

Experiential Metafunctional Analysis of Liu Xijun's "Bei Chou Ge" and Its English Versions

Cheng Huaming, Guangzhou College of Commerce, Guangzhou 511363, China*

ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to analyze and compare transitivity processes of "Bei Chou Ge" and its five English versions from the perspective of experiential function of Halliday's systemic-functional linguistics and makes a comment on the similarities and differences between them. Through the analysis of the transitivity of the poem and its translations, it is found that there are 5 versions for the first line, 3 versions for the second, third and sixth lines, and 1 version for the fourth and fifth lines, in which the transitivity maintains a high consistency with the original poem. Spearman Correlation shows that there is a significant positive relationship of transitivity between the version by Watson and the original poem, and the translation by Watson is highly correlated with the transitivity of the original poem with the following coefficient, $p = 0.890$. This study can give clues to the study of poems and their translations of the transitivity processes, by exploring the differences of participants and circumstantial elements with the theoretical framework of functional grammar.

KEYWORDS

"Bei Chou Ge," English Versions, Experiential Metafunction, Transitivity

1. INTRODUCTION

"Bei Chou Ge" is a poem written by Liu Xijun, a princess who married Wusun in the Han Dynasty, so it is also called "Song of Wusun Princess". Liu Xijun was the grandniece of Emperor Wudi in the Han Dynasty. Her father was Liu Jian, who succeeded to the throne of King Jiangdu. In order to build good relationship with Wusun, Emperor Wudi made Liu Xijun Princess of Jiangdu, and married her to King Wusun. She was the first "Reconciliation of Princess", earlier than Zhaojun who went far out of the frontiers. The poem, written in the first person, expresses the loneliness and sadness of the princess who married away from home and missed her native land. The research on this poem mainly includes: Zhang (1986) analyzed the poem "Song of Wusun Princess" in an early stage, and Li (2012) explained the influence of Princess Xijun's distant marriage to Wusun and her influences on the Han Dynasty culture at that time. At present, there is no study on the English translation of this poem. This paper will conduct an experiential metafunctional analysis of five translations of the poem from the perspective of Halliday's (2004) Systemic Functional Linguistics. To analyze and compare transitivity processes of the original poem with five different English translations, the paper mainly

DOI: 10.4018/IJTIAL.316932

*Corresponding Author

This article published as an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and production in any medium, provided the author of the original work and original publication source are properly credited.

focuses on the similarities and differences between them and finally applies Spearman Correlation to examine the correlation among them. It is hoped that the study will be conducive to more accurately grasp and translate the original poem so as to effectively improve the level of translation.

2. EXPERIENTIAL METAFUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF “BEI CHOU GE”

Experiential Metafunction consists of multiple semantic systems, and the most important part is the transitivity system. Its function is to express people's experience in the real world and the inner world in several processes, and to identify the participants and circumstantial elements involved in the process. (Huang, 2002, p. 1) According to Halliday, One can divide human experience into six different processes: (1) material process; (2) mental process; (3) relational process; (4) behavioral process; (5) verbal process and (6) existential process. (Hu *et al.*, 2008, p. 75) From the transitivity perspective of experiential metafunction, “Bei Chou Ge” consists of the following processes, namely:

1. Material process: “Wu Jia Jia Wo Xi Tian Yi Fang (Chinese: 吾家嫁我兮天一方)”.
2. Material process: “Yuan Tuo Yi Guo Xi Wu Sun Wang (Chinese: 远托异国兮乌孙王)”.
3. Relational process + Relational process: “Qiong Lu Wei Shi Xi Zhan Wei Qiang (Chinese: 穹庐为室兮旃为墙)”.
4. Relational process + Relational process: “Yi Rou Wei Shi Xi Lao Wei Jiang (Chinese: 以肉为食兮酪为浆)”.
5. Mental process + Material process: “Ju Chang Tu Si Xi Xin Nei Shang (Chinese: 居常土思兮心内伤)”.
6. Relational process + Material process: “Yuan Wei Huang Hu Xi Gui Gu Xiang (Chinese: 愿为黄鹄兮归故乡)”.

