



# The English Translation of Tang Poetry Based on Cultural Self-confidence and Selective Adaptation-Taking “Changgan Xing” as an Example

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## Abstract

Tang poetry has great poetic and aesthetic value. Based on the theories of cultural self-confidence and selective adaptation, the necessity and rationality of the English translation of Tang poetry will be discussed under the guidance of "Harmony-guided Three-level Criteria of Poetry Translation", and comparative analyses of five English versions of Li Bai's "Changgan Xing" will be made. The study holds that "Harmony-guided Three-level Criteria of Poetry Translation" not only embodies cultural self-confidence, but also conforms to the spiritual essence of the theory of selective adaptation. It can effectively disseminate Chinese poetry and improve the soft power of Chinese culture.

**Keywords:** Tang poetry; English translation; Harmony-guided three-level criteria of poetry translation; Cultural self-confidence; Selective adaptation; "Changgan xing"; Li Bai.



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## 1. Introduction

Chinese poetry has had a far-reaching impact on the history of world literature. Tang Dynasty is the peak of the creation of classical Chinese poetry, and Tang poetry is "the essence of our literary treasure" (Xu, 1983). As translators, it is our duty to translate such literary treasures as Tang poetry and to explore theories that can effectively guide poetry translation. Compared with that in other countries, the exploration of systematic translation theory in China started relatively late. In the early stage, many western translation theories were used for reference. However, with the development of translation studies in China, some translation theories with Chinese characteristics have been formed. For example, Xu Yuanchong's "Three Beauties," Hu Gengshen's "Eco-translatology" and Wang Feng's "Harmony-guided Three-level Criteria of Poetry Translation" have important guiding significance for translation practice and make excellent Chinese poetry culture better known around the world.

## 2. English Translation of Tang Poetry Based on Cultural Self-Confidence

"Cultural self-confidence is a more basic, deeper and more lasting support for the development of a country or a nation" (Xi, 2017). For China, cultural self-confidence is the self-confidence of socialist culture with Chinese characteristics, which includes excellent traditional culture, revolutionary culture and advanced socialist culture (Cheng and Cao, 2018). Tang poetry, beyond doubt, is a shining pearl in our traditional Chinese culture. William Alexander Parson Martin, an American sinologist, introduced Tang poetry by stating that Li Bai and Du Fu were Pope and Dryden in this poetic era of the Tang dynasty (Martin, 2009). Launcelot Alfred Cranmer-Byng praised Tang poetry as "the golden age of Chinese poetry." He also wrote that opening the scrolls of those glorious 300 years, all great singers (poets) would come and communicate with you (1909). With respect to Tang poetry, Chinese people should have confidence and let it go overseas. As Zhang (2012) said, Chinese people should be confident enough to bring out the good things handed down by Chinese ancestors. In other words, Chinese people should have cultural consciousness and cultural self-confidence. Only by spreading China's advanced cultural treasures abroad, letting the West know the East, and sharing Chinese culture with people of the world (Yu and Gu, 2001), can its great value be disseminated, thus improving China's soft power of culture and enriching the world's cultural diversity. As English is the most widely used language in the world, translating Tang poetry into English is the inevitable choice for its dissemination abroad. Zhang Caiyun argues that China's international publicity translation practice needs to be explained by Chinese translation theories, and then China's international publicity translation theories can be put forward with Chinese practice, in which a certain discourse system is expected to be established in the translation of Chinese culture (2018). With globalization, people with lofty ideals in the field of translation have devoted themselves to the practice and theoretical study of translation. Some scholars have put forward theories on translation methods and criteria. They have been working hard on the road of translating Tang poetry in pursuing the greatest value of Tang poetry. Wang F. (2015), put forward the theory—"Harmony-guided Three-level

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Criteria of Poetry Translation" in his monograph *A Comprehensive Study on the English Translation of Classical Tang Poetry*. The combination of micro and macro studies can be used as criteria for poetry translation and poetry translation criticism. The meso-level criteria—similarity in style, meaning and artistic conception are based on cultural self-confidence because the translation of Tang poetry should feature Chinese flavors.

