translator's task is to use their subjectivity and knowledge of the target reader's characteristics to apply his or her language proficiency, striving to convert the original text into the target language as faithfully as possible. Upon reading the translated text, the reader receives the information from both the author and the translator, the latter may add, omit or alter so as to prompt the reader to think in a more individualized manner. This thinking may lead to a transformation or adjustment in the reader's own ideas, and possibly result in feedback to the translator or the author, finishing the entire process.

There are numerous translation theories that address the elements and pathways to improving translation's "quality", and the next sections in this paper will discuss theories relevant to this case, Li Bai's "Changgan Xing", including mainly but not only Ezra Pound's "luminous details" theory but also other translating tactics.

Central to this paper is the idea of the "flow of culture", stands for the interaction and transformation of cultural elements across borders, fostering mutual enrichments and enlightens. Translation, in this context, is not merely the mechanical rendering of words from one language to another but an impressive process that shapes the flow of culture. Details depicted in translation, especially those "creative, luminous details" emphasized in this paper, showed perfectly how flow of culture were created during the communication process from the author, to the translator, then to the reader and back. Since culture are raised by people and translations are created by the people, discussions on these translators' lives will also be provided.

1.2 Introducing "Changgan Xing"

Chinese traditional poems in Tang dynasty are among the most precious treasures of China's long and glorious cultural heritage. Translating these poems into English helps increase the Western understanding of Chinese cultural traditions and promotes cultural interactions. Li Bai, one of the greatest poets of all times, created works that are considered jewels in the crown of poems from Tang dynasty. According to the critics (Yu Guangzhong, 1980), when Li Bai opened his mouth, "half of the glory of the Tang dynasty would be spilled out." "Changgan Xing" is a masterpiece of Li Bai's poetic art. Therefore, a case study of the English translation of Li Bai's "Changgan Xing" holds value and significance in enhancing the cultural flows between China and the world.

"Changgan Xing" is one of Li Bai's representative works, an immortal poem in the yuefu style that depicts love. It is included in the Three Hundred Tang Poems. This poem is narrated from the perspective of a female protagonist, expressing her longing for her husband, who is away on business. It tells the story of this woman who met her husband in childhood, married him at a young age, and now waits alone for his return as he travels. The poem vividly depicts the different stages of her life, from childhood to adolescence, and up to her current state of waiting, with each scene coming to life in striking details. Through the monologue of the protagonist, complemented by the imagery of the surroundings, the poem skillfully integrated narration, description, and emotional expression. The language was straightforward, with harmonious rhythms and delicate, winding emotions. The tone was sincere, and the poem's strong narrative power makes it a masterpiece of poetic art.

2. Contents in "creative, luminous details"

In his review of Qi Peihe's translation of Kissinger, Wang Zongyan, one of the editors of the Modern Linguistics Series, stated: "Translation is like painting, not photography; it is like memorizing lines, not reciting scripts." This highlights that translation should be "vivid and lively" and should "convey the meaning of the original text while not being confined to its literal wording" (Foreign Languages, 1981, Issue 4, cited in Luo Xinzhang and Chen Yingnian's Translation Studies Collection). This statement reveals the importance of a translator's creativity and language proficiency in producing a good translation.

Douglas Robinson, in his *The Translator's Turn* (1991), suggests that literary translators integrate feeling and thought, intuition and systematization. When analyzing the translator's "turn" from the source text to the target text, Robinson proposes a "dialogue" model to analyze the interactions between the translator and the source language/author, as well as between the translator and the target language/reader's ethical considerations. Robinson allows translators to intervene, subvert, deviate, and even entertain, emphasizing the creative nature of literary translation. He believes that linguists, translation scientists, and philosophers have had their time to develop translation theory; now it is time for literary translators to "take the stage" (cited in Edwin Gentzler's *Contemporary Translation Theory*, 2nd edition, 2001). From Robinson's perspective, the creativity of literary translators is of great importance, and the underlying assumption is that we must have confidence in their ability to integrate "feeling and thought, intuition and systematization".

Indeed, the work of translation demands that the translator possess certain skills. Good translations often share similar strengths. For example, an English-to-Chinese translator should be able to "immerse him/herself in the meaning of the original text and express it in plain Chinese", ideally possessing "an abundant vocabulary, and being able to convey the original meaning in term that Chinese speakers will find familiar and enjoyable" (Wang Zongyan, "Review of Qi Peihe's Translation of Kissinger, cited in Luo Xinzhang and Chen Yingnian's Translation Studies Collection). Similarly, a Chinese-to-English translator should immerse themselves in the meaning of the original Chinese text and express it in concise, distinct English, with a broad vocabulary and the ability to use phrases that English-speaking readers would find familiar and engaging.

This path that emphasizes the translator's ability and creativity resonates with Ezra Pound's translation theory, which "offers individual translators more dimensions for responding and regards the translator as an artist, sculptor, or calligrapher----a master of words" (Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theory*, translated by Fu Jingmin, 2021). In his *Contemporary*

Translation Theory, Gentzler explains that Pound's translation theory is deeply rooted in tradition, but it also goes beyond any conventional logic. To fully understand the poetic depth of a text, the translator must consider the temporal, spatial, and ideological limitations of the original. Pound insists that translators should be sensitive to the emotions, atmosphere, and intellectual processes within the text. Furthermore, "Translation must carry these emotions and sentiments from a specific time and place into the present culture, transforming them into a contemporary text." "The only way to achieve this without falling into 'translatorese' is to create new connections in the present, treating the translator as a vibrant, creative subject." This theoretical perspective also highlights the critical role of the translator's creativity.

Pound valued simplicity, clarity, and the depiction of concrete imagery, aiming to maintain accuracy, details, and specific visual representations. During Pound's era, and even up to present days, tendencies toward generalization, categorization, and abstraction have been prominent in Western academic and literary institutions, which helps explain why Pound has been regarded as "creatively rebellious" (Kang Yaolan, 2022). To this day, Pound's ideals of clear, accurate, detailed, and concrete imagery still hold great relevance and can serve as a benchmark for evaluation. Within this framework, "creative, luminous details" represent the translator's creative flair, and these "creative, luminous details" in the translation not only create more memorable moments but also enhance the reader's overall impression of the translated text, making themselves extremely essential.