The first sentence “Wu Jia Jia Wo Xi Tian Yi Fang (Chinese: 吾家嫁我兮天一方)” is a material process, “Jia (Chinese: 嫁)” is the process, “Wu Jia (Chinese: 吾家)” is the actor, “Wo (Chinese: 我)” is the goal, and “Tian Yi Fang (Chinese: 天一方)” is the circumstantial element of the concept of space. The second sentence “Yuan Tuo Yi Guo Xi Wu Sun Wang (Chinese: 远托异国兮乌孙王)” is a material process, “Yuan Tuo (Chinese: 远托)” is the process, “Yi Guo (Chinese: 异国)” is the circumstantial element of the concept of space, and “Wu Sun Wang (Chinese: 乌孙王)” is the recipient. The third sentence “Qiong Lu Wei Shi Xi Zhan Wei Qiang (Chinese: 穹庐为室兮旃为墙)” contains two relational processes. The first relational process is “Wei (Chinese: 为)”, “Qiong Lu (Chinese: 穹庐)” is the carrier, and “Shi (Chinese: 室)” is the attribute; the second relational process is also “Wei (Chinese: 为)”, “Zhan (Chinese: 旃)” is the carrier, and “Qiang (Chinese: 墙)” is the attribute. Sentence No. 4 also contains two relational processes, the first relational process is “Yi...Wei (Chinese: 以...为)”, “Rou (Chinese: 肉)” is the carrier, and “Shi (Chinese: 食)” is the attribute; the second relational process is “Wei (Chinese: 为)”, “Lao (Chinese: 酪)” is the carrier, and “Jiang (Chinese: 浆)” is the attribute. Sentence No. 5 contains a mental process and a material process, “Si (Chinese: 思)” is the mental process, “Tu (Chinese: 土)” is the phenomenon, “Ju Chang (Chinese: 居常)” is the circumstantial element of the concept of time, “Shang (Chinese: 伤)” is a material process, and “Xin Nei (Chinese: 心内)” is the actor. The last sentence “Yuan Wei Huang Hu Xi Gui Gu Xiang (Chinese: 愿为黄鹄兮归故乡)” contains a relational process and a material process, “Yuan Wei (Chinese: 愿为)” is the relational process, and “Huang Hu (Chinese: 黄鹄)” is the attribute; “Gui (Chinese: 归)” is the material process, and “Gu Xiang (Chinese: 故乡)” is the circumstantial element representing the concept of space.

3. EXPERIENTIAL METAFUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH VERSIONS OF “BEI CHOU GE”

We have collected five kinds of English translations of the poem “Bei Chou Ge” (see Appendix). For the convenience of narration, the following translations are represented by Waley (Waley, 1919, p. 75), Watson (Watson, 1984, p. 75), Turner (Turner, 1989, p. 9), Barnstone (Barnstone & Chou, 2005, p. 42), and Wang (Hong, Xiong & Wang, 2006, p. 9). For comparison, the analysis is followed sentence by sentence.

3.1 “Wu Jia Jia Wo Xi Tian Yi Fang (Chinese: 吾家嫁我兮天一方)”

All the various translations will be considered in three aspects: process type, participant and circumstantial element. The original line is a material process, and all the translations are material processes. The key word of four translations of the material process is “marry”, Waley’s and Watson’s translations apply the present perfect tense “has / have wedded”, Barnstone translated it into a past tense “married”, Wang translated it as a passive voice “have been married”, Turner translated it as the material process “have wedded”, so it can be assumed that the material process is basically the same. The actor is to translate “Wu Jia (Chinese: 吾家)”, Watson’s and Barnstone’s translations are the same “my family”, Waley translated it as “my people” and Turner as “my folk”, referring to the people, more in line with the original meaning, “Wu Jia (Chinese: 吾家)” did not refer to Xijun’s father, King Jiangdu—Liu Jian, but the Han Empire represented by Liu Che, Emperor Wudi of the Han Dynasty, and it is the Han Dynasty who married her to the distant frontier. Because the material process in the translation by Wang is in a passive voice, there is no actor. The goal is to translate “Wo (Chinese: 我)”, Waley’s, Watson’s, and Turner’s translations are consistent with Barnstone’s translation, which is “me”, while Wang translated the goal into “I”. Lastly, on translating “Tian Yi Fang (Chinese: 天一方)”, all the translations have circumstantial elements representing the concept of space, Waley translated it as “in a far corner of Earth”, Watson translated it as “in this far corner of the world”, Turner translates it as “across heaven’s span, into a far country”, explaining the long distance, while Barnstone translated it as “off”, and Wang translated it as “far away”, the meanings of which are more vague. According to the meaning of the original poem, combined with the various translations provided above, this sentence can be translated as “My folk (people) have married me in a corner of the earth (world)”.

