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A Study of the Feasibility of Xu Yuanchong's Theories of Literary Translation and of His Findings

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Abstract- By using the method of qualitative analysis, including compar ison, and by analyzing some typical examples, this paper discusses and proves Xu's principle of creative translation and that of excellence, focusing on the feasibility of his three-beauty principle: beauty in meaning, in sound, and in form. The typical examples are analyzed in detail, mainly from the perspective of prosody. Besides, by employing the deductive approach, the paper explores and explains Xu's findings through his translation of classical literature. In addition, the paper emphasizes that the pr inciple of creative translation and that of excellence and the three-beauty criterion are closely associated with one another. The former two help to ensure the implementation of the three-beauty standard. Finally, the paper states that they are all proved to be objective, scientific, practical, and widely applicable.

Keywords: *creative translation; excellence; three-beauty principle; feasibility; xu's findings.*

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I. Introduction

Professor Xu Yuanchong（许渊冲）(1921-) (hereafter shortened as Xu) was born in Nanchang, the capital of Jiangxi Province in China. He pursued his early studies in South-West China Associated University[1]. Upon graduation, he worked as an interpreter for US air unit volunteers who flew to China to help fight against the Japanese invaders. Later on, he received further education at Paris University. Then, he worked at several universities in China, such as Beijing Foreign Languages University and Beijing University. He has been a professor at Peking University since 1983. He is well-known as the first man to have translated classical Chinese literature, including classical Chinese poems, into English verses and rendered some into French verses. British publishing company Penguin published Xu's *300 China's Immortal Poems* (2014), which circulated in Britain, USA, Canada, Australia, and other countries. That was the first time that the publishing company had published a book of versions of Chinese poems. Apart from translating classical Chinese literature, esp. poetry into foreign languages, Xu has also translated many British and French classics into Chinese (from Wikipedia). He favors the strategy of domestication in his versions (2010:84).

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For scores of years, Xu has applied himself whole-heartedly to literary translation, mostly from Chinese into English, so that the world has acquired some knowledge of the exquisite quality of poems in the Tang Dynasty, verses in the Song Dynasty, and songs & dramas in the Yuan Dynasty, as well as of the profound meaning of *the Classic of Poetry* and *the Songs of the South*. Up to now, he has translated and published 120 classical Chinese works into English and some into French and vice versa. Through plenty of practice for 60 years, he has summarized his translation thoughts and translation theory, which are discussed and proved in his 121 academic papers and newspaper articles and which have formed a reasonable theoretical translation system. In 1999, he was nominated as a candidate for Nobel Prize in literature. He was honored with the title of "Outstanding Literary Translator" by the International Translators Federation. In 2010, he was awarded "Lifetime Achievement Prize for Translation of Culture" by the Chinese Translators Association. In 2020, some Chinese professors have recommended Xu again as a candidate for Nobel Prize in literature. Xu Yuanchong is the oldest and most respected translator and translation theorist in PRC. His principle of creative translation and that of excellence, esp. his three-beauty principle for translation of poetry with metrical meter, and his translated works are studied by numerous scholars in China, who take his theory as their guide to action.

Xu introduces the three-beauty-concept to translation theory: the idea that a translation should be as beautiful as the original in three ways: 1) semantically (the deeper meaning); 2) phonologically (the style like rhyme and rhythm); 3) logically (amongst others: length) (Chan Sinwai, 2009:216). According to Gao (2010:84), Xu advocates that the versions of poems should combine visual-and-aural beauty and that they should reproduce the integration of pictorial composition and musical arrangement. So far, in China, there are as many as 1417 academic papers and theses that explore and prove Xu's translation thoughts and translation theory from different perspectives. Many of them are MA theses, and quite a number of them verify the feasibility of Xu's three-beauty principle for translation of poetry. Tao Yemao and Zhang Zhen (2018: 68-73) do research into the achievement degree of Xu's translation of

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"Peach Blossoms in the Temple of Great Forest." They analyze Xu's version from the perspective of the three-beauty principle and survey it by sending 200 questionnaires to foreigners in the west who are requested to answer some questions about their understanding of Xu's version. They find out that "beauty in sound" and "beauty in form" have been accepted by most ordinary international readers, but, "beauty in meaning" has not been understood by them. The two authors give two reasons for the feedback and propose suggestions for improving "beauty in meaning" of the version. Ma Xiaoyan and Yan Changhong (2015:33-35) compare Xu's version of a famous poem in the Tang Dynasty with three other versions from the perspective of the three-beauty criterion. After detailed analysis, they conclude that the fourth version by Xu is the best, for it corresponds to the translation standard of equivalence, shows regular rhythms and demonstrates a perfect rhyming scheme. By analyzing the English version of "The Peacocks Fly Southeast"(the first longest narrative poem in the history of Chinese literature) translated by Xu, Huang Liping asserts that Xu's version of this narrative poem is harmonious in sound, symmetrical in form and faithful in meaning, which reproduces the original beauty in meaning, in sound, and in form (2018: 108-110). Another Chinese scholar named Wang Chenxin, by analyzing and comparing three versions by three scholars of *Three Character Classic* (a simple reader for children in ancient China, each line of which consists of two three-character phrases or sentences) from the perspective of Xu's three-beauty standard, discovers that Professor Zhao Yanchun's version ranks the best among the three versions because it is in conformity with Xu's three-beauty criterion. Still, another scholar Prof. Li Qingming (2014:125-130) makes a comparative study of the four versions done respectively by two foreign translators and two Chinese translators of an ancient well-known poem entitled "A Tranquil Night" by Li Baio② (701-762 A.D.), the greatest romantic poet honored as Poet-Immortal in the Tang Dynasty (618-907A.D.). By analyzing the four versions in the light of the three-beauty standard, Professor Li concludes that though the four versions are well done, yet Xu's version is counted the best because it strictly embodies the three-beauty standard. Many other scholars in China, who are deeply influenced by Xu's translation theory and translated works, have proved the aesthetic value, universal application, and practical effectiveness of the three-beauty principle.