"Similarity in style" means the style of the target text, namely the translation of poetry, is familiar to the source text. As Poet Jade Chips stated, deliberating words is not as good as deliberating sentences, deliberating sentences is not as good as deliberating meaning, and deliberating meaning is not as good as practicing style (Wei, 2007). Wang M. J. (2005), argues that "there are two towering trees in the Tang Dynasty's aesthetic forest, and style theory is one." Lv Shuxiang also holds that not only should translated poetry convey the meaning, but also present the style of the original poetry (2002). This shows the importance of style in poetry translation. The style is vital because it reflects the author's creative ideas. However, in the past, in many English versions of Tang poetry, the style has not been concerned much. For example, Cranmer-Byng's translations of Chinese poetry resemble pre-Raphaelian works (Wang F., 2015). There are many poets in the Tang Dynasty whose styles are different. In the *Four Oceans Poetry Tales*, Li Bai's poems are evaluated as unconstrained and elegant, Du Fu's are depressed and profound, Meng Haoran's are elegant, Wang Wei's are simple and ethereal, and other poets have their own styles (Xie, 2019). Tang poetry has many styles and features, which make it unique among world poetry. Therefore, when translating Tang poetry into English, translators have reasons to be confident in retaining the styles of the original Chinese poetry. "Similarity in meaning" refers that the meaning of the translated Tang poem is similar to that of the original. It is the general principle to have a thorough comprehension of the original works' meaning faithfully (Tan, 2004). The poet Dryden said that translators must obey the meaning of the original works (Tan, 2004). Faithfulness to the original text's meaning is generally accepted as a criterion in translation, and poetry translation is no exception. Chinese is a high-context language. Most of the information exists either in the environment or is internalized in the communicators, and only a small amount of the information exists in the encoded and transmitted symbols (Hall, 1977). Much information in Chinese is not sent through words but needs to be understood by readers or interlocutors in the context. English is a low-context language, and a great deal of information is contained in clear code (ibid.). How to introduce the translation of Tang poetry that has grown up in a high-context culture to readers in a low-context culture? Wang Feng holds that translators must respect the potential images and implicit meaning in Tang poetry. Rather than rewrite Tang poetry in the form of clear code, they need to consider the difficulties of readers in low-context cultures when they are reading the translations. The backgrounds, styles, and intentions of poems should be explained to help English readers understand the subtle beauty of Tang poetry (2015). It is with self-confidence in Chinese culture and language that translators translate Tang poems faithfully so that the meaning of their translations conforms to the original poems with the principle of harmony, respecting Chinese culture and its expression rather than merely rewriting Tang poems with an explicit coding.

"Similarity in artistic conception" refers that the comprehensive effect of artistic conception produced by translated poems in the brains of the readers is similar to that produced by the original poems in the brains of the original readers (Wang F., 2015). In fact, the theory of "Similarity in artistic conception" and Nida's functional equivalence are in the same vein. Nida (1993), believes that a good translation should enable the target readers to understand the target text in the way the source readers do, and the target readers to understand the target text as deeply as possible as the source readers understand the source text (1993). Tang poetry has various styles and schools, among which the best works are featured in the combination of scenes and emotions, which are not superficial but profound (Chen, 2006). Lu (2008), argues that poetry has three charms: the charm of feeling, of the image and language. If one of the three is missing, you will find this poem insipid. The combination of feelings and images constitutes the artistic conception. The theories of many specialists in translation, such as Qian Zhongshu and Xu Yuanhong, are concerned with the problem of artistic conception. This shows the critical position of artistic conception in Tang poetry. A typical feature of Tang poetry is the rich artistic conception composed of many images. To represent the cultural treasure of Tang poetry, the translator should reproduce its artistic conception and aesthetic value necessarily preserved. This is dependent on the translator's cultural self-confidence.

### 3. Selective Adaptation and English Translation of Tang Poetry

Rosanna Warren argued, Translation is a cognitive and living model. When literary works are transplanted from one language to another, it is like moving plants or animals from one place to another. It means that they have to adapt and grow just like individuals or nations, for only by adapting to the new environment can they survive (Warren, 1989). It is true that only when translators treat texts, especially poetry, as living and complete beings, can translations of high quality be created. How to successfully translate Tang poetry—a treasure of Chinese culture, is a problem that needs to be discussed and studied at present. In the process of translating, firstly, the differences between the two languages and cultures must be made clear, which is the disharmony between languages and cultures. Wang F. (2015), wrote in his monograph that because of the distinct national characteristics of cultures, there are differences among them, and these differences also appear at different levels of the language system. Various disharmony will inevitably arise in the process of translation and communication between different languages and cultures. The disharmony between Tang poetry and English poetry mainly exists in the following aspects: art against science, lyric against narrative, level and deflected tones against stressed and unstressed syllables, parataxis and hypotaxis, implication and exaggeration, integrity and enjambement (Wang F., 2015). How should translators deal with these disharmonies? They will be discussed one by one below.