Table 1. English Versions of “Wu Jia Jia Wo Xi Tian Yi Fang”

Translated By	Process	Participant	Circumstantial
Waley	Material process: have married	Actor: my people Goal: me	Place: in a far corner of Earth
Watson	Material process: has married	Actor: my family Goal: me	Place: in this far corner of the world
Turner	Material process: have wedded	Actor: my folk Goal: me	Place: across heaven’s span, into a far country
Barnstone	Material process: married	Actor: my family Goal: me	Place: off
Wang	Material process: have been married	Actor: Goal: I	Place: far away

3.2 “Yuan Tuo Yi Guo Xi Wu Sun Wang (Chinese: 远托异国兮乌孙王)”

The original poem is a material process, and translations by Waley, Watson and Barnstone are a material process. The Waley’s translation agrees with the material process of Watson’s, with the same process “sent” and the same goal “me”, and the recipients are the same “to the king of the Wu-sun (Wusun)”. The two translations represent the circumstantial elements of the spatial concept “away to a strange land” and “to a strange land” respectively. The material process translated by Barnstone is “live”, the actor is “I”, the recipient is similar to Waley’s and Watson’s translation, which is “to the king of the Wusun”, and it has the circumstantial element “in an alien land, a million miles from nowhere”, representing the concept of space. The translation by Turner and Wang omitted the material process, and Turner translated the sentence only as the recipient “to a Turkish Khan”, while Wang also had “in dismay”, the circumstantial element of the manner. Considering that it is still translated as a material process, and referring to the translations of Waley’s and Watson’s, this sentence can be translated as “Sent me to the king of Wusun in a foreign country”.

Table 2. English Versions of “Yuan Tuo Yi Guo Xi Wu Sun Wang”

Translated By	Process	Participant	Circumstantial
Waley	Material process: sent	Actor: Goal: me Recipient: to the king of the Wu-sun	Place: away to a strange land
Watson	Material process: sent	Actor: Goal: me Recipient: to the king of the Wusun	Place: to a strange land
Turner	Material process:	Actor: Goal: Recipient: to a Turkish Khan	
Barnstone	Material process: live	Actor: I Goal: Recipient: to the king of the Wusun	Place: in an alien land, a million miles from nowhere
Wang	Material process:	Actor: Goal: Recipient: to King of Wusun	Manner: in dismay

3.3 “Qiong Lu Wei Shi Xi Zhan Wei Qiang (Chinese: 穹庐为室兮旃为墙)”

The original poem contains two relational processes. Among all translations, there are the three versions with two relational processes. The translations by Waley, Watson, and Barnstone, all contain two relational processes. The first relational process translates the part “Qiong Lu Wei Shi (Chinese: 穹庐为室)”. The relational process of all these three versions is “is”, the carriers are respectively “a tent”, “a yurt” and “my house”, and the attributes are “my house”, “my chamber” and “a tent”. Waley’s and Barnstone’s translations just exchange the carrier and the attribute. The second relational process is to translate “Zhan Wei Qiang (Chinese: 旃为墙)”. The relational process of Waley’s and Barnstone’s translation is “are”, Watson’s translation has no process verb appeared. All the carriers are consistent, which are “my walls”, and the attributes are also similar, too. Waley’s and Barnstone’s translations are “of felt”, and Watson translated it as “felt”. Turner translated the sentence as a relational process “is”, the carrier as “a black tent”, the attribute as “our hall”, and the other relational process of the original poem is put into “with felt for party

wall”, the circumstantial element of the concept of manner. Wang translated the sentence into the material process “live”, the actor is “I”, and the circumstantial element “in yurts of felt that stink”, representing the concept of space, which contains a material process “stink”. By comparison, this sentence can continue to maintain two relational processes, and can be translated into “A yurt is my house (chamber), and of felt are my walls”.

Table 3. English Versions of “Qiong Lu Wei Shi Xi Zhan Wei Qiang”

Translated By	Process	Participant	Circumstantial
Waley	Relational process: is Relational process: are	Carrier: a tent Attribute: my house Carrier: my walls Attribute: of felt	
Watson	Relational process: is Relational process:	Carrier: a yurt Attribute: my chamber Carrier: my walls Attribute: felt	
Turner	Relational process: is	Carrier: a black tent Attribute: our hall	Manner: with felt for party wall
Barnstone	Relational process: is Relational process: are	Carrier: my house Attribute: a tent Carrier: my walls Attribute: of felt	
Wang	Material process: live	Actor: I Goal:	Place: in yurts of felt that stink

3.4 “Yi Rou Wei Shi Xi Lao Wei Jiang (Chinese: 以肉为食兮酪为浆)”

The original poem contains two relational processes. Turner translated it into two relational processes, one of which is “is”, the carrier is “flesh”, and the attribute is “our nutriment”; the other relational process is omitted, the carrier is “cheese”, and the attribute is “for condiment”.