In 1950, Pound wrote that, the goal of translation is: "1. The true speech within the English translation. 2. Fidelity to the original text's: a. meaning b. atmosphere." Pound expanded the concept of "fidelity" to include both the meaning of the original text and its "atmosphere". Pound's demand goes beyond the translation of words; it extends to the full imagination of scenes and events. Gentzler points out that the "atmosphere" Pound refers to includes both contextual and intertextual relations. Pound emphasized the importance of contextual relationships because every word exists within a context. Therefore, the translator must constantly imagine the context ("scene") and the expressions within it ("event"). According to Pound's translation theory, meaning is not an abstract concept nor a part of a universal language; meaning always exists within the historical flow, and this flow creates the "atmosphere" in which meaning arises. To interpret meaning, one must understand history and reconstruct the atmosphere/environment in which meaning was generated. Pound's translation theory insists that the translator always keeps in mind the historical atmosphere of the words, so the translation process reveals not only the meaning of the words themselves but also the various nuances of the words within their "linguistic expression" (Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theory*, translated by Fu Jingmin, 2021). Therefore, to create "creative, luminous details" in the translation, it is best to generate an overall impression in the translation that aligns with the impression given by the original text. This requires a full imagination of the scenes and events in the original text, which helps form the overall impression of the entire work. It sets a high-quality backdrop for "creative, luminous details", and the successful creation of these details can, in turn, contribute to enhancing the overall impression of the text.

To sum up, the concept of "creative, luminous details" involves the following four aspects: First, it calls for the translator to have both literal capability and creativity, actively exercising their subjective initiative; second, it requires the translator to imagine the scenes and events of the original text in full and as accurately as possible to lay the groundwork for the translation; third, it refers to the most remarkable details in the translated text, showcasing the translator's competence and providing memorable points; and fourth, it contributes to enhancing the overall "quality" of the translated text and the reader's overall impression; therefore, they are highly important.

3. Introducing and critically reviewing the nine English translations of Changgan Xing in the book *A Comparative Study on English Translations of Old Gems*

As recorded in *A Comparative Study on English Translations of Old Gems* (1988 edition) by Lü Shuxiang and Xu Yuanchong, there are nine well-known English translations of Li Bai's Changgan Xing. Among these, six are by Western translators, two by Chinese translators (Weng Xianliang and Xu Yuanchong), and one by a Japanese translator (Shigeyoshi Obata). This paper will not discuss the translation versions that didn't included in this book. In this section, a detailed analysis of these nine English translations will be provided, focusing on the concept of "creative, luminous details".

3.1 Ezra Pound's translation, "The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter"

Among the English translations of Changgan Xing, the most famous is perhaps Ezra Pound's version, "The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter" (according to the book of Lü and Xu, the title is without the two words "a letter" and it is the only difference), which was featured in his *Cathay*. Although many scholars, particularly American sinologists, have pointed out certain inaccuracies, omissions, and adaptations in his version, major poets like Yeats, Ford, and Williams have recognized its freshness, elegance, and conciseness as praiseworthy qualities. Pound was able to capture even the smallest details in the original text, using these details to reveal the fundamental concerns of the original poet. In recent years, Chinese scholars have highly praised Pound's

translation, acknowledging it as a manifestation of his creative talent, while still being fairly faithful to the content, spirit, tone, style, and imagery of the original poem (Hu Xueyin & Ran Yuti, 2023).

The full translated text is provided below:

THE RIVER-MERCHANT'S WIFE: A LETTER

Ezra Pound

While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead

I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.

You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse,

You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.

And we went on living in the village of Chokan;

Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.

At fourteen I married My Lord you,

I never laughed, being bashful.

Lowering my head, I looked at the wall,

Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back.

At fifteen I stopped scowling,

I desired my dust to be mingled with yours.

Why should I climb the look-out?

At sixteen you departed,

Forever and forever, and forever.

You went into far Ku-to-Yen, by the river of swirling eddies,

And you have been gone five months.

The monkeys make sorrowful noise overhead.

You dragged your feet when you went out.

By the gate now, the moss is grown, the different mosses,

Too deep to clear them away!

The leaves fall early this autumn, in wind.

The paired butterflies are already yellow with August,

Over the grass in the West Garden,

They hurt me.

I grow older,

If you are coming down through the narrows of the river Kiang,

Please let me know beforehand,

And I will come out to meet you,

As far as Cho-fu-Sa.

Ezra Pound (1885-1972) was born in the United States and studied American history, classical literature, and Romance languages in university. In 1908, he settled in London, where he became a prominent figure in the literary scene. As an American poet, literary critic, and a key representative of the Imagist movement, Pound possessed exceptional aesthetic taste and linguistic skills, along with a practical approach to theory. He was also a translator and translation critic. The Imagist movement, which took place between 1909 and 1917, was initiated by several English and American poets. Its aim was to encourage poets to present things vividly through clear, precise, and concise images, capturing the fleeting thoughts and emotions of the poet within the lines of poetry. Pound published *Cathay* in 1915, which included his translation of "The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter", based on the manuscript of Ernest Francisco Fenollosa (1853-1908).

The period during which *Cathay* was published, according to Gentzler in *Contemporary Translation Theory*, still belongs to Pound's early Imagist phase. His early works exhibited a romantic temperament, and his early ideas on Imagism seemed metaphysical. However, after figures like Amy Lowell and others began to appropriate his ideas and transform Imagism into a poetic form of metaphysical symbolism, Pound felt the need to distance himself from the movement. From that point on, his language became increasingly direct in his poetry to capture precise content and even minute details. His choice of words pointed directly to objective things---a painting, a pigment, a stone, a carved mark on a stone---rather than abstract concepts. To express his theory more precisely, Pound gradually turned toward "Vorticism". While his early Imagist works diverged from traditional logical forms, they still contained some abstract concepts and impressions. In his later Imagist phase, or Vorticist phase, the focus shifted entirely to "words in action" and "luminous" details. In these concepts, the things being presented were no longer important; what mattered more was the energy or form that language obtained through representation. Unlike some strictly defined translation theories, Pound's translation theory focuses on the precise transmission of concrete details, individual words, and even fragmented images. Pound's "theory" does not assume that the entire work has a single, unified meaning; rather, based on the concept of "language energy", he believed that words on paper and concrete details were not merely black-and-white marks representing other things, but rather, they were the molded images themselves---what he called "words carved in stone".

Therefore, although it could be said that "The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter" is not yet the most mature embodiment of Pound's "luminous" details theory, it already reflects the style he champions: precision, capturing minute details, choosing words that directly point to objective things, and emphasizing the specific transmission of individual or fragmented images. With this perspective, the following analysis of the English translation is provided:

Pound's translation almost completely successfully retained the textual details, such as "hair (发)", "covering the forehead (覆额)", "at the gate (门前)", "picking flowers (折花)", "riding the bamboo horse (骑竹马)" (though here "bamboo horse" is inaccurately translated as "bamboo stilts" and "horseplay"), "circling the seat (绕床)", "playing with green plums (弄青梅)", "Chokan (长干)" (Changgan, a small town's name), "two small people (两小)" and "dislike or suspicion (嫌猜)". The translation is accurate in its expression, even though "green plums (青梅)" is translated as "blue plums (蓝梅)", and "well fence (床/井栏)" is translated as "seat (座位)". These variations do not significantly affect the overall meaning, and the translation successfully conveys the delicate emotions of the young woman as she recalls her childhood memories.