As it is well known, Chinese is a language with a structure like bamboos, and English is a language with a structure like a tree. Every word in English has a definite part of speech. Words with different parts of speech play

different roles in the sentence. A complete English sentence is usually composed of subject, predicate, object, attributive, adverbial, complement, etc. in a specific order, and English poetry is no exception, but Chinese does not have a grammar system as rigorous as English. In the high context, the shackles of syntax are reduced to a minimum. This feature is especially prominent in concise poetry. (Jiang, 2008;2016), holds that Chinese poetry is highly metaphorical and can evoke associative images while English poetry sometimes lacks such a feature. This is the disharmony between English and Chinese poetry: art and science, parataxis and hypotaxis. When translating Tang poems into English, it is necessary to choose the grammatical structure of English poems, because only in this way can Tang poems adapt to the climate of foreign countries and be accepted by English readers. In Chinese, lyric poems are dominant and narrative poems are rare, but in English, narrative poems account for a more substantial proportion than lyric poems (Wang F., 2015). This is why English poetry is less advanced in the lyric practice while more developed at its narrative practice. Xu (2007), emphasizes that all words describing scenes in Tang and Song poems were words with emotions, and it is a pity only to ignore the emotions attached to them. In English poetry, in most occasions, words depicting scenes are just about scenes, and words expressing feelings have nothing with scenery, which is different from Tang poetry. It is a common phenomenon in Tang poetry to embody feelings in scenes and to express feelings through scenes, but not as much as in English poetry. To some extent, this is a cultural deficiency, for emotions attached to scenes in Tang poetry cannot be found in English poetry. Faced with this disharmony, translators need to make choices and add the missing cultural information to the translated poems, as there is no lyric poem without emotion.

Liu Naihua argues that the difference between Chinese and English rhythms is first manifested in rhythm units, and the Chinese rhythm unit is consistent with the smallest semantic unit, which is a Chinese character with a syllable. A syllable in phonetics can express certain meaning semantically. That is to say, each syllable of characters forms the basis of rhythm (Bai and Zhao, 2006). Generally, a fixed number of Chinese characters with fixed syllables exist in each poem of Tang poetry, of which five-character and seven-character poems are the most popular. English is centered on stress, which is mainly related to intensity. The basic unit of English poetry is the foot, and a poem has prescribed feet (Bai and Zhao, 2006). Among them, iambic pentameter is the most popular, and other iambic styles are also quite common. The orderly shift of level and deflected tones forms the beauty of rhythm in Chinese rhythmic poems. The beauty of rhythm in English is shaped by the regular arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables. So when translating Chinese poetry into English poetry, stressed and unstressed syllables should be adopted while level and deflected tones have to be abandoned.

Sikong Tu commented on Chinese poetry that no word in a poem directly describes the poet's feelings, but the poet's feelings have been perfectly expressed in the description of things. There is a well-known story that happened in the Northern Song Dynasty. In one national examination for painters, all the examinees must draw a picture according to a line of the poem—horses were fragrant when he went back on flowers. Most examinees worked hard on petals and hoofs, but only one did not. He painted that a man was riding a horse back to the countryside, the horse was galloping, and several butterflies were chasing the horse. There were no flowers in the painting, but the fragrance was pervasive, which coincides with the implicit beauty of Tang poetry. This beauty is rooted in implicit Chinese culture. Zhao Yiheng holds that Western poetry is traditionally exaggerated, while Chinese poetry, in Pound's words, 'is closer to the bone.' Zhu Guangqian also said that compared with western poems on nature, Chinese poems are also like love poems. One is euphemistic, subtle and concise, the other is forthright, profound and elaborate. English versions of Tang poems should be able to evoke English readers' aesthetic experience to appreciate the implicit beauty of Tang poems, which requires translators and readers to work together to achieve the integration of aesthetic values (Zhu and Chen, 2010). From the perspective of Hans Robert Jauss's Aesthetic of Reception, the translation of Tang poetry into English has its value only if it brings similar aesthetic experience to English readers. The implicit beauty of Tang poetry is usually transmitted through images, and many images constitute artistic conception. Cultural images create great challenges for translators. Tian (2018) In the process of translating Tang poems into English, images cannot be abandoned. Translators should keep the images and transplant them into the mind of English readers in an appropriate way.

