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A Translation of Four Chinese Shi-Poems

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Venerable Shengmiao, Miss Deng, good afternoon and good evening. My name is Pang Hoi Na and I would like to share with you my Translation of Four Chinese Shi-Poems.

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

Get up early to read Buddhist sutras in Master Chao' Longxing Pure Land Monastery (Liu zongyuan)	
Rinsing mouth, brushing teeth, with cold well water. Wiping off the dust from the clothes and the heart.	can also be expected to coincide. In the cultivation of virtue, how can one be accomplished. How tranquil and enjoyable is the temple of

Leisurely holding up the ancient Buddhist sutra, Strolling out of the east wing of Pure Land Courtyard, chanting and reading aloud. The true meaning of Buddhism is not comprehended by the world, The deed of superstition is what people chase. The essence of all sage's words	practitioners, Green fresh moss connects the deep bamboo forest. The sun comes out and shines on the morning mist, Verdant pine trees are like a post-bath grease. Silence makes the placid beyond words, Buddhism brings inner contentment.
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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，	閒來垂釣碧溪上，
玉盤珍羞直萬錢。	忽復乘舟夢日邊。
停杯投箸不能食，	行路難！行路難！
拔劍四顧心茫然。	多歧路，今安在？
欲渡黃河冰塞川，	長風破浪會有時，
將登太行雪滿山。	直掛雲帆濟滄海。

2.2 Translation

How many difficult forks on the paths? (Libai)

The expensive wine and precious dishes, worth ten thousand dollars, were filled with my gold cups and exquisite jade plates. Stop toasting and eating, pull out my sword and look around, feeling uncertain. Want to cross the Yellow River but it is ice- bound, Want to go to the Taihang Mountains but the wind is frozen.	Like waited for a comeback, and lived idle fishing by the river.¹ Like dream before being hired, passed by the sun in a boat.² How difficult, how difficult! how many forks on the paths, nowhere to go! One day when I can ride the wind and break the waves, hang the sails high, bravely move forward in the ocean!³
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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。	卻顧身為患，始知心未覺。
莞簞不可近，絺綌再三濯。	忽入甘露門，宛然清涼樂。

3.2 Translation

The travel of suffering and heat (Wangwei)
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¹ Literary quotation refers to Lu Shang (Jiang Taigong) was fishing on the Wei River, and he met King Wen in the Zhou dynasty. He help Zhou destroy the Shang dynasty.

² Yi Yin once dreamed that he passed by the sun and the moon in a boat, and was hired by Shang Tang to help the Shang dynasty to destroy the Xia dynasty.

³ According to *the Historical record of the Song dynasty*, chapter Zongqi Biography, when Zongqi was young, his uncle Zongbing asked him about his aspirations, and he said, 'I would like to ride the strong wind and break the waves of thousands of miles.'

In the hot summer, the red sun is full between heaven and earth, and many fire clouds like scorching volcanoes. All the plants seem to be curled up and burnt, All the rivers and lakes are also evaporated to exhausted. No matter how light clothes are, the feeling is still heavy, no matter how dense the tree is, the shade is still thin. Unable to approach the bamboo mat, cambric clothes need to be constantly washed.	Imagining going beyond the universe, and enjoying the vastness and emptiness in the sky. The strong wind comes thousands of miles, The rivers and seas can turbulent the irritable and confused. But unless one really realizes, One couldn't get rid of the troubles of his body. But unless one is fully enlightened, One couldn't enter the door of nectar-like dharma. Only the epiphany of Buddhism can bring the joy of coolness and refreshment.
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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

The third autumn feelings (Dufu)

Thousands of households are quietly bathing in the morn sunshine. Go upstairs the buildings by the river every day, sit and appreciate the verdant peak's flip side. The fisherman who overnights on boat day by day, still drifting in the river. In the bright and clean autumn seasons, the swallows were still flying around.	In the Han Dynasty, The loyal ⁴ resists the fame and persuades directly. The scholar ⁵ fails to hand down the classics. Most of my childhood classmates have astounding triumphs, who lived as aristocrats, with costly fur and nice horses.
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3. Commentary

To translate Chinese poetry, the first thing to know is the spirit and writing style of the poet. For the first poem, the poet Liu zongyuan is good at the poem of the landscape. His famous poem Jiangxue (Watching Snow on the River) shows his style clearly, which is secluded and steep, vigorous and condensed poetry. Through the plain and simple wording, this snow scene poetry reflects Liu's loneliness and fortitude. Get up early to read Buddhist sutras in Master Chao's Longxing Pure Land Monastery is also a lyric poem to express the situation of society and his philosophical views of reading the Buddhist sutras. In the first part of the poem, he describes the scene where the poet goes to read Master Chao's Monastery, and transiting to accusing people's superstition and absurdity is what people chase. He finishes the poem with the essence of Buddhism is beyond words which bring inner contentment.