Pound translates "君" as "my lord you", which implicitly reflects his understanding of the hierarchical relationship between husband and wife in ancient Chinese families, where the husband is considered the dominant figure. This shows Pound's broad knowledge of ancient Chinese culture. He translates "暗壁(dark wall)" simply as "wall", omitting the "暗(dark)", which could be seen as a loss of nuance. The word "暗" could suggest the low height of the bowed head, conveying a sense of shyness. This suggests that Pound did not achieve perfect precision in this translation, which may be related to the specific manuscript he had access to, as he did not know Chinese but relied on Fenollosa's notes to understand the original text.

Pound translates "始展眉" as "stop scowling" rather than a more literal translation like "compose/straighten my eyebrows", which still captures the meaning accurately. However, his translation of "同尘与灰" as "my dust to be mingled with yours" seems to interpret "尘与灰" as the ashes left after the body's demise, rather than the original cultural meaning of "尘" in Chinese, which reflects the insignificance of human life---lives could be as small as ashes and dusts. This line expressed that even with such insignificance, the protagonist is willing to be with the one person for her whole life. But the sentiment of "being with you"

remains intact. The phrase “常存抱柱信” is entirely omitted, which should not be, as this line expresses the protagonist’s unwavering loyalty and determination to uphold the promise made to her husband.

In the original text, the sentence “at sixteen you departed” would suffice, but Pound enhances it with “forever and forever, and forever”, creatively and precisely capturing the protagonist’s longing, sorrow, and anxious hope for her husband’s return, adding a melancholic yet aesthetic tone. This should be considered a “creative, luminous detail”, one that sticks with readers’ appetites and evokes emotional resonance. Pound’s translation of “瞿塘滟滪堆” as “the river of swirling eddies” follows the principle of accurate transmission of a single image, supplementing the original detail by adding “swirling”, enriching the image of the river. However, his translation of “五月不可触” as “you have gone for five months” is inaccurate. The line means the river’s flow is too rapid and dangerous to ride boats upon in the May of lunar calendar. The next line is beautifully rendered, with “迹(trace)” as “dragged”, reflecting the walking trace of the woman’s seeing her husband off, just like dragged on the ground. The phrase “the moss is...the different mosses...” demonstrates Pound’s skill in language transformation, delivering the image of beautiful autumn green mosses through precise spatial imagination. On one hand, the imagery of “苔深(thick mosses)” “不能扫(cannot be cleaned)” “落叶(falling leaves)” “秋风(autumn wind)” “早(early)” “八月(August of lunar calendar)” “蝴蝶(butterflies)” “黄(yellow)” “双(doubled)” “飞(fly)” “西园(west garden)” “草(grasses)” flows naturally to form an emotionally charging scene of late autumn, with each image building upon the next, showing Pound’s accurate grasp of the atmosphere; the omission of “心” in “伤妾心” and “坐” in “坐愁红颜老” makes the translation losing some of the imagery Pound often emphasizes, but the emotional effect remains intact; the term “坐(sit)” especially might had added a sense of passive time passing, which would have conveyed more of the protagonist’s emotional state. On the other, the omission of “早晚(early or later)” in “早晚下下巴” which indicates the anticipation of her husband’s return, losses some important emotional details, violating Pound’s own principle of conveying the complete scene.

Overall, Pound’s translation of “The River-Merchant’s Wife: A Letter” already shows the embryonic application of his “luminous” details theory. The translation highlights the accurate transmission of individual images, the need for precise imagination of the original text’s scenes and events, and the emphasis on concrete objects. It also exhibits a fresh, elegant, and concise aesthetic. Moreover, it includes “creative, luminous details” that are easy for the reader to remember: by adding the phrase “forever and forever, and forever”, Pound brings to life the character of a melancholic and longing wife.

3.2 W. A. P. Martin’s translation, “A Soldier’s Wife to Her Husband”

A SOLDIER’S WIFE TO HER HUSBAND

W. A. P. Martin

‘T was many a year ago,

How I recall the day!

When you, my own true love,

Came first with me to play.

You rode a bamboo horse,

And deemed yourself a knight,

With paper helm and shield,

And wooden sword bedight.

Thus we together grew,

And we together played----

Yourself a giddy boy,

And I a thoughtless maid.

At fourteen I was wed;
And if one called my name,
As quick as lightning flash,
The crimson blushes came.

'T was not till we had passed,
A year of married life,
My heart was knit to yours,
In joy to be your wife.

Another year, alas!
And you had joined your chief;
While I was left at home,
In solitary grief.

When victory crowns your arms,
And I your triumph learn,
What bliss for me to fly,
To welcome your return.

W. A. P. Martin (1827-1916), a Presbyterian missionary from the United States, spent ten years (1850-1860) in Ningbo, China, where he was involved in missionary work. During the 1858 Sino-American negotiations, he served as a translator and contributed to drafting the Treaty of Tientsin (Tianjin). Martin also provided intelligence about the Taiping Rebellion to the U.S. government, established a church in Beijing, and worked as a teacher at the Tongwen Guan from 1865. He later became the head of the same institution from 1869 to 1894, serving as a legal advisor to the Qing government. From 1898 to 1900, he was the head of the Imperial University of Peking (predecessor of Peking University). Martin founded the Chongshi School (now Beijing No. 21 School) and served as its first principal. Having lived in China for 62 years, Martin's mission was originally focused on spreading Christianity, but over time, he became a significant figure in China's modern educational development through his translation work and leadership at Tongwen Guan and the Imperial University of Peking. Martin was particularly fond of Chinese lyrical poetry, especially the works of the Book of Songs and the poetry of Li Bai, whom he regarded as "China's greatest lyric poet" and "the Oriental Anacreon". He confessed that his translations of Chinese legends and poems were aimed at correcting Western misconceptions about Chinese literature and people. He argued, "All these legends and lyrical poems will prove that the Chinese are not dull-witted nor unimaginative. Additional to epics, their various poetic literatures are rich." His translation of Li Bai's poems was among his most frequent works, including his rendition of *Changgan Xing*. For Martin, "the charm of this little piece lies not in its strength or height, but in its simplicity and the natural expression of emotion". Clearly, he misunderstood the poem as being about a wife writing to her husband on a military expedition. (Liu Lisheng, Liao Zhiqin, 2011)

Martin's translation essentially reworks the original poem. While the emotional bond between the couple and the sequence of time are correctly conveyed, Martin adds a significant amount of imagination, transforming the poem into a "typical Western love poem" that aligns with Western stereotypes. His translation aims to present a version of China based on Christian values for Western readers (Liu Lisheng, Liao Zhiqin, 2011). This translation moves beyond strict translation and becomes a reinterpretation of the original, with the unique cultural elements of China completely absent. If there is a small "creative, luminous detail" in this

translation, it lies in the rendering of “十五始展眉，愿同尘与灰” as “My heart was knit to yours, in joy to be your wife”, where the word “knit” effectively conveys the meaning of “同(together)”.