Table 4. English Versions of “Yi Rou Wei Shi Xi Lao Wei Jiang”

Translated By	Process	Participant	Circumstantial
Waley	Relational process:	Carrier: raw flesh Attribute: my food	Manner: with mare’s milk to drink
Watson	Relational process: Material process: to drink	Carrier: flesh Attribute: my only food Actor: Goal: kumiss	
Turner	Relational process: is Relational process:	Carrier: flesh Attribute: our nutriment Carrier: cheese Attribute: for condiment	
Barnstone	Relational process: is	Carrier: raw flesh Attribute: all I eat	Manner: with horse milk to drink
Wang			Manner: with beef and milk as food and drink

Watson translated it as a relational process and a material process, the carrier of the relational process is “flesh”, and the attribute is “my only food”; the material process is “to drink”, and the goal is “kumiss”. Waley and Barnstone translated it as a relational process. Waley did not translate the process verb, Barnstone translated the relational process as “is”, the two carriers are the same “raw flesh”, the attributes are “my food” and “all I eat” respectively, while the latter contains a material process “eat”, the actor is “I”. Both have the circumstantial elements, expressing the concept of manner, respectively “with mare’s milk to drink” and “with horse milk to drink”. They are relatively similar, both of which contain a material process “to drink”, to translate “Lao Wei Jiang (Chinese: 酪为浆)”. Finally, Wang translated the sentence into the circumstantial element “with beef and milk as food and drink”, with the concept of manner. Through comprehensive analysis, this sentence has the same structure with the former sentence of the original poem, both of which contain two relational processes, so it can be imitated and translated as “Flesh is my only food, and milk is my drink”.

3.5 “Ju Chang Tu Si Xi Xin Nei Shang (Chinese: 居常土思兮心内伤)”

The original poem has a mental process and a material process. Barnstone’s translation is consistent with them. Barnstone translated the mental process into “think of”, the sender is “I”, the phenomenon is “home”, and “always” is the circumstantial element representing the concept of time, to translate “Ju Chang (Chinese: 居常)”, Wang & Wang (1994, p. 203) explained that “Ju (Chinese: 居)” means “usually”; its material process is “stings”, and the actor is “my heart”. Waley translated it as a mental process and a relational process, its mental process is “thinking of”, the sender does not appear, the phenomenon is “my own country”, and “always” is the circumstantial element representing the concept of time; the carrier of its relational process is “my heart”, the attribute is “sad”, and “within” is the circumstantial element representing the concept of space. Watson translated the sentence as a relational process and a material process, the relational process is “are”, the carrier is “my thoughts”, and the attribute is “all of my homeland”; its material process is “aches”, the actor is “my heart”, and “within” is the circumstantial element, representing the concept of space. Turner translated it as a relational process, which is “would”,

Table 5. English Versions of “Ju Chang Tu Si Xi Xin Nei Shang”

Translated By	Process	Participant	Circumstantial
Waley	Mental process: thinking of Relational process	Senser: Phenomenon: my own country Carrier: my heart Attribute: sad	Time: always Place: within
Watson	Relational process: are Material process: aches	Carrier: my thoughts Attribute: all of my homeland Actor: my heart Goal:	Place: within
Turner	Relational process: would	Carrier: I Attribute: so homesick	Place: here—from this lothly band
Barnstone	Mental process: think of Material process: stings	Senser: I Phenomenon: home Actor: my heart Goal:	Time: always
Wang	Mental process: miss Mental process: feel	Senser: I Phenomenon: my home Senser: Phenomenon: the sorrow	

without a main verb, the carrier is “I”, the attribute is “so homesick”, and “here—from this lothly band” is the circumstantial element, representing the concept of space. Wang translated it as two mental processes: the first mental process is “miss”, the senser is “I”, the phenomenon is “my home”; the second mental process is “feel”, and the phenomenon is “the sorrow”. To translate this sentence as a mental process and a material process, this sentence can be translated as “I always think of my homeland, so my heart aches (stings)”.