Chinese characters' forms are like certain squares or rectangles with nearly the same shape. And most classic Chinese poems are metrical poems, and every line in one poem consists of equal characters, making Chinese poetry neat and formally symmetrical, so Tang poetry is more integrated than English poetry visually (Wang F., 2015). Lv (2002), said that Western poetry usually has more than a dozen lines. It is impossible for the translated poems and the original ones to be completely equal in form, for Chinese and English are two different forms of language, rooted in different cultures. To adapt to English readers, the unity in the form of Chinese poems is bound to be abandoned to some degree. It is the differences in languages and cultures between Chinese and English poetry that lead to diverse standards in poetry translation, some of which are even totally in opposition. Under such an occasion, Wang F. (2015) put forward the theory of "the Harmony-guided Three-level Criteria for poetry translation," whose macro-level theory of "Harmony" absorbs the nutrition of sino-philosophy -- the doctrine of the mean and this theory is a social, historical choice he made. If the English translation of Tang poetry completely loses the taste of Chinese poetry, then it will not reveal the cultural charm of Tang poetry, and it is contrary to the original intention of the translation. Certainly, it is impossible to fully retain all its components, because there are also a large number of "adaptation," "choice," "survival," and "elimination" phenomena in translation (Hu, 2010). Therefore, "Harmony" is a notion about the translation of Tang poetry based on selection and adaptation. It can guide us to go further on the road of poetry translation.

## 4. An Analysis of the English Versions of Li Bai's "Changgan Xing" Under the Standard of Eight Beauties

Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy that studies beauty and taste, and the combination of translation theories and aesthetics has a history of nearly two thousand years. Translation theory is inseparable from aesthetics, especially in literary translation. It is necessary to reproduce the aesthetic value and characteristics of the poems to convey the semantic information of original poems (Liu and Bao, 2015). Translation aesthetics is also the research content in translation circles, and it plays a vital part in poetry translation. Xu Yuanchong, a great translator in China, put forward the theory of "three beauties" which guides many poetry translation practices. Wang Feng has absorbed the essence of previous academic achievements and established "the Harmony-guided Three-level Criteria of poetry translation," in which Eight standards of beauty refer to the beauty of form, musicality, image, emotion, implication, words, allusions and gestalt. The following five English versions of "Changgan Xing" (Li Bai) translated by Ezra Pound, W.J.B. Fletcher, Shigeyoshi Obata, Xu Yuanchong and Jiang Shaolun respectively, will be compared and analyzed from an aesthetic point of view with the eight standards of beauty as a reference.

### 4.1. Beauty of Form

The beauty of form refers to the external shape of poetry, which is determined by the number of lines, arrangement, length, indentation, and structure of poetry (Wang F., 2015), which is what Wen Yiduo called "the beauty of architecture." Tang poetry has a typical beauty of form—symmetry. This feature is due to the Chinese characters' external form while English does not have that. It is difficult to achieve a complete correspondence between Tang poetry and its English translation in form. But English poetry, especially metrical poetry, also has its symmetrical beauty. Therefore, in terms of overall form, the English translation of Tang poetry can still retain symmetrical beauty to some degree. Among the five selected English versions of "Changgan Xing," Xu Yuanchong and Fletcher's translations are superior in terms of symmetrical beauty. Pound's almost lost the symmetrical beauty of the original poem. Jiang Shaolun's and Shigeyoshi Obata's preserved a partially balanced form, missing part of it.

### 4.2. Beauty of Music

The beauty of music refers to the beauty of poetry reflected through the tone, rhythm, and rhyme, occupying a critical position in classical Chinese poetry, and poets especially value it in the Tang Dynasty (Wang F., 2015). The musical beauty of Tang poetry is embodied in level and deflected tones and rhyme. English poetry's musical beauty is placed in stressed and unstressed syllables. "Changgan Xing" is not a perfect metrical poem for not every line of the poem is rhymed, but there are still many rhymes in the whole poem. Therefore, the musical beauty of the original poem should be reproduced in its translation. Among the five translations, the three translations of Fletcher, Xu Yuanchong and Jiang Shaolun are metrical poems. Among them, Fletcher's rhymes are more flexible, and the types of abab, abba, and aabbcc appear in the poem. Xu Yuanchong's has rhyming couplets. There are rhymes within two consecutive lines, or three consecutive lines, or four consecutive lines in Jiang Shaolun's. These three translations have their own merits in music beauty and can bring readers the enjoyment of music. The other two translations are free verses, and the beauty of music is naturally inferior to that of metrical poems.