Some foreign experts also speak highly of Xu's translations of classical Chinese literature, esp. poetry. For instance, Professor West from California University remarks that the English version of *the Classic of poetry* rendered by Xu is a delight to read (2015:11). An American scholar named Kowallis from Melbourne University sets a high value on Xu's translations of English and American literature, highly praising Xu's versions as a peak of English and American literature (ibid.). Still, another foreign scholar states that Xu's theory of excellence proved by him is a theory of new literary translation by destroying the old and establishing the new (2003:2).

Although so many Chinese scholars have written papers confirming and proving Xu's translation theory and practice, yet most of them show a lack of deep analysis and fail to offer detailed explanations. Thus, this paper conducts a specific study of the feasibility of Xu's translation principles, focusing on the effectiveness of Xu's three-beauty principle for translation of poetry and his findings through his translation of classical literature, esp. classical poems, which exert a profound influence on Chinese translators and translation researchers.

II. Xu's Principle of Creative Translation and that of Excellence

In the last two decades, linguists agree that language not only expresses meaning but also generates meaning. Xu (2000) proposes the principle of creative translation in the Introduction to *English versions of 300 Immortal Poems in the Tang Dynasty*. He then points out that the creative translation just means creating new or novel expressions to reproduce the original meaning better. E.g., Zhu Shenghao's versions of Shakespeare's plays, Fu Lei's versions of Balzac's novels and Yang Bi's translation of *Vanity Fair* are all representative works which show features of creative translation (2003:2).

Translators may treat the literary translation as the rivalry between two languages or even between two cultures which compete to reproduce the original content better. It should be faithful to the original at least, and beautiful at best. A literary translator ought to exploit the advantages of the target text, i.e., to make the fullest possible use of the best expressions of the target language to make the reader understand, enjoy and delight in the version. A creative translator should do his work as though he were the author of the original in the target language (Xu, 2000: 2).

The two languages which involve translation have their advantages and disadvantages. Each has its idiomatic usage. If the translator can bring into full play the distinguishing features of the target language by using the most appropriate expressions to describe the reality portrayed by the original, then the version becomes superior or gets closer to what actually happens or what is true in the source text. That is the ontology of literary translators. According to this cognition, the version may be better or above the original. That is the theory of excellence advocated by Xu. (2012:83).

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Guo Moruo once commented that good translation equals creation and even better than it. Now that we want Chinese culture to go to the world, it is necessary to make the best use of the quintessence of Chinese culture. Four-character phrases form a major characteristic of Chinese, just as relative clauses are a particular feature of the Western languages.

What is the best translation? The highest principle for literary translation is that the translator is duty-bound to bring into full play his individual initiative by employing the most idiomatic expressions and sentences of the target language that faithfully reproduce the original meaning. Xu provides one example from the novel *Red and Black*. He supplies two versions of the first sentence from Chapter One of *Red and Black.*

1. 维里埃尔（verriere）这座小城可以算是弗朗什一孔泰那些美丽的城市中的一座。
2. **玻璃市算得是方施一孔特地区山清水秀、小巧玲**珑的一座小城。

Then, Xu analyses these two translated sentences. The translator transcribes "verriere" in the original sentence as "维里埃尔" in the first translated sentence, but "verriere" refers to glass, therefore, it is rendered as "**玻璃**" in the second version, which is equivalent to the original. "**美**丽的城市" in the first version just gives us the impression that the buildings in the city are beautiful, but it does not include the great rivers and mountains. In fact, the first paragraph of Chapter One describes the most lovely rivers and mountains, asserting that the small city is most beautiful. Evidently, the first version mechanically translates the words of the first sentence, but it fails to convey the implied meaning, so it cannot be said to be equivalent to the original, while the second is true to the original by giving us a vivid picture of the city. If you have been to the border between France and Switzerland, you will find that this small city is exquisite. Obviously, the second version brings out the original meaning just exactly by utilizing idiomatic expressions in Chinese so that the readers have a good grasp of the original sentence, with a good understanding of the city. Also, the first version sounds very unreadable, not smooth at all, whereas the second reads very smoothly with ease and grace, for two vivid four-character phrases are used in an appropriate way, which brings out an idiomatic characteristic of Chinese. Clearly, the second version is an example that shows the translator actively exerts his personal initiative to the fullest degree.