3.6 “Yuan Wei Huang Hu Xi Gui Gu Xiang (Chinese: 愿为黄鹄兮归故乡)”

The original poem has a relational process and a material process. Waley, Watson and Barnstone translated the same process with the original verse. The original poem “Yuan Wei Huang Hu (Chinese: 愿为黄鹄)” is translated as a relational process, and Waley’s translation is “would were”, which is wrong here, and it should be “would be”, the carrier is “I”, and the attribute is “a yellow stork”. The relational process of Watson’s translation is consistent with the translation by Barnstone, which is “to be”, the attribute of Watson’s translation is “the yellow crane”, the attribute of Barnstone’s translation is “a yellow snow goose”, and it also has the circumstantial element “again”, representing the concept of time. The original poem “Gui Gu Xiang (Chinese: 归故乡)” is all translated as a material process. Waley’s translation is consistent with Wang’s material process, which is “could fly”, Waley’s translation also has a circumstantial element “to my old home” for the concept of space, the actor of Wang’s translation is “I”, and it has the circumstantial elements “home” and “tomorrow” for the concept of space and time. The translation of a material process by Watson is “winging”, and there is also the circumstantial elements “again” “home”, representing the concept of time and space. Turner translated the sentence as a circumstantial element “like the Brown Swan might fly”, representing the concept of comparison, which contains a material process “might fly”, the actor is “the Brown Swan”, and “to my native land” is the circumstantial element representing the concept of space. The translation of a material process by Barnstone is “floating”, and “home” is the circumstantial element, representing the concept of space. According to the previous analysis, this sentence can be translated as “I would be a yellow swan to fly home”.

Table 6. English Versions of “Yuan Wei Huang Hu Xi Gui Gu Xiang”

Translated By	Process	Participant	Circumstantial
Waley	Relational process: would were Material process: could fly	Carrier: I Attribute: a yellow stork Actor: Goal:	Place: to my old home
Watson	Relational process: to be Material process: winging	Carrier: Attribute: the yellow crane Actor: Goal:	Time: again Place: home
Turner	Material process: might fly	Actor: the Brown Swan Goal:	Comparison: like (the Brown Swan might fly) Place: to my native land
Barnstone	Relational process: to be Material process: floating	Carrier: Attribute: a yellow snow goose Actor: Goal:	Time: again Place: home
Wang	Material process: could fly	Actor: I Goal:	Place: home Time: tomorrow

3.7 Correlation Between Translations and Original Poem on Transitivity

Spearman Correlation shows that there is a significant positive relationship of transitivity between the version by Watson and the original poem ($p < 0.05$), and the translation by Watson is highly correlated with the transitivity of the original poem with the following coefficient, $p = 0.890$.

Table 7. Spearman Correlation Between Translations and Original Poem

Correlations								
			Original poem	Waley	Watson	Turner	Barnstone	Wang
Spearman's rho	Original poem	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.746	.890*	.747	.746	-.435
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.088	.018	.088	.088	.388
		N	6	6	6	6	6	6
	Waley	Correlation Coefficient	.746	1.000	.939**	.344	1.000**	.171
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.088	.	.005	.504	.	.745
		N	6	6	6	6	6	6
	Watson	Correlation Coefficient	.890*	.939**	1.000	.633	.939**	.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	.005	.	.177	.005	1.000
		N	6	6	6	6	6	6
	Turner	Correlation Coefficient	.747	.344	.633	1.000	.344	-.274
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.088	.504	.177	.	.504	.599
		N	6	6	6	6	6	6
	Barnstone	Correlation Coefficient	.746	1.000**	.939**	.344	1.000	.171
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.088	.	.005	.504	.	.745
		N	6	6	6	6	6	6
	Wang	Correlation Coefficient	-.435	.171	.000	-.274	.171	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.388	.745	1.000	.599	.745	.
		N	6	6	6	6	6	6