⁴ Kuang Heng, a native of the Han Dynasty. Because of his sparse political speech, he was appreciated by Emperor Yuan of the Han Dynasty, and moved to Doctor Guanglu and the Prince Shaofu. For the deeds, see "Han Shu • Kuangheng Biography" Anti-shu: Shang Shu speaks bluntly. When Du Fu was in the post of Zuo's relics, he sparsely talked about saving Fang Guan, so he compared himself with Kuang Heng.

⁵ Liu Xiang, courtesy name Zizheng, was a scholar of the Han Dynasty. The clan, who served in the three dynasties of Xuandi, Yuandi, and Chengdi, repeatedly wrote and said things. Liu Xiang was a famous scribes scholar. He taught the Five Classics in Shiqu Pavilion when Emperor Xuan was appointed. Famous and Name Book: It means that he saved Fang Kuan because of his slanderous remarks and was reprimanded by the imperial court. Pointing to the contrary. This sentence means that he hopes to inherit the spirit of Confucian classics like Liu Xiang, but it is difficult to fulfill his long-cherished wish.

The translation of the topic may seem too long. But there are many annotations regarding Liu Zongyuan living in the Longxing temple at that time. The Longxing Pure Land Monastery is in the south of the city, and the abbot is Chongxun. He lives in the Pure Land Monastery of Longxing Temple, and always teaches Liu, who is in the west wing of Longxing Temple. Liu Zongyuan sought his way from Buddhism in Yongzhou, asking him to teach Buddhism, or going to the Pure Land Monastery to read the Buddhist sutra. The important four lines about the life of the monk most likely is describing his worshipping of Master Chongxun so to avoid affecting the fluency of the verse, I put this key information in the topic.

When Liu wrote this poem, he was demoted to Yongzhou. The scenery of temple life he writes about is noble and natural without a single word of careless which shows his sincerity as a virtuous person as well. During the translation, the main point is how to use the simple and clear way to express his complex feeling about being exiled before accomplishing his great aspiration. He wanted to seek the way to governing and a kind of transcendence and lingering in a leisurely and peaceful world in the Buddhist sutra. Therefore, I adjust some word order to make the subject clear like ‘Wiping off the dust from the clothes and the heart’, skipping the word ‘absurdity’ in the lines ‘The deeds of superstition and absurdity is what people chase’; and skip the word ‘meaning’ in the lines ‘The essence and meaning of all saint’s word can also be expected to coincide’; skip the word ‘proficient’ in the lines ‘in the cultivation of virtue, how can one be proficient and accomplished’. The purpose of this edition is to make it short and powerful.

For the second poem ‘How many difficult forks in the road’, Li bai's poetic style is bold and unrestrained, and his imagination is peculiar. After Qu Yuan, he is another poet who is full of romanticism, so he has the reputation of a ‘fairy poet’. His poems are rich in materials,

and his language is natural and clear, getting rid of the poetic style of the Six Dynasties. In 742 BCE (the first year of Tianbao), Li entered Beijing by edict and served as a Hanlin official. However, he was not reused by Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang Dynasty and was slandered and excluded by the powerful nobility. Li was forced out of Beijing, and all his friends came to pay him a farewell. He felt the difficulty of his career and wrote the poem 'How many difficult forks in the road'.

Compare with the scenery description of Liu's poem, Li's poem pays more attention to expressing his emotion through action. I try to use different expressions to translate 停, 投, 拔, 顧 which can vividly show the inner depression and emotional changes. It is difficult to make a balance. Because too detailed description will be very cumbersome, and too refined language will lose the strength of the original lines. The final version 'Stop toasting and eating, pull out my sword and look around, feeling uncertain' combine 停 and 投 as one word, skip the word chopsticks to keep the succinctness. To break the first two lines into three to keep the readability. For understandability, adding a footnote to explain the literary quotation in 'Like waited for a comeback, and lived idle fishing by the river. Like dream before being hired, passed by the sun in a boat.' Explaining the story of Lvshang, Yiyin, and Zongqi in a footnote can let the reader know more about Li indicating that he is still expecting a political career. In this way, it will not affect the fluency and rhythm of the verse, while increasing the reader's understanding of the poet's inner emotions.