By putting the principle of creative translation and that of excellence into practice, Xu is able to turn many English and French classics into Chinese versions which are quite popular in China. Moreover, guided by the principles he himself advocates, Xu has translated numerous famous classical Chinese literature into English and French versions which are highly appreciated abroad. Thus, he has made outstanding contributions to cultural communications across the world.

Now we want to build up an influential Chinese culture. To make it come true, it is imperative to not only translate excellent foreign literature into Chinese but also render more outstanding Chinese literature into foreign languages to enable Chinese literature to merge into world literature so that world literature may become more brilliant (Xu, 2014:12).

Clearly, Xu's theory of creative translation and that of excellence are closely related to each other. They cannot be separated from each other. They promote and complement each other. To my way of thinking, they are just translation principles. While doing literary translation, including translation of poetry, a translator ought to comply with these two principles so that he or she may become an admirable translator and produce excellent translated works.

III. Towards the Feasibility of Xu's Three-Beauty Principle

Classical Chinese poetry (Hereafter, abbreviated as CCP) is a kind of treasure of Chinese culture, and it represents one of the forms of the beauty of Chinese culture. Its form, language and implied meaning are quite different from modern Chinese literature. Classical Chinese poems create profound moods, express the poets' rich ideas and their abundant feelings, and show deep implications of Chinese culture by employing concise language and peculiar artistic forms. Considering such features of CCP and many differences between Chinese and Western cultures, translation scholars universally acknowledge that CCP is extremely difficult to translate into English or other Western languages. In order to let more and more foreigners understand the quintessence of CCP, through many years of much practice, Professor Xu proposes (2003) the three-beauty principle for its translation, "beauty in meaning, beauty in sound, and beauty in form." This principle is considered to be the highest criterion for poetry translation. By "beauty in meaning," Xu refers to the faithfulness of the version of a poem. In other words, the version must fully convey the original ideas or meanings and imagery to the target language readers, without any mistakes, or the omission or addition of the original content (2006:74). By "beauty in sound," Professor Xu means that poems are supposed to show tonal patterns and rhyming schemes and that they must be smooth to read and pleasant to hear (2006: 76). By "beauty in form," Xu means that the translator of a version uses nouns, adjectives, verbs,

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and phrases to reproduce the same in the original and that the length and symmetry of the version had better be similar to that of the original (2006:78). This part attempts to prove Xu's three-beauty principle by analyzing typical examples.

According to Xu (2015:1), Chinese is concise, while English is precise. English is a relatively scientific language: its form expresses its meaning, its formula being: 1+1=2. Chinese is a comparatively artistic language, and its content normally implies more than its form, its formula being: 1+1>2. If we translate a concise Chinese text by using precise English, we can often ensure that the version is merely similar in meaning, but we cannot possibly convey the original beauty (ibid.).For example, at the end of *Juliet and Romeo*, we find the following couplet: For never was a story of more woe, / Than this of Juliet and Romeo.

These two lines are by no means novel or attractive, except that they are rhymed and rhythmical. Cao Yu, a celebrated Chinese writer, translated this couplet as follows:

1. 人间的故事不能比这个更悲惨，// 像朱丽叶和她的罗密欧所受的灾难。(trans.by 曹禺)

Cao Yu added "人间的" to the Chinese version, thus making readers feel more sorrowful. The two lines of the English couplet, which are similar in length, assume a five-foot iambic meter, but Cao Yu's translation is irregular in length and meter, and although it achieves "beauty in meaning", it fails to fulfill "beauty in sound and in form." On the contrary, Zhu Shenghao, an outstanding translator of Shakespeare, translated the two lines much better:

2. 古往今来多少离合悲欢，// 谁曾见这样的哀怨辛酸！(trans. by 朱生豪)

Zhu added "古往今来", "谁曾见", and "多少" to his version, which are implied in the original. Either line in the English couplet contains ten syllables, and it is smooth to read and easy to understand; the two lines in Chinese each include ten characters. The two lines, both in English and Chinese, are well rhymed and rhythmical. Yet the Chinese version is not only smooth to read, but also it sounds more idiomatic and more heartbroken. Thus, it is better than the original, though "Juliet and Romeo" are omitted in the Chinese version, as the readers know them in the context.

Now Let's compare three versions of another couplet. The Introduction to the English Versions of *Yang Zhenyu's Selected Essays* cites two lines of a poem by Du Fu, ③ which go as follows and are translated below:

(2) 文章千古事，
得失寸心知。

1. A piece of literature is meant for the millennium,
Its ups and downs are known already in the author's heart.

In the original "文章" is hard to translate accurately, for we may interpret it as an essay, a poem, or a literary work. In the version, "文章" is rendered as "a piece of literature", which is correct, but it does not fit into a poem. Du Fu composed a large number of poems instead of writing many articles or essays. Therefore, it is suitable to treat "文章" as a poem or verse. Similarly, "千古" can be said to be correctly translated, too. "事" is handled in a free manner as "is meant". The first sentence is rendered faithfully. "得失" in the next sentence is turned into "ups and downs" (referring to the fate of a poem), which is better than "gain and loss". Of course, it is wrong to render "寸心" into "an inch of heart". Here, the translator interprets it as "the author's heart", which is all right. Only "知" is translated through the literal approach.

