譯策淺釋

我是退休中學教師，在職時擔任理科教席。自幼喜愛古典詩詞，欣賞其題材廣泛，言情説理，深入淺出；朗讀背誦，音韻悠揚。退休後，嘗試將某些篇章，翻譯為英文古典詩以自娛，屢計有數百首。今挑選約二百首，奉上一眾詩詞愛好者及在校中學同學分享。

詩本來就是歌，《詩經》中的《國風》，是西周時各地民歌的結集。唐代元稹《重贈》:「休遣玲瓏唱我詩，我詩多是別君詞。」；劉禹錫《與歌者何戡》:「舊人唯有何戡在，更與殷勤唱《渭城》。」；杜牧《夜泊秦淮》:「商女不知亡國恨，隔江猶唱《後庭花》」。唐代薛用弱《集異記》記載一個故事，頗能説明這一觀點。

A Brief Account of the Translation Strategy

I was a secondary school master, teaching science subjects. Since childhood, I have loved classical Chinese poetry, appreciating its wide range of themes, emotional depth, and melodic rhythm. After retirement, I translated some pieces into English classical poetry for my own enjoyment, resulting in several hundred pieces. I have now selected around two hundred to share with current secondary school students and poetry enthusiasts.

Poetry was originally song. The Guofeng section of the Classic of Poetry (Shi-jing) is a collection of folk songs from various regions during the Western Zhou Dynasty. Yuan Zhen of the Tang Dynasty wrote in his poem Re-Gifting: "Do not send Ling-long to sing my poems; most of my poems are farewell verses for thee."; Liu Yuxi remarked in To the Singer He Kan: "Only He Kan remains from the old times. Still, he sings Weicheng with an affectionate tone."; Du Mu wrote in Mooring at the Qin-huai at Night: "The singing girls feel not the pain of a fallen motherland, across the river, they are still singing Flowers of the Rear Courtyard." Xue Yong-ruo's Collected Strange Tales from the Tang Dynasty records a story that illustrates this point well.

開元年代某天，王之渙、王昌齡、高適三位詩人，到旗亭（酒肆）飲酒。他們看到歌女在店內賣唱，靜耳傾聽。王昌齡建議，假如歌女唱他們三人的詩作，以唱誰的詩多寡，評定誰的水平高低。第一個出場的歌女唱了王昌齡的《芙蓉樓送辛漸》，第二個唱了高適的《哭單父梁九少府》。及至他們評為色藝最佳的歌女，開口即唱王之渙的《涼州詞》。這個故事，後人稱為「旗亭畫壁」或「旗亭賭酒」。

可以說，詩的第一特徵是它的音樂屬性。把這個特徵刻劃於譯文中，是我的要務。選擇英文古典詩為譯文載體，是可行方法之一。以下是翻譯策略簡述。

One day during the Kai-yuan era, the three poets Wang Zhi-huan, Wang Chang-ling, and Gao Shi were drinking at a qi-ting (a tavern). They saw singing girls performing in the shop and listened attentively. Wang Chang-ling suggested that if the singing girls performed their poems, the one whose poems were sung the most would be considered the best among them. As it turned out, the first singing girl performed Wang Chang-ling's Farewell to Xin Jian at the Lotus Tower, and the second sang Gao Shi's Lament for the Accomplished Magistrate Liang Jiu. When the singing girl they considered the most talented in both beauty and artistry came out, she immediately began singing Wang Zhi-huan's Liangzhou Ci. This story is known as Inscriptions on the Wall at the Qi-ting or Betting on Wine at the Qi-ting.

It can be said that the primary characteristic of poetry (including Ci verses) is its musical quality. Capturing this characteristic in the translation is my essential task.

Choosing classical English poetry as a vehicle for translation is a viable method. The following is a brief outline of translation strategies.

詩的翻譯

七言絕句

每首譯為兩組四行詩，每組採用 8-6，8-6 或 8-7，8-7 或 8-8，8-8 音節格式，採交義韻 ABAB，單韻 AABB，或拱韻 ABBA。

五言絕句

每首譯為一組 10 音節四行詩，採用單一韻 AABB，交義韻 ABAB，或拱韻 ABBA。

七言律詩

每首分為兩首七言絕句，再依照七言絕句規則翻譯。

五言律詩

每首分為兩首五言絕句，再依照五言絕句規則翻譯。

古詩（包括樂府）

四言。每四行譯為一組八音節四行詩，採用上述押韻格式。

五言。每四行譯為一組十音節四行詩，採用上述押韻格式。

七言。每兩行比擬為一首七絕。

Poetry Translation

Five-Character Quatrain (五言絕句):

Each poem is translated into one four-line stanza with 10-syllables per line, using a mono rhyme (AABB), alternating rhyme (ABAB), or arch rhyme (ABBA).

Seven-Character Quatrain (七言絕句):

Each poem is translated into two four-line stanzas, each adopting an 8-6, 8-6 or 8-7, 8-7 or 8-8, 8-8 syllables format, using alternating rhyme (ABAB), mono rhyme (AABB), or arch rhyme (ABBA).

Five-Character Regulated Verse (五言律詩):

Each poem is divided into two five-character quatrains, and then translated according to the rules for five-character quatrains.