1.3 W. J. B. Fletcher’s translation, “That Parting at Ch’ang-Kan”

THAT PARTING AT CH’ANG-KAN

W. J. B. Fletcher

When first o’er maiden brows my hair I tied,

In sport I plucked the blooms before the door.

You riding came on hobby-horse astride,

And wreathed my bed with green-gage branches o’er.

At Ch’ang-kan Village long together dwelt,

We children twain, and knew no petty strife.

At fourteen years, lo! I became thy wife.

Yet ah! the modest shyness that I felt!

My shamefaced head I in a corner hung;

Nor to long calling answered word of mine.

At fifteen years my heart’s gate open sprung,

And I was glad to mix my dust with thine.

My troth to the till death I keep for aye;

My eyes still gaze adoring on my lord.

When I was but sixteen you went away,

In Chü-t’ang Gorge how Yen-yü’s billows roared!

For five long months with you I cannot meet.

The gibbon’s wail re-echoes to the sky!

Before the door, where stood your parting feet,

The prints with verdant moss are covered high.

Deep is that moss! it will not brush away.

In early autumn’s gale the leaflets fall.

September now! ----the butterflies so gay,

Disport on grasses by our garden wall.

The sight my heart disturbs with longing woe.

I sit and wail, my red cheeks growing old,

Early and late I to the gorges go,

Waiting for news that of thy coming told.

How short will seem the way, if we but meet!

Across the sand the wind flies straight to greet.

W. J. B. Fletcher (1879-1933) was a British diplomat and one of the earliest translators to publish anthologies of poetry from Tang dynasty in English. In the 1920s, the Commercial Press in Shanghai first published Fletcher's *Gems of Chinese Verse* and *More Gems of Chinese Poetry*, which were later reprinted multiple times in the English-speaking world. In 2019, the essential version of these works, *Selected Chinese Poems Translated into English Verse*, was released by China Pictorial Publishing House. Fletcher lived and worked in China for over 20 years starting in 1908, during which time he immersed himself in classical Chinese literature and developed a unique perspective on the appreciation of poetry from Tang dynasty. His selection of poems for translation was closely aligned with mainstream Chinese poetics and values. Of the 280 Tang poems he translated into English, 53 were by Li Bai and 75 by Du Fu. His translation also includes a poem dedicated to Li Bai and Du Fu titled "To Li Po and Tu Fu". Fletcher's focus on translating the works of Li Bai and Du Fu greatly contributed to the introduction of major Chinese poets to the English-speaking world. As one of the early Western sinologists advocating for the translation of poetry into rhyme, Fletcher did not rigidly adhere to the original meter, but instead followed the characteristics of English poetry, making his translations more relatable and engaging for English readers. Moreover, the flexibility of Tang poetry's imagery reflected the depth of Chinese classical poetry, and Fletcher often used "juxtaposed imagery" to make his translations concise and vivid. His use of "juxtaposed imagery" resonated well with English and American Imagist poetry. Fletcher's anthologies of Tang poetry's English translation are milestones in the history of Tang poetry translation, marking the transition of the introduction of Tang poetry into the English world from its early stages to a more advanced phase.

Fletcher fully considered the reading habits and cognition psychology of English readers, and reconstructed the original text using the metrical forms of Victorian-era poetry to capture the musical beauty of the original poem. The translated verses take on rhyme schemes like "abab" "abba" and "aa". For example, in the first line, the rhyme scheme "abab" is formed with the chose words "tied" and "ride", and "door" and "o'er". In the second line, the "abba" rhyme scheme is created with "dwelt" and "felt", and "strife" and "wife". In the third line, the "abab" rhyme scheme appears with "hung" and "sprung", and "mine" and "thine". The fourth line forms the "abab" rhyme scheme with "aye" and "away", and "lord" and "roared". In the next line, the rhyme scheme "abab" is created with "meet" and "feet", and "sky" and "high". The following line uses the "abab" rhyme scheme with "away" and "gay", and "fall" and "wall". In the next line, the "abab" rhyme scheme is formed with "woe" and "go", and "old" and "told". The last line uses the "aa" rhyme scheme with "meet" and "greet". What is striking is that, while the translator focused on achieving the musicality of the poem, the meaning of the original text was also fully and accurately conveyed. This demonstrates Fletcher's thorough imagination of the scenes and events, as well as great attention to word choice and sentence structure. The balance of musical beauty and accurate meaning makes the translation memorable. One could say that Fletcher's translation has successfully achieved its goal of cultural interaction, stands out with its musical beauty, which aligns closely with the metrical requirements of English poetry. This musical quality is the most prominent feature of the poem and can be considered a "creative, luminous detail".

3.4 C. Gaunt's translation, "Idyll of Ch'ang-Kan"

IDYLL OF CH'ANG-KAN

C. Gaunt

When the curls first began to o'er shadow my brow,

I was plucking the flowers by the gate,

When lo! There rode up a venturesome knight,

On a bamboo charger he sate;

Together we played, village boy and maid,

Nor suspected the schemings of fate.

But at twice seven years I was wedded to him,

And then shame clouded the joy;

Toward the dark wall my head I declined,

When he called I was dumb to the boy.

When a year had slid by my countenance cleared,

And our hearts became one out of twain;
 We swore to be true with a "beam-clasping" faith,
 And the thought of his absence was pain.
 Another year sped, and alas! my dear lord
 Went afar on a river of fear;
 In the fifth moon the rapids are perilous still;
 Heaven pity the voyager dear!
 Where we bade each the other farewell at the gate
 The footprints are green with moss now,
 Deep moss that clings fast to the unswept steps.
 How early the wind strips the bough!
 In the eighth moon the butterflies pale their bright hues,
 But in pairs they flit through the west glade,
 With a pang I remember it, sitting alone,
 Old in heart though my cheek does not fade.
 But surely, returning, he's made the Big Bend,
 And the glad news my ears will soon greet.
 If to welcome him home I went seventy leagues
 I should count the road short, the toil sweet.

In Gaunt's translation's first lines, the phrase "绕床弄青梅(playing with green plums around the well fence)" is omitted. In the line "together we played, village boy and maid, nor suspected the schemings of fate", the name of town "长干(Changgan)" is replaced with "village" and "嫌疑(dislikes and suspicions)" is reinterpreted as "an attitude toward the unknown fate", adding perspective of seeing these two small persons' fates with a grand epic tone, as the rhyme between "fate" and previous words like "sate" and "gate" enhances the musicality. In the next line there's a mistranslation, as "羞颜(shy face)" refers to the shy countenance of a young girl, but is mistakenly interpreted as the more negative "shame", which casts a shadow over the happiness of the past. This choice creates a regrettable shift from a positive to a negative tone, although it does serve to foreshadow the separation of the couple later on.