It can be seen from the version that liberal translation is more frequently utilized than literal translation and that being close to the original meaning is considered more important than being close to the original form, which corresponds to the requirement of "seeking the truth". However, observed from the perspective of beauty, the version is rather undesirable. Either of the two sentences in the couplet consists of five Chinese characters, which corresponds to "beauty in form". Also, both lines in it are rhymed, which is in agreement with "beauty in sound". But the two sentences in the first version are irregular in length, and they are not rhymed at all. In other words, they are defective in terms of beauty. That is why Professor Xu re-translates the two-sentence couplet as follows in two ways:

2. A poem may long, long remain, // Who knows the poet's loss and gain (joy and pain)?
3. A verse may last a thousand years. // Who knows the poet's smiles and tears?

Version Two and Version Three are better than Version One in terms of seeking beauty based on seeking the truth. The two sentences in Version Two and Version Three are all well rhymed, and they all contain the same number of syllables---eight syllables in each line. It is not difficult to see that Version Two and Version Three both meet the three-beauty principle. Yet, comparatively, Version Three is better than Version Two, for the former is more specific and more vivid. As we can see, "a thousand years" just means a very long time, and "smiles and tears" are examples of metonymy, which symbolize joy and pain. Xu (2000:3) emphasizes that broadly speaking, in poetry translation, when the prerequisite of seeking the truth comes true, the

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translator must do his or her best to convey to the readers the original beauty in meaning, in sound, and in form so that the readers may understand and get pleasure from the version. Xu (ibid.) points out that this three-beauty principle is also called the ontology of poetry translation and that it is precisely the purpose of poetry translation if the readers easily understand and get great pleasure and satisfaction from translated poems.

(3) The *Ci* Poem and its version

Now we shall observe a *Ci* poem ④ by Yang Shen (杨慎). It is named "Lingjiangxian", the name of a tune to which the *Ci* poem is composed. Meanwhile, we shall look at Xu's version of it. The Chinese *Ci* poem is put on the left side, followed by its tonal pattern, and Xu's version placed on the right, with its metrical pattern under it.

临江仙	Lingjiangxian
杨慎	Translated by Xu Yuanchong
滚滚长江东逝水，	Wave on wave the long river eastward rolls away;
⋁⋁/——\⋁	↗● ●· ● ●·● ●● ● ● ●● ●↘
浪花淘尽英雄。	Gone are all heroes with its spray on spray.
\—/ \—/	↗● ● ●● ● ·● ● ● ● ●↘
是非成败转头空。	Success or failure, right or wrong, all turn out vain.
\—/ \⋁/—	↗● ● ● ●●↘ ↗● ● ●↘ ●·● ● ●↘
青山依旧在，	Only green mountains still remain,
———\ \	↗●● ●· ● ● ●· ●●↘
几度夕阳红！	To see the setting sun's departing ray
. ⋁ \⋁/ /	↗● ●·● ●● ● ●·●●· ●↘
白发渔樵江渚上，	The white-haired fisherman sail on the stream with ease,
/—/ /—⋁\	↗● ● ● ●● ● ●●·●· ● ● ●·↘
惯看秋月春风。	Accustomed to the autumn moon and vernal breeze.
\ \ —\——	↗●·● ● ● ● ●·●· ● ●·●●· ●↘
一壶浊酒喜相逢。	A pot of wine in hand, they talk as they please.
—/ /⋁⋁—/	↗●· ●·●·● ●·●·● ● ● ● ●↘
古今多少事，	How many things before and after
⋁——⋁\	● ●● ●·●·●·●●●↘
都付笑谈中！	All melt into gossip and laughter. (2013:54)
—⋁\ /—	↗●·●·●·●·●● ● ● ●↘

By reading aloud this famous *Ci* poem several times, and with a basic grasp of it, we may interpret it as follows:

The rolling waves of the Changjiang River flow towards the east, never to return. Here historic times are compared to the rolling waves of the Changjiang River. So many heroes in the past ages have disappeared in the twinkling of an eye, just like splashing sprays. Why care so much about right and wrong, as well as success and failure, which last so short a time? Green mountains

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still exist; the sun rises in the east and sets in the west every day with departing rays. The white-haired fisherman often sails on the river, enjoying the autumn moon and vernal breeze. He gets used to the changes of the four seasons, although feeling a bit lonely. On one occasion, the author meets his rarely-seen friends; he feels so happy that he drinks rice wine to his heart's content. While drinking and laughing happy and gay, they talk about many things, or matters and disputes in the past and those at that time, which adds much interest to their gossip and drinking.

Now let us compare the *Ci* poem with Professor Xu's version of it.

This Chinese *Ci* poem, which comprises two stanzas, each of which consists of five sentences, possesses 60 Chinese characters. The rhythm and cadence of the *Ci* poem delights the ear. The rhyming scheme of the first stanza is ABBCB, and that of the second stanza is DBBEB. Therefore, the whole *Ci* poem is perfectly rhymed with a strict tone pattern. It is easy and smooth to read, and it is splendid to appreciate. Observing the version, we find that it demonstrates such typical metrical feet as the iamb, trochee, anapest, dactyl, and spondee, showing regular rhythm with 80 words altogether. At the same time, we find out with ease that the first stanza of the version displays the rhyming scheme of AABBA, while the second stanza demonstrates the end rhyme of CCCDD. Both the original and the version are highly rhythmical and well rhymed. The version conveys the original poem's beauty in meaning, in sound and in form.