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4. CONCLUSION

From the perspective of the experiential metafunction of the Systemic Functional Linguistics, this paper makes a comparative analysis and discusses the poem “Bei Chou Ge” and its five English versions. Through the transitivity of experiential metafunctional analysis, the language of the original poem and its translated works can be deeply discussed to understand the transitivity of the original poem and the translations, as well as the similarities and differences of participant and circumstantial element related to various processes, which will be conducive to more accurately grasp and translate the original poem, and effectively improve the level of translation. Through the experiential metafunctional analysis above, the primitive version is modified and some words are deleted, and then “country” in the second line is replaced with “hearth”, which refers to the fireplace, with the meaning of families, rhyming

with the word “earth” of the first line. At the end of the fourth line, “of all” are added, rhyming with the word “wall” in the third line. The fifth line selects “stings”, and the sixth line adds “with wings”, rhyming with the previous line. The whole poem¹ is translated as follows: // Song of Sorrow // / My folk have married me in corner of the earth; / Sent me to king of Wusun in a foreign hearth. / A yurt is my chamber, and of felt is the wall; / Flesh is the only food, and milk is my drink of all. / I always think of my homeland, so my heart stings; / I would be a yellow swan to fly home with wings. Due to my limited level of translation study, there is no intention to comment on the translations of famous translators here, it is just hoped that the study focuses on the discussion of the English translation of ancient poetry from the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics, to bring forward some good clue for further study of poetry translation.

REFERENCES

- Barnstone, T., & Chou, P. (2005). *The Anchor Book of Chinese Poetry*. Anchor.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Christian, M. (2004). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (3rd ed.). Hodder Arnold.
- Hong, Z., Xiong, Z. Q., & Wang, R. P. (2006). *300 Early Chinese Poems*. Hunan People's Publishing House.
- Hu, Z. L., Zhu, Y. S., Zhang, D. L., & Li, Z. Z. (2008). *Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics* [系统功能语言学概论]. Peking University Press.
- Huang, G. W. (2002). The Enlightenment of Functional Linguistic Analysis to Translation Studies—An Analysis of the Experiential Metafunction in the Translation of Qingming [功能语言学分析对翻译研究的启示——《清明》英译文的经验功能分析]. *Foreign Languages and Their Teaching*, (5), 1-6 + 11. 10.13458/j.cnki.flatt.002599
- Li, Q. (2012). The Influence of Xijun Princess' Marriage with Wusun on Han Culture [细君公主和亲乌孙对汉文化的影响]. *Journal of Guangxi Vocational and Technical College*, (5), 82-85+100.
- Turner, J. (1989). *A Golden Treasury of Chinese Poetry*. The Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- Waley, A. (1919). *A Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems*. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.
- Wang, B. E., & Wang, Y. X. (1994). *100 Chinese Classical Poems in English*. Beijing Language and Culture University Press.
- Watson, B. (1984). *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry: From Early Times to the Thirteenth Century*. Columbia University Press.
- Zhang, H. C. (1986). On the Song of the "Song of Wusun Princess" [谈《乌孙公主歌》的“歌”]. *Journal of Xinjiang Education Institute*, (2), 92-96.

ENDNOTE

- ¹ To save space, the English translation lines are separated by “/”, and the title line is separated by “//”.

APPENDIX

Five English Versions of “Bei Chou Ge”

Waley: // LAMENT OF HIS-CHUN // / My people have married me / In a far corner of Earth: / Sent me away to a strange land, / To the king of the Wu-sun. / A tent is my house, / Of felt are my walls; / Raw flesh my food / With mare's milk to drink. / Always thinking of my own country, / My heart sad within. / Would I were a yellow stork / And could fly to my old home! (Waley, 1919, p. 75)

Watson: // SONG OF SORROW // / My family has married me / in this far corner of the world, / sent me to a strange land, / to the king of the Wusun. / A yurt is my chamber, / felt my walls, / flesh my only food, / kumiss to drink. / My thoughts are all of my homeland, / my heart aches within. / Oh to be the yellow crane / Winging home again! (Watson, 1984, p. 75)

Turner: // Lamentation // / My folk have wedded me / Across heaven's span, / Into a far country, / To a Turkish Khan. / A black tent is our hall, / With felt for party wall: / Flesh is our nutriment, / And cheese for condiment. / So homesick here—would I / From this lothly band / Like the Brown Swan might fly / To my native land! (Turner, 1989, p. 9)

Barnstone: // Lament // / My family married me off to / the king of the Wusun, / and I live in an alien land / a million miles from nowhere. / My house is a tent. / My walls are of felt. / Raw flesh is all I eat, / with horse milk to drink. / I always think of home / and my heart stings. / O to be a yellow snow goose / floating home again! (Barnstone & Chou, 2005, p. 42)

Wang: // Song of Sorrow // / I have been married far away / To King of Wusun in dismay. / I live in yurts of felt that stink, / With beef and milk as food and drink. / I miss my home and feel the sorrow; / Oh that I could fly home tomorrow! (Hong, Xiong & Wang, 2006, p. 9)