In the next lines, while the literal meaning is accurate, the use of "dumb" carries connotations of being stupid or hoarse in English, which diverges from the author's meaning. The correct term, "quiet", would better convey the shyness rather than implying shame or subordination that weakens the sense of love and introduces a more realistic and less idealized tone. The following line softens the stronger emotions in the original, turning the more intense feelings of youthful love into a calmer sentiment. The phrase "同尘与灰(with ashes and dusts)", meaning to be with each other through life and death, is simplified to "our hearts becomes one", which slightly diminishes the sense of solemn commitment but still contains a sense of love.

In the next lines, the literary quotation of "抱柱(hold on to a pillar)"'s translation is accurate, though the cultural reference to "尾生抱柱(a man named Weisheng holds on to a pillar to keep his promise of waiting for his beloved one when the flood comes)" and "望夫台(a woman daily climbed to a high stage later called Wangfu Tai to let her husband see her at first sight when he returns)" left unaddressed. The rhymes in "joy" and "boy", and "twain" and "pain", add a pleasant sound quality.

In the following lines, they capture the concern for the danger of the river and the husband's safety, though the specific geographical location is omitted. The term "river of fear" highlights the peril without affecting the meaning. The next line omits "猿声(the sound of monkeys)", and "哀(sadness)" is interpreted as divine sympathy and protection, changing the original natural danger into a more emotional expression of concern, which is an acceptable choice.

In the following lines, there is an accurate and poignant translation, capturing the sense of saying goodbye. The next lines, omits the important character “秋(autumn)”. The “autumn” imagery signifies the passing of seasons and could have been retained for a more evocative effect. Rhymes like “bough” and “now” create musicality. In the next lines, the important character “草(grasses)” is omitted, which is part of the original imagery of the western garden’s scene. In the following lines, the translation profoundly conveys a sense of sadness and the passage of time. The contrast between the speaker’s inner aging and youthful appearance creates a poignant tension, which is well captured. The rhyme between “fade” and “glade” adds a lyrical quality.

In the last lines, the interpretation shifts the original expectation of receiving a letter from her husband to a more optimistic view of his return, adding a hopeful tone that was not as pronounced in the original text. The term “seventy leagues” are then added to emphasize distance, while the specific place name “长风沙(Chang Feng Sha)” is omitted. The addition of “sweet” creates a more cheerful tone, with “greet” and “sweet” rhyming to enhance the musicality.

On the whole, Gaunt’s translation showcases the translator’s abundant and varied vocabulary. It reflects a deep understanding of English poetic meter and an imaginative grasp of the original scenes and events. Gaunt’s creativity and subjective engagement are fully realized, resulting in a translation that not only conveys the meaning of the original poem with precision and completeness but also elevates it to a level that touches on profound themes such as “eternity” and “fate”. The translation possesses a rich literary resonance and philosophical depth, with a well-structured and aesthetically pleasing flow. The most “creative, luminous detail” is perhaps found in the line “with a pang I remember it, sitting alone, old in heart though my cheek does not fade”, which stands out for its memorable impact and its ability to provoke contemplation on the passage of time.

3.5 Amy Lowell’s translation, “Ch’ang Kan”

CH’ANG KAN

Amy Lowell

When the hair of your Unworthy One first began to cover her forehead,

She picked flowers and played in front of the door.

Then you, my Lover, came riding a bamboo horse.

We ran round and round the bed, and tossed about the sweetmeats of green plums.

We both lived in the village of Chang Kan.

We were both very young, and knew neither jealousy nor suspicion.

At fourteen, I became the wife of my Lord.

I could not yet lay aside my face of shame;

I hung my head, facing the dark wall;

You might call me a thousand times, not once would I turn round.

At fifteen, I stopped frowning.

I wanted to be with you, as dust with its ashes.

I often thought that you were the faithful man who clung to the bridgepost,

That I should never be obliged to ascend to the Looking-for-Husband Ledge.

When I was sixteen, my Lord went far away,

To the Cu’ü T’ang Chasm and the Whirling Water Rock of the Yü River.

Which, during the Fifth Month, must not be collided with;

Where the wailing of the gibbons seems to come from the sky.

Your departing footprints are still before the door where I bade you good-bye,

In each has sprung up green moss.

The moss is thick, it cannot be swept away.

The leaves are falling, it is early for the Autumn wind to blow.

It is the Eighth Month, the butterflies are yellow,

Two are flying among the plants in the west garden;

Seeing them, my heart is bitter with grief, they wound the heart of the Unworthy One.

The bloom of my face has faded, sitting with my sorrow.

From early morning until late in the evening, you descent the Three Serpent River.

Prepare me first with a letter, bringing me the news of when you will reach home.

I will not go far on the road to meet you,

I will go straight until I reach the Long Wind Sands.

Amy Lowell (1874-1925) was an American poet, born into a distinguished family in Brookline, Massachusetts. She received private education in her early years. Having traveled extensively, she interacted with Imagist poets in London and, upon returning to the U.S., vigorously promoted their work. In 1913, she emerged as a key figure in the experimental Imagist movement, succeeding Ezra Pound as its leader. Her notable poetry collections include *Men, Women, and Ghosts* (1916), *Ballads for Sale* (1919), *East Wind* (1926), and *Selected Poems of Amy Lowell* (1928). Her critical works include *Six French Poets* (1915), *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* (1917), and *A Critical Fable* (1922). In her later years, her poetry was influenced by Chinese and Japanese traditions.

In 1921, she and her collaborator Florence Ayscough published *Fir-flower Tablets*, a collection of translated Chinese poetry. The book opens with poems by 11 Tang and Five Dynasties poets, with Li Bai leading the list. It includes 94 poems by Li Bai, 15 by Du Fu, 3 by Wang Wei, and 1 each from Bai Juyi, Liu Yuxi, Niu Xiji, Qiu Wei, Qiwu Qian, Meng Jiao, Wei Yingwu, and Wen Tingyun, demonstrating Lowell and Ayscough's admiration for Li Bai's poetry. The collection spans various poetic forms, including 3 fu poems, 34 yuefu poems, 30 ancient-style poems, 30 regulated poems, and 1 ci. However, the arrangement of the poems suggests that the translators may not have been consciously aware of formal distinctions, as the works are interwoven without a clear system (Jiang Wenyan, 2018).

Before the main text of *Fir-flower Tablets*, there is a "Preface" by Lowell and an "Introduction" by Ayscough. The 6-page "Preface" mainly discusses the compilation process and Lowell's understanding of Chinese poetry. The 77-page "Introduction" provides a panoramic view of Chinese literature and culture, with a significant portion dedicated to Li Bai. Lowell and Ayscough particularly admired the lyrical quality of Li Bai's poetry, calling it his defining feature. They argued that "Li Bai's poetry is full of impact and astonishment, and his finest works have an extraordinary joy". They regarded him as the "greatest lyric poet in the world" due to his ability to capture human emotions and desires. This understanding led them to dub him "the people's poet" and Du Fu "the poet of scholars". They saw Li Bai's poetry as emerging from daily life, transforming personal experiences into universal emotions. Some scholars note that the "commoner's sense" in Li Bai's poetry (Lin Geng, 2011, cited in Jiang Wenyan, 2018) emphasizes its political aspects, such as egalitarian ideals and anti-war sentiments. However, Ayscough's labeling of Li Bai as "the people's poet" highlights his focus on everyday subjects and universal human feelings, which aligns with the understanding in "Li Bai and the Moon: On Li Bai's Rebelliousness and Commonness" (Pei Fei, 2013, cited in Jiang Wenyan, 2018), which emphasizes his celebration of nature, friendship, homesickness, love, and nostalgia—all common human emotions devoid of specific political content.