"滚滚" in the first line of the *Ci* poem is a reduplicated word, which has no equivalent word in English, referring to the powerful rolling waves of the Changjiang River, the longest in China, while "wave" is repeated as "Wave on wave" in the first line of the version, thus flexibly keeping the original sentence's beauty in sound and beauty in form. The second sentence in the original is translated creatively, its meaning retained in the translated sentence. "是非成败" in the third line is handled in the inverted order so as to achieve an iambic foot, thus fulfilling the purpose of beauty in sound. The fourth line "青山依旧在" is rendered literally through the method of equivalence. Sometimes, beauty in form and beauty in meaning had better go hand in hand if it is possible. "夕阳红" in the fifth line is rendered into "the setting sun's departing ray" for two reasons: one is to keep the line rhymed; the other is to symbolize the leading character reaching the end of his last days. Patently, this is a case of creative translation. The first line in the second stanza of the *Ci* poem is translated creatively. "江渚上" is rendered into "sail on the stream with ease" to retain the metrical rhythm and the rhyming scheme, which basically corresponds to the original meaning. The second line is translated literally, which keeps the original meaning and form. The literal or equivalent translation of "惯看秋月春风" tells us that heroes like the deposed official work hard until dusk in autumn and spring so that they get accustomed to the autumn moon and vernal breeze, and of course, they enjoy such beautiful scenes. The third line in the second stanza of the *Ci* poem is also treated in a creative manner, both literally and liberally. "浊酒" means glutinous rice wine. Here "glutinous rice" is omitted for rhythm's sake. And for the beauty in sound and in form, "in hand" is added to the translated sentence. "喜相逢" is also rendered in a lively way. We can easily see that the translated line creates a very happy mood and a joyous atmosphere. The fourth line "古今多少事" is likewise handled flexibly, "古今" rendered into "before and after", which are put as the latter part of the line for the rhyming scheme. The last line is translated vividly, where the predicate verb "melt" is used metaphorically. On the whole, the *Ci* poem is translated through the creative translation, just as the translator puts it. To render the poem correspond to beauty in sound and beauty in form, the translator utilizes such translation techniques as the addition of proper words like "Wave on wave", "spay on spray", "in hand", etc. Meanwhile, the omission of some words occurs where necessary, for example, "浊", "几度", and "樵" are all left out in the version. Moreover, some phrases are put in the inverted order, for instance "是非成败", "古今", "笑谈", and "浪花" are not placed in the original order. Besides, some phrases are handled freely and vividly, such as "淘尽", "转头", "喜相逢", and so on. This famous *Ci* poem is rendered in such a creative manner that its version conforms to the three-beauty principle. We admire Xu a great deal, the oldest and greatest translator alive, from the bottom of our heart.

On the basis of a good understanding of this *Ci* poem, now we can appreciate the poem. This *Ci* poem is composed by Yang Shen, a deposed official and famous poet in the Ming Dynasty. In the first stanza, the author attempts to explore the permanent value through description of the eternal spectacular scenes that the rolling river flows eastward continuously, green mountains exist forever, and the sun rises in the east and sets in the west every day with departing rays. Meanwhile, he reveals his sad and splendid feelings by describing the phenomenon that heroes of one generation after another in historic times have all vanished off in the long river of history just like splashing sprays. Also, the author finds out the profound philosophical views of human life by pointing out that right and wrong, success and failure, all prove to be transient. The first stanza reflects the poet's noble and pure sentiments and his broad-mindedness. While appreciating the first stanza of this poem, we feel as though we were hearing the merciless history marching forward, instead of the rolling river flowing eastward; we

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feel as if we were hearing sighs of history so that we are trying to look for the everlasting value of life from them. The following stanza describes the image of a white-haired fisherman (referring to the poet himself). Despite the terrifying waves and without regard to right or wrong, success or failure, he just focuses his full attention and interest on the autumn moon and spring breeze. Although he feels a little lonely, yet he is wild with joy when some of his friends come from afar. While drinking rice wine and laughing heartily, the author and his friends, who seldom meet, talk about the ups and downs as well as transient heroic deeds of the previous dynasties and those of the contemporary times, which add interest to their drinking. While drinking and laughing, the poet retains a tranquil state of mind without cherishing any worldly desires. By narrating the ups and downs of historical times and by recounting right & wrong and success & failure of life as something transient, the poem describes the permanent value of history, and especially the poet's feelings, attitude, and values of human life. Moreover, through this *Ci* poem, the poet shows that he has contempt for worldly affairs and that he no longer yearns for fame or wealth, but enjoys a quiet and serene life as a hermit. Its style is vigorous and implicit, as well as reserved. This soul-stirring poem is pregnant with meaning, reflecting deep philosophical views of human life. The tone is passionate, soul-stirring, a little sad, profound, and splendid.