### 4.3. Beauty of Image

The beauty of image has a long history in Chinese literature and literary theories, and its position cannot be replaced all the time (Wang F., 2015). In the Book of Changes, images are thought to serve for the emotion and theme. A series of images together constitute the artistic conception of poetry. It can be said that there is no poetry without images. Below we will select three different images in the five translations of "Changgan Xing" for a comparative analysis. "竹马" was translated by Pound, Fletcher, Shigeyoshi Obata, Xu Yuanchong, and Jiang Shaolun respectively into bamboo stilts, hobby-horse, bamboo horse, hobby horse, bamboo stilts. These five images can convey the original image to a certain extent, but generally speaking, Shigeyoshi Obata's "bamboo horse" is closer to the original and more aesthetic because the word bamboo can bring natural intimacy to people and poetic feeling. "hobby horse" and "bamboo stilts" are not the same as the Chinese bamboo horse. "青梅" was translated into blue plums by Pound, while Fletcher translated it into "green-gage branches," Shigeyoshi Obata and Jiang Shaolun translated it into green plumes, and in Xu Yuanchong's it is "mumes still green." All five translations translated the image of "梅," but the color "青" is not translated exactly in most translations. In ancient China, "青" can refer to three colors: green, blue, and black. Which color it is exactly is determined according to the actual context. "青梅" in this poem refers to green plums that are not yet ripe. Pound's and Fletcher's translation deviated from the original meaning. Therefore, they are likely to lead to the distortion of the original poetic imagery in the minds of the target readers. There are no errors in the translation of images in the other three, but among them, Xu Yuanchong's is the most poetic, for "still" emphasizes "green," and "still green" strengthens the image of mumes when it is placed after "mumes" at the end of the line. "猿声" is translated into "sorrowful noise" by Pound, the gibbon's wail by Fletcher, and the monkey's wailing and frightened Gibbons wail by Shigeyoshi Obata and Jiang Shaolun respectively. Converting nouns to verbs is common in translation, but whether it is better to arouse the aesthetic and emotional experience of the target readers remains to be discussed. As to this image, Shigeyoshi Obata misinterpreted it. In fact, apes and monkeys are different. Fletcher's and Xu Yuanchong's translation conform to the original image and convey the aesthetic value of the image.

#### 4.4. Beauty of Emotion

Bai Juyi wrote in his book that "what touches the heart is emotion," which is one of his aesthetic views. Pound believes that the beauty of things is equivalent to what people call "strong emotions" (Wang F., 2015). Any excellent literary work can bring profound philosophical thinking and strong emotional experience, and poetry is no exception. For example, "愿同尘与灰" in "Changgan Xing" implies the determination that the wife and her husband will go through life hand in hand. The translations of Pound, Fletcher, Shigeyoshi Obata, Xu Yuanchong and Jiang Shaolun are respectively: "I desired my dust to be mingled with yours", "And I was glad to mingle my dust with thine", "And beg you to love me till we were dust and ashes", "To mix my dust with his was my dear vows", "And decided to be with you in sickness or in health". Except for Jiang Shaolun's free translation, the literal translation is adopted in these translations. The obtainment of aesthetic experience from Chinese poetry often requires readers to try to figure out the sense through imagery, so literal translation is more advisable. The appreciation of emotion needs the reader's participation. All translated versions show the heroine's firm determination to go through life hand in hand with her husband, but there are subtle differences of emotion among them. Fletcher's translation conveys the feeling that the heroine is willing to die with her husband. Readers can feel the heroine's humble even poor attitude in Shigeyoshi Obata's translation, and in Xu Yuanchong's translation, "vows" creates solemnity and weight of love.