Seven-Character Regulated Verse (七言律詩):

Each poem is divided into two seven-character quatrains, and then translated according to the rules for seven-character quatrains.

Ancient Poetry (古詩) (including Yue-fu 樂府):

Four and five-character lines: Every four lines is translated into one set of four lines with eight and ten syllables, using the above-mentioned rhyme schemes.

Seven-character lines:

Each pair is analogized to a seven-character quatrain.

詞的翻譯

詞是中國文學重要的體裁。簡單的說，樂曲作家首先譜寫一首樂曲，規定了樂曲的格律，韻腳，然後由填詞人按規則把文字配入樂曲。顯然，詞的音樂屬性，是它的首要特徵。

為了保留這一特徵，譯者採用「行對行」翻譯，而且包括以下幾個要素：

匹配行長度

譯文中每一行的音節數目，是原文對應行的兩倍，這有助保持韻律流暢和詩歌結構。

保留尾韻

譯者確保譯文尾韻的位置，與原文的尾韻位置相符合。

保持韻的一致性

當原文所押的韻，屬同一韻組，對應的英文尾韻，也屬同一韻組。這進一步增強了譯文的音樂性和連貫性。

Ci (Lyrics) Translation

Ci is an essential form in Chinese literature. Simply put, a composer first writes a melody, establishing its rhythm and rhyme scheme, then a lyricist fits words to the music according to these rules. Clearly, the musical quality of Ci is its foremost feature.

To preserve this characteristic, the translator uses a "line-to-line" translation approach, including the following elements:

Matching Line Length:

Each line in the translation has double the number of syllables as the corresponding line in the original text, aiding in maintaining rhythmic fluency and poetic structure.

Preserve the end rhyme:

The translation ensures that the end rhymes in the translated text occupy the same position as the original.

Maintain rhyme consistency:

When the original text's rhyme belongs to the same rhyme group, the corresponding English end rhymes also belong to the same rhyme group. This further enhances the musicality and coherence of the translation.

Chapter

第一章 1

五言詩

5-character Poems

問劉十九

白居易

綠蟻[1]新醅酒
紅泥小火爐
晚來天欲雪
能飲一杯無

1 新釀的酒，未經過濾，酒渣往往浮上酒面，細小並帶微綠，故稱「綠蟻」。

Inviting Liu to a Drink

Bai Ju-yi

On the lately brewed wine, the green ants[1] spread.
Warmth pervades from the small stove of clay red.
The dimmed and tranquil twilight-sky may snow,
To the nectar a drink, could you say no?

1 Freshly brewed wine, unfiltered, often has sediment floating on the surface. These tiny particles carry a slight greenish hue, which is why they are called "green ants."

古原草送別

白居易

離離原上草
一歲一枯榮
野火燒不盡
春風吹又生
遠芳侵古道
晴翠接荒城
又送王孫去
萋萋滿別情

Parting at the Ancient Grass Plain

Bai Jui-yi

In the plain, green grass waves roll with billow.
In a year, it changes from green to yellow.
Blazing by wildfires, some bravely survive.
A green carpet grows as spring winds arrive.
Scent plants spread far to meet the ancient way.
The ruined town tints green in the sunray.
My lord, once again, I bid you adieu,
Parting feelings fill the grass through and through.

題破山寺後禪院

常建

清晨入古寺
初日照高林
曲徑通幽處
禪房花木深
山光悦鳥性
潭影空人心
萬籟此俱寂
但餘鐘磬音

The Back Meditation Hall of Cracked Hill Temple

Chang Jian

I enter the ancient temple at dawn.
On the clump of high trees, the dawn sun shone.
A trail meanders to a seclud'd place,
A monk's room, the flowering trees embrace.
Mountain gleam gladdens birds of every kind.
The pond's reflection cleans the human mind.
Right then, the chords of nature cease to swell,
Still, jingles the morning prayer bell.

長干行[1]

崔顥

I

君家何處住
妾住在橫塘
停船暫借問
或恐是同鄉

II

家臨九江水
來去九江側
同是長干人
生小不相識

1 長干行是地名也是調名，收入樂府「雜曲歌辭」，原為長江下游一帶民歌。內容多抒寫船家婦女的生活，及對遠出經商丈夫的懷戀。由於屬民謠體裁，用語淺顯易懂，讀來琅琅上口。

Chance Rendezvous on the River[1]

Cui Hao

I

Sir, do you mind where you live unveiling?
Heng-tang Town doth dwell the junior me.
To ask, I pause my boat a while sailing.
By chance, we are fellow townsmen, do we?

II

The Jiu-jiang waters, my home doth o'er see.
I only visit places 'round my hometown.
People of Chang-gang, so both of us be,
I'm young, yet to know your name of renown.

1 Chang-gan Xing is both a place name and a tune name, included in the 'Miscellaneous Songs and Lyrics' of the Music Bureau. It originally refers to folk songs from the lower reaches of the Yangtze River. The content often expresses the lives of the boatmen's wives and their longing for husbands who have gone far away for business. Since it belongs to the folk song genre, the language is simple and easy to understand, making it pleasing to recite.