Xu's three-beauty principle is widely applicable not only to CE translation but also to EC translation of poetry, especially poetry with rhyme and rhythm. Let us look at the following example.

(4) She Walks in Beauty

By George Gordon Byron[5]

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace,
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

她走在美的光彩中

Trans. by the author

她走在柔美光彩中，
像在无云繁星夜空；
明暗相间最佳色彩，
凝聚于眼睛与面容：
光泽如此柔美娇嫩，
上天不给灿烂白昼。

多点阴影，少缕光线，
均有损她无比优雅，
优雅波动乌黑秀发，
或温柔地照亮脸颊；
甜蜜思绪宁静表达
思绪寓所何等纯珍。

脸颊表面，眼眉前额，
如此柔和沉着传神，
微笑醉心，色泽怡人，
明示度过美好光景；
心智包容世间万物，
心灵充满纯真爱情。

The above lyric poem consists of three stanzas, each of which is made up of six lines. The rhyming scheme goes as follows: abababab; cdcdcd; efefef. Each line has four metrical feet. The whole poem is perfectly rhymed. The theme of the poem is quite clear. The poet admires the leading character's beauty and describes her beauty in vivid detail by using lively figurative language. Her aspect and her eyes radiate all that's best of dark and bright, mellowed to tender light. Her nameless grace, which waves in every raven tress, so softly lightens her face, where sweet thoughts serenely express how pure and how dear her brains are! Her cheeks and her brow are so soft, so calm, and eloquent. The smiles that win and the tints that glow all tell us the good days she spent. She has a mind at peace with all below and a heart whose love is innocent! Everything about her carries the poet away. He is so fascinated by her beyond words.

Now let us observe and analyze the version of this poem by Byron. Obviously, each line consists of eight Chinese characters, and the version is somewhat rhythmical with a rhyming scheme: aabacd; effffg; hiijkj. Although the end rhyming scheme is not regular, yet the readers find that the translation is comfortable and smooth to read and easy to understand. The translator makes great efforts to reproduce the English lyric poem in the Chinese version by using the three-beauty principle as the guideline. On the whole, the translated poem is concise. The translator attempts to make the best use of four-character expressions of the target

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language, such as "无云繁星， 柔美光彩，明暗相间，柔美娇嫩， 无比优雅，乌黑秀发，甜蜜思绪，微笑醉心，色彩怡人，美好光景，世间万物，纯真爱情"等，the proper use of which renders the translation concise and smooth to read. Besides, in order to make the version concise and conform to the three-beauty principle, the translator flexibly employs such translation techniques as the omission of some words like prepositions and conjunctions and the adjustment of the original order of some phrases and so on. In short, the English lyric poem is translated into standard and idiomatic Chinese and the translation process is guided by the three-beauty principle.

This part endeavors to prove the feasibility of Xu's three-beauty principle for translation of classical literature, especially classical poems by analyzing some typical examples. The examples are analyzed in detail, mainly from the perspective of Xu's three-beauty standard and by referring to differences between the two most commonly used languages. Sometimes, a comparison is conducted of a few versions of the same original poem. Through qualitative analysis, including comparative analysis, this part verifies the effectiveness of Xu's three-beauty standard and demonstrates that it is objective, scientific, and universally applicable. Of course, whenever we translate poetry, we must first of all have a good understanding of it, then we should strive for creative translation and employ excellent expressions of the target language so that our versions may come up to the three-beauty standard.

IV. Xu's Findings through Translation of Classical Literature

Speaking of building world culture, Xu highlights (2015：11) that we must not pay too much attention to the culture of just one country. Each culture has its merits and demerits. Different cultures show their particular features. To build up world culture, we must realize that Chinese culture is bound to play a significant role. If we recall the history of the development of Chinese culture and Western culture, the two cultures developed side by side over two thousand years ago. The West boasted Homer's two odes, while we had *the Classic of Poems* and *the Songs of the South*. Over 1000 years ago, we Chinese boasted a well developed culture in the Han and Tang Dynasties, whereas the West possessed a religious culture. But only 500 years ago, did Western culture begin to become superior to Chinese culture. At present, we Chinese are working hard to realize "China Dream," which means we are trying to catch up with the western culture. When the Chinese culture gets rejuvenated, it can advance together side by side with Western culture (ibid.). Through the translation of classical literature, esp. classical poetry, Xu obtains the following findings.

(1) Major language differences can be known through literary translation. Xu emphasizes (ibid) that the 21st-century world culture is composed of the following three aspects: literature, the humanities, and natural sciences. As far as culture is concerned, what after all are the differences between Chinese culture and Western culture? The first difference lies in words and characters. Chinese is particular about conciseness, while English cares much about accuracy. Laozi ⑥ remarked in his *the Classic of the Virtue of the TAO,* "道可道，非常道。" In the first sentence, the first "道" is a noun, while the second "道" a verb. "非常道" means no ordinary truths. The whole sentence is translated by Xu as "Truth can be known, but it is no ordinary truth." Xu also emphasizes that democracy can be known, too, and that democracy can be implemented in different countries in different ways. And so is the truth of governing a country (ibid.). Chinese boasts its three-beauty feature: beauty in meaning, beauty in sound, and beauty in form. For instance, 明 as a Chinese character is made up of sun（日）and moon （月）, while in English it is light. Another example, 好 as a Chinese character is made up of 女 (daughter) and 儿（son, while in English it just means good. In short, English is precise, while Chinese is concise. Generally speaking, Chinese has more words with multiple meanings (ibid.). To be a good translator, one must be at home in the two languages concerned. If one fails to have a good command of Chinese, naturally he cannot sink in the essence of Chinese culture.