#### 4.5. Beauty of Implicitness

Compared with other forms of language, poetry is much more implicit. Ancient Chinese Confucian culture dominant at that time in society is a kind of implicit culture. Tang poetry growing up in this culture has become quite implicit. Lytton Strachey once said that Chinese implicit poems had peculiar and irresistible power for recalling what happened in the past (Wang J. S., 1986). It is true that ancient Chinese poets liked to remember the past, which is the habit of Chinese thinking pattern in terms of time. The first seven lines in the poem "Changgan Xing" are memories of the past, accounting for almost half of the whole poem, but this poem is not intended to recall the past, but to express a wife's missing for her husband far away from home. The heroine hoped him to return soon. But in the whole poem, no word directly expresses that she missed her husband or hoped him to come back soon. On the whole, the five translations of Pound, Fletcher, Shigeyoshi Obata, Xu Yuanchong and Jiang Shaolun are in line with the implicit style of Chinese poetry. This is determined by the content of the original poem. In addition, it is due to translators' sufficient knowledge about poetry translation. Another two lines of the poem—"八月蝴蝶黄，双飞西园草" is quite implicit. The poet tried to express the heroine's desire for reunion with her husband and set off her loneliness through the flying butterfly scene. The translations of Pound, Fletcher, Shigeyoshi Obata, Xu Yuanchong, and Jiang Shaolun are respectively "The paired butterflies are already yellow with August over the grass in the West garden", "The butterflies so gay disport on grasses by our garden wall", "The yellow butterflies of October flutter in pairs over the grass of the west garden", "In yellow autumn butterflies would pass two by two in west garden over the grass", "Butterflies arrive waiting not for August to appear. They pair to fly all over our garden spheres". The image of double flying butterflies existed in the original poem. The heroine's care and missing for her husband are expressed implicitly through the image of paired butterflies. This image plays an important role in the implicit expression of feelings, so it should be translated literally, otherwise, it is difficult to achieve the implicit aesthetic effect. Pound, Shigeyoshi Obata, Xu Yuanchong and Jiang Shaolun all translated the images—paired butterflies, but Fletcher did not translate the butterflies into pairs, but into "the butterflies." Reading his translation, readers can only understand that there are more than one butterfly here, possibly a group of butterflies, and cannot capture the typical image of Chinese poetry of paired butterflies. And it is difficult for English readers to obtain the emotional meaning of the metaphor, so the implied beauty. Therefore, the translations of Pound, Shigeyoshi Obata, Xu Yuanchong and Jiang Shaolun are more implicit on the whole.

#### 4.6. Beauty of Diction

Poets in Tang dynasty quite valued refined words, and a subtle word is often better than thousands of words. "A strong word can support a poem," "only one wonderful word can make a text outstanding," both illustrate the importance of refined words. Such words contain an endless aesthetic value. In the poem, "堆" is a wonderful word because it reveals the way of waves' movement and its violence spurred by the reef. The translations of Pound, Fletcher, Shigeyoshi Obata, Xu Yuanchong and Jiang Shaolun are respectively "by the river of swirling eddies", "In Chü-t'ang Gorge how Yen-yü's billows roared", "Where the giant rocks heap up the swift river", "Where ships were wrecked when spring flood ran high", "Where spring tides wreck boats sailing near". Pound translated the waves, but failed to translate how waves rolled; Fletcher translated how huge waves rolled but failed to convey the way of "堆"; the word "roared" is vivid, but the rhetoric of personification is applied here, which is the creativity of the translator. Xu Yuanchong conveyed the height of the waves but failed to remind people of the waves' shape. Jiang Shaolun translated the waves but did not convey the waves' violence, neither the movement of the waves. Shigeyoshi Obata translated the action of "堆," which highlighted the dynamic beauty of waves while they were moving. Therefore, Shigeyoshi Obata's is better among the five when it came to the refinement of words.

#### 4.7. Beauty of Allusions

In ancient Chinese poems, allusions are often quoted, and the use of them can enhance the appeal and persuasiveness of works because allusions are representative and widely known. Allusions generally have multiple functions of imagery, metaphor, and symbolism. In "Changgan Xing" allusions are used in the line—"长存抱柱

信，岂上望夫台" to describe the deep love and loyalty of the husband and wife. By comparing the heroine and her husband in the poem with the heroine and hero of the allusions, feelings are expressed through other people's stories, at the same time magnifying the feelings. It is precisely through other people's love stories that the heroine expressed her feelings. Because of the application of allusions, the implicit beauty, image beauty and emotional beauty of poetry are magnified. Therefore, allusions in Tang poetry should not be deleted from English versions in general, and noting after poems can be useful to help the target readers understand them. However, in all the five translations, only “望夫台” is mentioned in Shigeyoshi Obata's version. This results in the disappearance of the allusions in “Changgan Xing” and their aesthetic value.

