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<i>Student Name:</i> QIXUAN ZHOU 周琦璇	
<i>Module Code:</i> SICH6011 <i>Module title:</i> Sinological English III	<i>Student number:</i> 1804447
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A Translation of Four Chinese Shi-Poems

Student name: Qixuan Zhou

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1. Original text and translation of the *shi*-poem *Chenyi chaoshiyuan*

duchanjing 晨詣超師院讀禪經

1.1 Original text

晨詣超師院讀禪經（柳宗元）	
汲井漱寒齒，清心拂塵服。	道人庭宇靜，苔色連深竹。
閒持貝葉書，步出東齋讀。	日出霧露餘，青松如膏沐。
真源了無取，妄跡世所逐。	澹然離言說，悟悅心自足。
遺言冀可冥，繕性何由熟。	

1.2 Translation

A morning visit to the Master Shi's temple to read the Buddhist Scriptures（Liu Zongyuan）	
Draw the cold well-water to rinse my teeth and mouth. Make my mind calm before whisking the dust on clothes. Hold a roll of the Buddhist	It's a very peaceful and quiet yard belonging to the Taoist priest. Green mosses have extended to the deep place of a bamboo grove. The morning sunlight shines the

Scriptures with carefree leisure.	morning mist and dew drops.
Read it carefully after walking out of the east dining room.	Pines in the morning seem to be smeared with oil after a bath.
No one really understands the truth of the Buddhist Scriptures.	It is unspeakable how this peace and calm situation makes me feel.
All people in this world just chase after those absurd things.	Penetrating the Buddhist truth makes my mind happy and satisfied.
The essence of the Buddhist Scriptures is meant to be understand.	
But how could I cultivate my nature and self-cultivation to be a master.	

2. Original text and translation of the *shi*-poem *Xinglunan* 行路難

2.1 Original text

行路難（李白）	
金樽清酒鬥十千， 玉盤珍羞直萬錢。 停杯投箸不能食， 拔劍四顧心茫然。 欲渡黃河冰塞川， 將登太行雪滿山。	閒來垂釣碧溪上， 忽復乘舟夢日邊。 行路難！行路難！ 多歧路，今安在？ 長風破浪會有時， 直掛雲帆濟滄海。

2.2 Translation

Life is hard (Li Bai)	
The good liquor in this golden vessel is worth a lot of money. The rare delicacies in this jade plate are worth much more. Dropping down the vessel and chopsticks, I can't eat anything. Drawing my sword and looking around, my mind is so vacant. I want to cross the Yellow River, but it is blocked by giant ice. I want to climb the Taihang Mountain, but it is covered by snow.	Fishing beside the Bixi stream in my spare time. Suddenly dreaming about passing by the sun by a boat. Life is hard! Life is hard! So many branch roads, which one is the best choice? One day, I will ride the wind and waves. Sailing my boat to the real wide world.

3. Original text and translation of the *shi*-poem *Kurexing* 苦熱行

3.1 Original text

苦熱行（王維）

赤日滿天地，火雲成山嶽。	思出宇宙外，曠然在寥廓。
草木盡焦卷，川澤皆竭涸。	長風萬里來，江海蕩煩濁。
輕紈覺衣重，密樹苦陰薄。	卻顧身爲患，始知心未覺。
莞簟不可近，絺綌再三濯。	忽入甘露門，宛然清涼樂。

3.2 Translation

A travel to the fierce heat (Wang Wei)	
The hot sun burns every inch of the world.	People's minds are flying away to places far beyond the universe.
Orange clouds look like burning mountains.	A wider space where you can find the feeling of cool and openness.
All the grass and trees are scorched and rolled up.	The remote wind will come from ten thousand miles away.
All the rivers and lakes dry up and leave no water.	The river and sea will dispel all the sorrow and worry.
Even very thin silk clothes, you will feel it is too heavy to wear.	Only focus on and worry about the current body feeling.
Even under a dense mass of trees, you can not feel any cool.	Then I realized that I have not felt it with my mind.
The bamboo mat and cattail mat become too hot to touch.	Walking into the Ganlu Gate out of expectation.
The ko-hemp cloth must be washed again and again.	I suddenly find a pleasant feeling of coolness.

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4. Original text and translation of the *shi*-poem *Qiuxing bashou* 秋興八首·其三

4.1 Original text

秋興八首·其三（杜甫）	
千家山郭靜朝暉， 日日江樓坐翠微。 信宿漁人還泛泛， 清秋燕子故飛飛。	匡衡抗疏功名薄， 劉向傳經心事違。 同學少年多不賤， 五陵衣馬自輕肥。

4.2 Translation

Eight poems about autumn—the third (Du Fu)	
All families in this city are bathing in the morning sunlight. Sitting in the building beside the river everyday, to see the green mountains.	Kuang Heng advised frankly to the emperor and ignored fame and gain. Liu Xiang devoted himself to teach scriptures, though his life didn't go

The fisherman sleeping in a boat for two days is still boating in the river. There are still swallows flying around though it is a cool autumn now.	well. All schoolfellows in early youth have made their own successes. They live in Wuling, wearing expensive clothes, riding strong horses.
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3. Commentary