(2) The Chinese and Western cultures have many things in common and they are supposed to learn from each other (2015:11). Confucius remarked in his *The Book of Rites* that when the Great Truth prevailed, the whole world became one community. The great truth belongs to everybody, not to just one class. Later on, he highlighted that a state should be governed by capable talents. Only thus, can a government of the people, by the people, and for the people exist. Similar thoughts in the USA did not appear until the 18th century. Thus, we can see that Chinese and Western cultures from ancient times to the present can be linked up and become integrated.

(3) We Chinese always advocate harmonious development and have a passion for peace. This can be traced back to ancient classical Chinese literature. Through a study of Chinese history, Xu has discovered that we Chinese people have always pursued peace, and we never have any intention of invading or threatening other peoples. Through the translation of classical Chinese literature, we can spread the idea of harmonious development to

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foreign countries. Qian Zhongshu, a prominent scholar who passed away a few years ago and who was Xu's contemporary, once remarked that China is proud of her two treasures: one is the Great Wall; the other embraces her brief poems. Similarly, Xu speaks highly of the splendid spiritual quality of the Great Wall, its profound implied meaning being defensive instead of being aggressive; Xu also highly praises China's classical short poems, which disseminate Chinese people's passionate love of peace. But how should we translate the original content and implied beauty of Chinese classics both faithfully and beautifully? Professor Xu points out that it is practical if we follow "fidelity" as the prerequisite of translation, and if we amply exert the appreciation of beauty(ibid.). He adds that "Faithfulness means not violating the translation rules or principles, while beauty implies that the translator actively exerts his personal initiative by utilizing the best expressions in the target language.

(4) Ancient Chinese hated war and loved peace. About 2500 years ago, there was a brief Chinese poem in *The Classic of Poetry*, which goes as follows: "**昔我往矣**，杨柳依依。今我来思，雨雪霏霏。行道迟迟,载渴载饥。我心伤悲，**莫知我哀。**""**依依**" and "**霏霏**" in the this poem have no equivalents in English. How to translate them? An English translator named Legge renders "**依依**" as "fresh and green". He does not know that "**依依**" here means "**依依不舍**" (reluctant). "杨柳依依" is a vivid example of personification, which implies that even willows are reluctant to see that the young man has to leave home and go to fight at the front, revealing to us that ancients in China hated war and cherished peace. The English translator renders "**霏霏**"as "falling in clouds," which contains no idea of loathing the war. Considering the whole context, Professor Xu translates the brief poem as follows: "When I left here, willows shed tear. / I come back now, snow bends the bough. / Long long the way. Hard hard the day. / My grief overflows. Who knows? Who knows?" (2015:11) Professor Xu renders the translated poem not only true but also beautiful. He strictly follows the principle of faithfulness, vividly presenting a sorrowful scene: the exhausted soldier is going home slow with tired steps, with snow falling heavily and bending willows, feeling hungry and cold. Nobody knows how sad and bitter and dreary he is! All the lines are perfectly rhymed, although changes are made in form, which shows that the translator actively exerts his imagination and brings his individual initiative to the fullest degree. No wonder a professor from California University remarked, "It is a real delight to read the versions of *the classic of poetry*" (2015:11). The translated poem implies that even ancient Chinese hated war and loved peace, not willing to fight.

(5) Heroism in China and that in the West are not quite the same. Homer's two odes vividly reflect Western individual heroism. His heroes lead their men in charging forward and fighting against their enemies heroically until they win great victories; nobody can stop them. However, they are never modest in getting a generous reward. They want what they deserve. But heroism in ancient Chinese literature is somewhat different. Heroes in the Chinese classics are not eager to be generously rewarded, though they lead their men charging ahead. Chinese heroes are not merely heroes, but also very kindhearted, noble-minded, and selfless men (ibid.).

(6) People in the east and people in the west love beauty in different ways. About 2000 years ago, Emperor Han had a beautiful wife. Her brother Li Yannian composed a poem in praise of her rare beauty, which can be interpreted to the following effect: When the beauty casts a glance at soldiers, the soldiers are so fascinated that they no longer want to guard the town, and they all leave the town in order to look at the beauty. When the beauty casts a look at the monarch, the monarch is so carried away by her beauty that he would rather lose his crown than the beauty. This ancient poem tells us that Chinese people, including emperors, exceptionally love and value beauty above everything else, even above town and crown, for town and crown are overshadowed by her beauty. This indirectly reflects Chinese people's love of peace. In Homer's odes, there are similar lines. When soldiers look at Hailee, they feel it is worth much to fight against their enemies for this beauty. From this, we can see that people in the east and people in the west react to beauty in different ways (ibid.).