In the beginning lines, the term "妾(a humble self-reference used by the wife)" is rendered as "unworthy one", which reflects Lowell's insufficient understanding of traditional Chinese culture. This term does not imply the "worthy" or "unworthy" relationship between husband and wife based on love, but rather the unequal status inherent in the feudal marriage system, where a husband is naturally superior to his wife. But still, this term emphasizes the personal love between wife and husband.

In the next lines, the term "竹马(bamboo stick)" is often misinterpreted as a literal horse made of bamboo, whereas it refers to a child's toy made from a bamboo stick. Similarly, "床(here means井栏, well fence)" is not a literal bed but refers to the enclosure around an ancient Chinese household well.

In the next lines, the term “嫌(dislike)” is translated as “jealousy”, but it more accurately means “dislike” or “resentment”. Between two young children, it is more likely that the feelings would be about liking or disliking rather than jealousy, making this translation somewhat imprecise. Similarly, the term “羞(shyness)” is mistakenly translated as “shame”, which changes the nuance from the innocence and beauty of a young long to an image of a woman ashamed due to her low status, skewing the tone of the poem.

In the following lines, the translation is accurate in conveying the meaning. The later translation is one of the most successful ones in Lowell's translation: The phrase “like dust with its ashes” is a poignant expression of eternal love, conveying the idea of staying together with one's lover both in the face of life's fleeting and of fragile nature. Next, although the literal translations are correct, the interpretation is skewed. The lines should be expressing the woman's unwavering faith in her love and commitment, not in the reliability of her husband, which the translation incorrectly emphasizes.

In the following lines, Lowell appears to have misunderstood “触(touch)” as a collision between a large rock and passing boats or stones in the river, but this is a misinterpretation. The original poem refers to the river segment the husband is traveling through being dangerous and difficult to navigate due to the rapid water flow in the fifth month of lunar calendar. The month referenced is not the “fifth month since the husband's departure” as Lowell believes.

In the lines after, the translation is accurate and complete. However, “八月(the eighth month)” refers to the eighth month in the lunar calendar, not the eighth month since the husband's departure, as the translator may have assumed. Additionally, the word “草(grasses)” should not be directly translated as “plants” since “plants” in Chinese more refers to “绿(the greens)”, “草” in Chinese generally refers to common grasses or weeds.

In the posterior lines, again, “unworthy one” is not quite appropriate, a more fitting translation would be simply “I” to maintain the humility of the speaker without imposing unnecessary connotations. In the last lines, “三巴(three regions named after ‘巴Ba’)” refers to Ba, Badong and Baxi, not a river named “three big snakes”. Besides, “不道远(not say it's far)” means “I won't mind walking far” rather than “I will not walk far”, furthermore, “直至(all the way to)” doesn't necessarily imply “go straight” but rather means walking determinedly, without turning back until reaching the “long wind sands” which is an accurate name.

To sum up, although the translator's imagination of the original scenes and events is somewhat present, most of the time these interpretations are accurate. However, due to cultural differences, there are still instances where the poem cannot be fully understood. Despite this, the translation demonstrates the translator's subjective creativity and presents “creative, luminous details” especially with the line “I wanted to be with you, as dust with its ashes”. The line expresses a kind of “fate-driven” love that is widely understood in the foreign world, also imbuing the poem with a pitiable, charming, and admirable sense of destiny.

3.6 Shigeyoshi Obata's translation, “A Letter from Chang-Kan”

A LETTER FROM CHANG-KAN

(A river-merchant's wife writes)

S. Obata

I would play, plucking flowers by the gate;

My hair scarcely covered my forehead, then.

You would come, riding on your bamboo horse,

And loiter about the bench with green plums for toys.

So we both dwelt in Chang-kan town,

We were two children, suspecting nothing.

At fourteen I became your wife,

And so bashful that I could never bare my face,

But hung my head, and turned to the dark wall;

You would call me a thousand times,

But I could not look back even once.

At fifteen I was able to compose my eyebrows,
 And beg you to love me till we were dust and ashes.
 You always kept the faith of Wei-sheng,
 Who waited under the bridge, unafraid of death,
 I never knew I was to climb the Hill of Wang-fu
 And watch for you these many days.

I was sixteen when you went on a long journey
 Traveling beyond the Keu-Tang Gorge,
 Where the giant rocks heap up the swift river,
 And the rapids are not passable in May.
 Did you hear the monkeys wailing
 Up on the skyey height of the crags?
 Do you know your foot-marks by our gate are old,
 And each and every one is filled up with green moss?

The mosses are too deep for me to sweep away;
 And already in the autumn wind the leaves are falling.
 The yellow butterflies of October
 Flutter in pairs over the grass of the west garden.
 My heart aches at seeing them...
 I sit sorrowing alone, and alas!
 The vermilion of my face is fading.

Some day when you return down the river,
 If you will write me a letter beforehand,
 I will come to meet you----the way is not long----
 I will come as far as the Long Wind Beach instantly.

In the beginning lines, Obata misunderstood the “well fence” as “stool”. Additionally, “with green plums for toys” could be ambiguous: one interpretation is “playing with green plums” and another is “giving green plums to toy figures”. While the latter does not apply here, it would be better to choose a clearer language.

In the continued lines, “dislike” also is omitted. Furthermore, there is a slight misunderstanding here. “展眉(unfolding brows)” suggests the girl’s facial expression brightening with happiness, in contrast to the previous line about “shy face”, not “learning to draw my brows”. The line “till we were dust and ashes” is more about the girl expressing her love for the husband, rather than begging him to love her.

In the following lines, the story of Weisheng is well captured here. Furthermore, the addition of "old" for the footprints is a reasonable choice to explain why moss has grown there. Next, Obata has converted the eighth month of lunar calendar into October, which is no wrong, but he should not keep "五月" as May in the previous part because there will be a contradiction in the timeline, since the fifth month in lunar calendar is usually June or July. And according to geographical knowledge, it is typically rainy and flood-prone in southwestern China in the summer, not spring.

In the lines later, "红颜(red face, usually refers to beautiful women)" should not be interpreted into "vermilion red" because it is not only the color in the face but more stands for youth and beauty. In the last lines, the term "三巴(three regions named after '巴Ba')" as a geographical reference for the ancient places is omitted too. The addition of "instantly" conveys the urgency of the waiting.