If I have to choose between word meaning and rhyme, I will usually choose to express the meaning clearly. Because Tang poetry is rich in resources, if I cannot express the meaning of the word clearly, it will make the poems of the same theme read very similarly and lose their uniqueness. Therefore, when translating Liu's poems, in the line 'The sun comes out and shines on the morning mist', even if I could use 'the sun shines instead of The sun comes out

and shines', I still choose a longer sentence to express it. But Li's poem is different, it is very suitable for rhyme, and rhyme does not affect the meaning, so more rhymes will be used in combination.

For the third poem 'The travel of suffering and heat', Wangwei's later poems mainly focus on landscapes which truly represent his elegant artist creation. His poetry is mainly based on five characters, describing the life of retreat, the pastoral landscape, the pursuit of a quiet and leisurely spiritual life, and the approach is quiet and simple. Wang 's poems are rich in Buddhism, and Taoism thoughts. The political setbacks, the part in life and separated by death, have brought him inspiration for creation. The intervention of Buddhist thought has become the dominant thought of his late poetry.

Whether frontier poems or landscape poems, rhythm poems, or quatrains, there are many good poems that have been passed down by the population. But among them, his landscape poetry is the most famous. His verses were commented by Sushi as 'the poems of literary evaluation, there are paintings in the poems, his viewing and criticism are very graphic.' He did have his own unique accomplishments in describing natural scenes. Whether it is the grandeur of famous mountains and rivers, the splendid coldness of frontier gates, or the tranquillity of small bridges and flowing water, it can be accurately and refined to create a perfect and vivid image.

When translating this poem, I spend much time finding the right translation for the word 莞簟 wǎn diàn and 絺綌 xì zhǐ. *Wandian* means vine mat and bamboo mat. *Xizhi* is the general name of hemp cloth. I doubt whether western people will use the same material in their hot summer, can they understand the meaning of the poet? But considering poetry has no boundary, to show the broad meaning of the poetry. I choose to translate *Wandian* into the bamboo mat and *Xizhi* into cambric clothes. Although *Wandian* and *Xizhi* may have detailed

classification of Chinese culture for western readers they just need to know, that the poet is describing the extreme heat that makes summer bedding and thin clothing become unbearably hot. To be prudent, I also change the second line ‘and many fire clouds like scorching volcanoes’ many times, to translate the character *cheng* into the word become, turn into or transform seems too exaggerated, so this translation is the word like which can faithfully express what the poet meant.

The other difficult word is 甘露門, If I want to unify the sentence patterns of the last four lines, the key is the translation of Ganlu. If I choose to translate it into the door of nectar, part of its meaning will be lost so I decorate the door of nectar with dharma, to avoid the readers’ misunderstanding. To avoid wasting the poet’s ingenuity, the word epiphany is my understanding of 忽入 which is reserved but still enchanting. In Li’s poem I translate 長風破浪 into ‘ride the wind and break the waves’ while in Wang’s poem 長風萬里來 into ‘The strong wind comes thousands of miles. One is because of the rhythms and the other reason is whether the wind is strong or not will not change the understanding of Li’s poem but will have a more significant impact on Wang’s poem.

For the last poem ‘The third autumn feelings’, the style of his poetry is profound and accumulated, full of pause and transition in melody. The language is refined, the rhythm is rigorous, the emotion is sincere, and the description is profound. his creative style is delicate and touching, and the image is vivid. Every word in Du Fu's poems has been tempered. His poems aroused the fiery emotion of loving the motherland and the people and the lofty spirit of self-sacrifice. Therefore, he was recognized as the "history of poetry" by later generations, and the poet was honoured as ‘the saint of poetry’. I break the second line into two lines to avoid too pressing and cumbersome. To translate 信宿漁人還泛泛 into The fisherman who overnights on boat day by day, it is the understanding in context but not just for the single line. Du uses *fanfan* to describe the feeling of a fisherman who is drifting away, without any

support. This is the projection of his inner emotions, and it is also his helplessness that he cannot change the political situation with his own hands. Therefore, I use the term ‘day by day’ to link the word every day in the previous line which can facilitate the reader's association. I choose to skip the name 匡衡 and 劉向 and describe their character image as ‘loyal minister’ and ‘outstanding scholar’ which can make the reader understand easily. I put the details of this two-person in the footnote, it is convenient for some readers who want to find out the story.

This is all my presentation today. Any feedback and suggestions would be appreciated.
Thank you.

4. Bibliography

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