(7) Theory must be subordinated to practice. Concerning the relationship between translation theory and translation practice, Xu highlights that translation practice goes first, while translation theory second. He states that if literary translation theory is not proved through much practice, it is useless or devoid of guidance and that empty talk about translation theory is of no value according to his experience of sixty years of translation (2003:1). Chinese and English are the two most important languages in the world, for they are used by nearly half of the world population. Undoubtedly, translation between Chinese and English is of the greatestimportance.

Through translation of so many literary works, esp.CCP, Xu finds plenty of similarities and differences between Chinese culture and Western culture. And through much practice, he concludes that practice goes

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first, whereas theory second. Nowadays, cultures across the world are open to each other and learn from each other. Through translation, people in the world understand different cultures better so that they can communicate better and benefit from one another.

V. Concluding Remarks

In one of his papers, Xu shares with readers three key questions he constantly asks himself while translating literary works. The three questions are: (1) Is the version so faithful that it will let the reader know what the original says? (2) Is the version so smooth that it will be appealing to the readers? (3) Is the version so felicitous that the readers will enjoy reading it? Xu explains how the three questions have led him through what he regards as the three crucial stages in the mental process of a literary translator (Xu, 2003:30).

Xu emphasizes tht to be faithful to the source text does not mean that the translator must follow the expressions of the source text slavishly. In literary translation, it is more important to be as beautiful as the original. The translator should make the best use of the resources of the target language to express the ideas of the original most effectively" (2001:1).

When we discuss new theories of translation in the new century, it is far from enough if we just focus on faithfulness only. It is owing to his experience in translating scores of famous literary works that Xu advocates that during literary translation we should do our utmost to create and utilize the best expressions of the target language to reproduce the original meaning most impressively. That is the essence of his translation principles (Xu,. 2001:52).

Xu highlights that translation aims to convey the truth, while poetry focuses on beauty and that translation of poetry should pay special attention to beauty based on faithfulness. In other words, as far as translation of poetry is concerned, seeking the truth is the low criterion, whereas seeking beauty is the high standard. Translation of poetry must be not only faithful to the original but also beautiful. It won't do to be merely faithful without being beautiful (ibid.).

So far, we have discussed and verified Xu's translation principles, but for lack of space, the analysis of typical examples is quite limited. Nevertheless, we have proved the feasibility of Xu's three-beauty principle for translation of classical poetry by analyzing abundant examples. This principle, which is well known to all Chinese translators and translation theorists, applies to the translation of all poems with rhythm and rhyme.

Xu's principles for literary translation, i.e., the criterion of creative translation & that of excellence and the three-beauty principle are closely associated with one another. The former two help to ensure the realization of the three-beauty criterion. Without carrying out the former two, or without being guided by them, it is impossible to obtain a version with beauty in meaning, in sound, and in form. Also, it is a solid fact that the three-beauty principle strikes root in the heart of translation scholars in China, who conscientiously put it into translation practice. In fact, Xu's translation principles all prove to be quite objective, scientific and universally applicable, as they are based on his plenty of practice. Guided by these translation principles, we may produce excellent translated works. They are very reasonable because Chinese and Western languages differ a great deal in many ways. Each has its advantages and particular features.

Notes

① It was a national transitional comprehensive university founded in Changsha in August 1937. It was made up of Qinghua University, Beijing University and Nankai University, known as National South-West Associated University. During the Anti-Japanese War, it moved to Kunming, where education was relatively safe, and where the best university could be protected. It stopped enrolling students on July 31, 1946, after Japanese invaders surrendered.

② Li Bai (701-762 A.D.), a great poet of romanticism in the Tang Dynasty, is honored as Poet-Immortal by subsequent generations. He possessed a frank and generous personality. He was fond of composing poems while drinking alcohol. And he liked to make friends with ordinary people. His poems, esp. his Ci poems boast a very high status in China.

③ Du Fu (712-770 A.D.), an outstanding poet of realism in the Tang Dynasty, is counted just as great as Li Bai. Du Fu composed as many as 1500 poems, which are all well kept in a collection. The core of his thoughts was the benevolent government. His poems have exerted a profound influence on subsequent generations, who have called him Poet-Saint.

④ A Ci poem demonstrates a strict tonal pattern and a perfect rhyming scheme, originating in the Tang Dynasty (618-907A.D.) and well developed in the Song Dynasty (960-1279A.D.).

⑤ George Gordon Byron (1788—1824) was a poet of romanticism. He was born in an aristocratic family and graduated from Cambridge University. His representative works are *Don Juan* and *Child Harold's Pilgrimage*. "She Walks in Beauty" is a lyric poem composed in 1814. At a dance party ball, Byron met a beautiful woman who was the wife of an aristocratic man. Byron was so deeply impressed by this young beauty that he created this eternal poem.

⑥ Lao Zi (571-?), the founder of Tao School, was a prominent thinker, philosopher, literary writer, and historian. His thoughts have a deep influence on the development of Chinese philosophy. The

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core of his thoughts is simple dialectics. Politically, he advocated adaptation to nature and government of a state without making a special effort. Concerning shifts in politics, he was particular about why things turn into their opposites when they reach the extreme.

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