The "creative, luminous detail" of this translation lies in the successful, complete, and clear translation of the Chinese classical allusion, namely the story of "Weisheng holding the pillar", which stands out strengthfully, manifested Obata's respect on Chinese traditional culture and his devotion on learning background information.

3.7 Witter Bynner's translation, "A Song of Ch'ang-Kan"

A SONG OF CH'ANG-KAN

Witter Bynner

My hair had hardly covered my forehead.
I was picking flowers, playing by my door.
When you, my lover, on a bamboo horse,
Came trotting in circles and throwing green plums.
We lived near together on a lane in Ch'ang-kan,
Both of us young and happy-hearted.
...At fourteen I became your wife,
So bashful that I dared not smile,
And I lowered my head toward a dark corner
And would not turn to your thousand calls;
But at fifteen I straightened my brows and laughed,
Learning that no dust could ever seal our love,
That even unto death I would await you by my post
And would never lose heart in the tower of silent watching.
...Then when I was sixteen, you left on a long journey
Through the Gorges of Chü-t'ang, of rock and whirling water.
And then came the Fifth-month, more than I could bear,
And I tried to hear the monkeys in your lofty far-off sky.
Your footprints by our door, where I had watched you go,
Were hidden, every one of them, under green moss,
Hidden-under moss too deep to sweep away.
And the first autumn wind added fallen leaves.
And now, in the Eighth-month, yellowing butterflies

Hover, two by two, in our west-garden grasses...
 And, because of all this, my heart is breaking
 And I fear for my bright cheeks, lest they fade.
 ...Oh, at last, when you return through the three Pa districts,
 Send me a message home ahead!
 And I will come and meet you and will never mind the distance.
 All the way to Chang-fêng Sha.

In the beginning lines, the “well fence” is omitted. A detailed “lane” was added to be the two children’s living place. “No dislike nor suspicion” is simply free translated into “happy-hearted”, which is correct. “壁(wall)” is translated into “corner”, and it seems to have a better result than “wall”, because “corner” showed more about the shyness. In the following lines, Bynner seems to have over-imagined “尘与灰(dusts and ashes)”, in fact, this line in the poem is not aiming at “seal our love”, but more relates to “life and death” and “the smallness of human in nature”. Besides, the allusion of Weisheng is not presented. Furthermore, Bynner similarly misunderstood “五月”, thought it was the fifth month since her husband left, and “不可触(cannot ride boats on)” is mistaken as “beyond my tolerance”.

In the following and the last lines, Bynner also mistaken “八月” as the eighth month that her husband left. However, Bynner correctly translated the “三巴” as a region rather than a river, but he omitted the “早晚(early or later)”.

Overall, there are very few mistakes in Bynner’s translation, and he presented two “creative, luminous details” when he translates the term “happy-hearted” and “dark corner”.

3.8 Weng Xianliang’s translation, “The Trader’s Wife”

THE TRADER’S WIFE

Weng Xianliang (翁显良)

“My first coiffure---twin tassels with a fringe. My first bouquet---dewy buds gathered in the front garden. That very day you came galloping down the street on a hobby-horse. We played in the courtyard, capering and pelting each other with green plums.

Close neighbours from childhood, we grew closer with the years, our friendship never clouded by the least misunderstanding. At fourteen I became your bride. So bashful was I that I used to sit silent for hours, head bowed before the wall, and no amount of coaxing could make me turn around. At fifteen I blossomed out, radiant with new-awakened love. We would be one even unto dust. Sooner die than break faith, you declared. What would life be without you? It was impossible to contemplate.

But at sixteen I had to let you depart for the hinterland; such is the lot of a trader’s wife. Up river you sailed in the teeth of the midsummer flood, past jagged rocks more dangerous for being sunken, through dismal gorges filled with wails of apes on high.

The footprints you left behind are now overgrown with moss so thick as to defy the broom. I feel the chill breath of autumn; I see the leaves wither and fall. But in my garden there are still patches of green with golden butterflies fluttering about---in pairs. The sight touches me to the quick. Youth and beauty cannot endure. Why are you so long in returning? Delay no more, and do not forget to send word ahead. I will go to meet you halfway, however far that may be.”

Professor Weng Xianliang’s translation is firstly notable for its vivid and imaginative rendering of the original poem’s scenes and events, bringing them to life. For example, the first line is expanded into the image of a young, innocent girl with a childlike hairstyle, holding a small flower while watching a boy running down the street---an evocative and charming scene that feels almost tangible. This translation makes the reader feel immersed in the innocent atmosphere, as if they could be touched by the pure, untainted mood.

Another characteristic of this translation is that it doesn’t follow a rigid, word-for-word approach. Instead, Weng employs free translation, focusing on conveying the meaning and emotion. For instance, in rendering the original lines as “Sooner die than

break faith, you declared. What would life be without you? It was impossible to contemplate". This phrase is moving because it touches on the eternal and profound themes of love and death----ideas that speak to the very essence of life itself.

Third, although free translation is used, Weng's rendition does not lose any important details. For example, though "秋风(autumn wind)" is translated as "chill breath of autumn", the vivid imagery of sweeping moss, golden leaves falling, and butterflies fluttering in the garden retains its richness and color. These images feel alive and tangible, as though they are right in front of the reader.

Additionally, Weng's translation is emotionally nuanced and sincere, expressing deep feelings. For example, before the last two lines, he adds "Why are you so long in returning?" This addition is a heartfelt expression from the protagonist, a natural and spontaneous sentiment that brings the character to life with fresh vibrancy.

These four qualities—vivid imagination, free translation, details, and emotional depth—are all strengths of this translation and can be described as its "creative, luminous details". The most striking line of the translation is "sooner die than break faith, you declared", standing out as a particularly powerful and resonant phrase.

3.9 Xu Yuanchong's translation, "Ballad of A Merchant's Wife"

BALLAD OF A MERCHANT'S WIFE

Xu Yuanchong (许渊冲)

My forehead covered by my hair cut straight,
I played with flowers pluck'd before the gate.
On a bamboo horse you came on the scene,
Around the well we played with plums still green.
We lived both of us on Riverside lane,
Both thoughtless and guileless, we children twain.
At fourteen years I became your young bride,
I'd often turn my bashful face aside,
Hanging my head, I'd look at the dark wall,
A thousand times I'd not answer you call.
At fifteen I began to straighten my brows,
To mix my dust with yours were my dear vows.
Rather than break faith, you declared you'd die.
Who knew I'd live alone in tower high?
I was sixteen when you went far away,
Passing Three Canyons studded with rocks grey,
Where ships were wrecked when spring flood ran high,
Where gibbons' walls seemed coming from the sky.
Green moss now overgrows before our door,
I see your departing footprints no more.
I can't sweep it away: so thick it grows,
And leaves fall early when autumn wind blows.