For A morning visit to the Master Shi's temple to read the Buddhist Scriptures

This poem mainly depicts the poet's feeling of reading the Buddhist Scriptures in the Master Chao's temple. The poet adopts a kind of method of narration interspersed with comments to write this poem, and the whole poem is actually a diary about how the poet spent a day in this yard. The first, second, fifth and sixth sentences are narrative, and the third, fourth and seventh sentences are argumentative. When translating this poem into English, the stylistic features of different sentences should be paid enough attention, to embody the original artistic conception and central idea of this poem. In addition, this poem involves several Buddhist conceptions, which require the translator to use the relevant terms accurately, to avoid cultural ambiguities. Most ancient Chinese poems are written to express a certain kind of emotion or attitude of the poet, the same as this one. So it is very important to figure out what emotion or attitude the poet wants. This is the basis for translating the poem into English accurately. The poet expresses his mind state of hoping to seek for a method of saving the country and the people from the Buddhist Scriptures, and also expresses his depressed mood of being relegated without achieving his political aspiration. At the same time, the poet even

reveals a kind of complex mood of seeking for a tranquil and leisurely environment which is beyond the real world. When translating this poem into English, these complex emotions of the poet must be fully considered.

For Life is hard

I think these are necessary steps to translate it into English accurately, smoothly and coherently. The first two lines of this poem depict an extremely luxurious banquet scene, where the poet was at the table, but the next two lines depict the frustrated mood of the poet, which makes him unable to eat or drink anything even before these delicacies and great wine. This strong contrast highlights the state of mind of the poet at that time. The description of this scene is very vivid and detailed. Therefore, when translating these sentences, I try to translate every element mentioned in the original text into English as detailed as possible, avoiding to omitting any information point. Then this poem depicts the author's current predicament—his official career was blocked, and he was unable to implement his political ambition. But it depicts examples of two famous ancients in the next two lines, who achieved great successes in politics in their old ages. These examples imply that the poet still held the hope to make some achievements in politics. Then, in the last two lines, the poet shows his own attitude to life with a positive and passionate mentality—even there are endless difficulties in your way of dream, he will still march forward courageously. This poem adopts a lot of contrast techniques to embody the poet's mood and mind state. So I also try to highlight this comparative effect as far as possible when translating it into English, to achieve the role of expressing the central idea of this poem.

For A travel to the fierce heat

his poem depicts various objective scenery in the extremely hot summer, and the subjective feeling that the hot weather brings to people. It embodies the scorching heat of summer and

the people's discomfort feeling brought by this heat. At the same time, this poem takes advantage of a scene to express the poet's emotion, expresses the real feelings of the poet on this hot summer day, and then expresses the poet's life perceptions. When translating this poem, I drew much attention to choosing appropriate translation methods for every line of the poem. The first two lines depict scenery, which highlights the scorching heat of summer by vivid descriptions. This part adopts two kinds of rhetorical device, metaphor and exaggeration. Therefore, it is very important to distinguish the objective description and the metaphor image in the process of translating. The third and fourth lines depict people's daily life scenes in this hot summer, which reflect the scorching heat of summer from a side face. This part mentions some things of ancient times, such as daily clothes and pillows, and these things are very different from what we use today. Hence, before translating, I searched for information about these things carefully, to ensure that the translation text is accurate and understandable for the target readers. The last four lines depict the poet's subjective feelings and life perceptions, and those emotional expressions are more than what the words themselves. For this reason, it is very necessary to figure out the deep meaning behind the literal word before translating. This is also a common feature of ancient Chinese poems. This part is also the most important content of the poem, the part of emotion expression. It embodies the poet's positive life attitude, which should be embodied in the translation text.

For Eight poems about autumn—the third

It is a typical poem that takes advantage of a scene to express the poet's emotion, which expresses the poet's inner emotion by depicting the scenery or objects around. In this kind of poem, all the scenery and objects are given a certain kind of special connotation, which needs to be understood combining with the writing time and background of the poem. In addition, this poem is the third poem of a series poem work, which means it is necessary to have a general idea of the entire series of poems if you want to fully understand some special

meaning in this poem. The first two lines depict the scenery and objects, including towns, mountains, rivers, people, and animals. There are only two lines, but they include an extremely rich amount of content. Most scenery or objects in the ancient Chinese poem have a certain symbolic significance, which plays a certain or even an important role in the understanding of the entire poem. Thus, when translating this sentence, I tried to restore the scenery and objects mentioned in the poem as far as possible, to ensure the comprehensive expression of the translation text. The third line is about stories of some eminent persons in history, and expresses the poet's emotion, attitude, or idea through these old stories. Therefore, the translation text of this sentence shall not only tell the story of the ancients, and what's more important is to show the poet's emotional expression as much as possible. The fourth line is about current situations, in which the different conditions between him and his old friends make the poet can not help to sigh. This sentence is the key sentence of this poem, because it embodies the central idea of this poem—the poet feels very depressed about his current life.

4. Bibliography

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