#### 4.8. Beauty of Gestalt

The beauty of gestalt proposed by Wang F. (2015) refers to the comprehensive aesthetics formed by the combination of all the aesthetic elements in the above seven kinds of beauty, and other unmentioned beauties. In different poems, the status of different types of beauty in poetry translation is not equal. Translators need to make choices to maximize the aesthetic value of Tang poetry. Under these circumstances, the guidance of the macro-level criterion—Harmony, and the medium-level criteria—similarity in style, sense, and artistic conception, are crucial. It is necessary to translate a poem as a whole to convey its comprehensive aesthetic value as much as possible.

### 5. Conclusion

Improving cultural self-confidence and telling Chinese stories well are the irresistible trend of the times and the only way for China to enter the international center stage. By cultural self-consciousness and cultural self-confidence, more Chinese characteristics find their way in the English translational practice of Tang poetry. It cannot be denied that China's cultural soft power still needs to be improved, the right of cultural discourse needs to be strengthened, and Chinese literature is still far from the world cultural center. But any nation should not underestimate itself and its culture. Tang poetry is a part of traditional Chinese culture and also of the world's culture, so it is worth being spread around the world. It is the mission of translators to disseminate Tang poetry so that people over the world can enjoy it.

Translations of Chinese culture must have a Chinese feature; however, adaptation to the target audience is crucial for any culture. Therefore, choosing and adapting are inevitable in translating Tang poetry into English. Translation researchers and practitioners at home and abroad are exploring this path. The "Harmony-guided Three-level Criteria of poetry translation" in Wang F. (2015) includes the macro-level "Harmony", the middle-level "similarity in style, sense, and artistic conception", and the micro-level "eight criteria of beauty", which reflects cultural self-confidence and the essence of choice and adaptation, and plays an important guiding role in the practice of Tang poetry translation. Under its guidance, translators also need to improve their knowledge of Chinese and English to translate classics into classics. With the guidance of the Harmony-guided Three-level Criteria of poetry translation, the authors of this paper tried to translate the poem——“Changgan Xing” as follows:

Ballad of a Woman in Chang-gan

by Li Bai (701-762)

Translated by Wang Xu and Wang Feng

While my hair could barely cover my forehead,  
I plucked flowers and played in front of the gate.  
Then on your bamboo horse, you came to me;  
Around the well, we disported with green plums.  
We twain dwelt closely in Chang-gan town;  
Between us, there never had suspicion or strife.  
At fourteen, the bashfulness covered my face,  
For I was newly-married and became your wife.  
Hanging my head, I turned to the dark wall;  
I dared not respond to your call upon call.  
At fifteen, I gradually composed my brows,  
To mingle my dust with yours was my vows.  
Your loyalty was on a par with Weisheng.  
The Wang-fu Tower would never be my ending.  
When I was sixteen, you went away from home,  
And sailed in Qu-tang Gorge, where billows pile;  
In the fifth moon, a touch would make people die,  
And gibbons' wails were grieved in the sky.  
Your footprints outdoors are filled with green moss.  
They cannot be swept away for thick it grows.  
Early in this autumn, leaves fall while the wind blows,  
In the eighth moon, many yellow butterflies  
Fly over the grass in our western garden, in pairs.  
Seeing these all, I cannot help upsetting myself.  
Nothing I can do but look at my rosy cheeks fade.  
I know you will come back sooner or later;

Please write to me beforehand, whenever.  
To meet you earlier, however far I will go;  
I am willing to trudge to the Long Wind Beach.

**Notes:**

- I. Weisheng: In ancient China, a man named Weisheng made an appointment with his beloved girl under a bridge. He awaited that girl for a long time. Unfortunately, on that day, there came a flood; he held the bridge post tightly in his arms and did not leave. In the end, he died. Since then, this event has become a representation of keeping the faith.
- II. Wang-fu Tower: It is said that Wang-fu Tower was a high place where a wife awaited her husband in ancient China who went away from home and his wife. She became a stone where she was waiting for her husband.

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