In the eighth month yellow butterflies pass
 Two by two o'er our western-garden grass.
 This sight would break my heart and I'm afraid,
 Sitting alone, my rosy cheeks would fade.
 When will you return to the native land?
 Don't forget to let me know beforehand.
 I'll walk to meet you and not call it far
 When to go to Long Wind Sand where you are.

The greatest feature of Professor Xu Yuanchong's translation is each line in the coupled two lines is rhymed with the other, and together formed an aesthetic musical quality for the poem. For instance, "straight" and "gate", "scene" and "green", "lane" and "twain", "bride" and "aside", etc. "开(unfold)" is oppositely translated into "turn aside (her face)", which is accurate for understanding the poem. "望夫台(Wangfu Tai, a high ledge or stage)" is translated into "tower high", relates more to the foreign reader's cognition, which is a smart choice.

Here is a detail: In this paper, the author thinks that back to Li Bai's time, his reference to the "fifth month" and "eighth month" should not be "May" and "August", but according to the national calendar used in Tang dynasty. When Li Bai wrote the poem, it was between 725-726, so the national calendar was "麟德历(Lin De Calendar, until about 721-729)" or "大衍历(Da Yan Calendar, since about 727-729)". In Da Yan Calendar, a month's length was similar to today's Gregorian calendar, has 29 to 30 days. Besides, among these traditional calendars, there were the 24 solar terms, settled according to the sun's running. The sun's running, is the base of the nowadays universal calendar (in fact, all calendars), which is the western Gregorian calendar. And the Chinese lunar calendar, in fact is a combination of the sun's running disciplines and the lunar months. Therefore, the 24 solar terms' dates are in accordance with the universal calendar, not the lunar calendar. In Professor Xu Yuanchong's translation, he may finds out the fact that "五月" and "八月" actually equals the Gregorian calendar in dates, if he has the relevant references. But in this paper, the author still thinks the months' actual dates should be according to lunar calendar.

In general, the most prominent feature of Professor Xu Yuanchong's translation is that the lines rhyme, and the rhyme feet are very neat, so that the translation has rhyme beauty, which reflects the superb skills of "the sole translator of Chinese poems to English and French". Meanwhile, another feature of this translation is that it does not use complex nor obscure words, but uses common and familiar words.

2. Conclusion

Classical Chinese poetry represents the essence of China's traditional culture, and its translation and dissemination abroad hold great value. In the process of translating and disseminating ancient Chinese poetry, there are many factors that should be considered, including but not limited to the original selection of poems, the language creativity of the translator and his/her literacy of Chinese classical culture, the way of external communication, etc. The most significant thing is to give full play to the translator's agency in the creative communication process of translation. This paper proposes a practical way to achieve a high level of translation, that is, to add "creative, luminous details" in the translated text. It has four aspects of contents: First, literal creativity; second, imagination upon the scenes, events and atmosphere; third, memorable points; fourth, overall impression.

By improving on these "creative, luminous details", translators can bridge the cultural gap and better communicate the subtleties of the original work to the foreign reader, thus enhancing the cultural exchange and interaction between China and the world. This approach underscores the translator's pivotal role not just as a linguistic mediator but as an active participant in the dynamic flow of cultures. As such, the power of translation goes beyond mere word-for-word rendering, but becoming a tool that shapes cultural perceptions and fosters deeper understanding across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Ultimately, the flow of culture is not only about transmitting meaning, but about infusing it with a creative spark that brings both the original and the translated work to life in a new cultural context.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Publisher's Note: All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers.

References

- [1] Gentzler, Edwin; Fu, Jingmin, trans. *Contemporary Translation Theory* [M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2021.
- [2] Hu, Xueyin; Ran, Yuti. "A Study of the English Translation of Changgan Xing from the Perspective of Hermeneutics----Taking Ezra Pound's English Version as an Example" [J]. *Jingu Wenchuang*, 2023(06): 99-101.
- [3] Jiang, Wenyan. "A Comparative Study of Arthur Waley and Amy Lowell's Research on Li Bai" [J]. *International Sinology*, 2018(01): 89-95, 205.
- [4] Kang, Yaolan. "On Creative Rebellion in Poetry Translation----A Case Study of the English Translations of The Book of Songs: Jian Jia by Xu Yuanchong and Pound" [J]. *Chinese Character Culture*, 2022(22): 153-155.
- [5] Liu, Lisheng; Liao, Zhiqin. "A Study of Hypertextual Elements in the Overseas English Translations of Classical Chinese Texts—Taking Three English Versions of Li Bai's Changgan Xing as Examples" [J]. *Ethnic Translation*, 2011(04): 39-45.
- [6] Lü, Shuxiang; Xu, Yuanchong, eds. *A Comparative Study of Chinese Poetries and Their English Translations* [M]. Hong Kong: Hong Kong United Publishing Group, 1988: 149-160.
- [7] Luo, Xinzhan; Chen, Yingnian, eds. *Essays on Translation Theory* [M]. Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2021.
- [8] Anonymous. "Amy Lowell----American Poet" [EB/OL]. Baidu Encyclopedia, https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E8%89%BE%E7%B1%B3%C2%B7%E6%B4%9B%E5%A8%81%E5%B0%94/5728672?fr=ge_al.
- [9] Anonymous. "Ezra Pound----American Poet, Literary Critic, Representative of Imagism" [EB/OL]. Baidu Encyclopedia, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E5%9F%83%E5%85%B9%E6%8B%89%C2%B7%E5%BA%9E%E5%BE%B7/3112689?fromModule=disambiguation>.
- [10] Anonymous. "W. A. P. Martin----American Missionary" [EB/OL]. Baidu Encyclopedia, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%B8%81%E9%9F%AA%E8%89%AF/3186576>.
- [11] Anonymous. "Witter Bynner----American Poet" [EB/OL]. Baidu Encyclopedia, https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E5%A8%81%E7%89%B9%C2%B7%E5%AE%BE%E7%BA%B3/14720614?fr=ge_al.
- [12] Anonymous. "Weng Xianliang----Chinese Translator" [EB/OL]. Baidu Encyclopedia, https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E7%BF%81%E6%98%BE%E8%89%AF?fromModule=lemma_search-box.
- [13] Anonymous. "Shigeoshi Obata: A Translator with Shallow Language but Deep Emotions for Li Bai" [EB/OL]. China Social Sciences Network, <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1675258997132625039&wfr=spider&for=pc>.
- [14] Anonymous. "Xu Yuanchong—A Master of Translation, Professor at the School of Journalism and Communication, Peking University" [EB/OL]. Baidu Encyclopedia, https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E8%AE%B8%E6%B8%8A%E5%86%B2?fromModule=lemma_search-box.
- [15] Anonymous. "Xuelin Yishi----Fletcher: Translating Tang Poetry with Great Effort" [EB/OL]. China Social Sciences Network, https://m.thepaper.cn/baijiahao_4676695.
- [16] Anonymous. "William John Bainbrigg Fletcher" [EB/OL]. Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_John_Bainbrigg_Fletcher.