

# Recreating the Image of a “Chaste Wife”: Transitivity in Two Translations of Chinese Ancient Poem *Jie Fu Yin*

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**Abstract**—This article is a comparison on the recreating of the image of a “chaste wife” in two English translations of Chinese ancient poem *Jie Fu Yin* from the perspective of systemic functional linguistics (SFL). The linguistic choices of the poet and translators are measured from transitivity under the experiential meaning of ideational metafunction. It has been found that Hart tends to follow a creative and imaginative translation, thus creating a more enthusiastic even passionate image of a young “chaste wife” in a direct and explicit way, while Fletcher presents a calm and tender image of a mature “chaste wife” in a relatively implicit way. Besides, both translations reproduce the theme about love, but losing the political theme. It is argued that in translation, the lexico-grammatical choices will lead to variation in meanings and recreate different images of a same character, and the seemingly unconscious choices can be better understood based on the context of translation.

**Index Terms**—systemic functional linguistics, transitivity, chaste wife, *Jie Fu Yin*, context

## I. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to explore the transitivity on recreating the image of a “chaste wife” in Chinese ancient poem *Jie Fu Yin* and its two translations: W.J.B. Fletcher’s *The Retort Courteous* (1918), Henry H. Hart’s *A LETTER* (1933) based on systemic functional linguistics (SFL). *Jie Fu Yin* is a classical poem presenting the monologue of a married official’s wife refusing a pursuer, written by famous ancient Chinese poet Zhang Ji (766-830), who also served as an official for Tang dynasty all the time (Du, 2004). It is created in imitation of Chinese earlier folk songs (*yuefu*), which indicates it can be set to music for singing (Liu, 2010, p.162), and the last two lines (see Appendix) of this poem have been highly praised and spread by people from ancient to modern times with endless whispers about love (Li, 2004).

*Jie Fu Yin* is also called *Ji Dong Ping Li Si Kong Shi Dao* (a letter Zhang Ji wrote to Li Shidao, and Si Kong is Li’s official position), which appears as a subtitle (like in Song Dynasty Yao Xuan’s *Tang Wen Cui*, Wang Zhi’s *Si Liu Hua*) and as an indicator to expose its political theme. In mid-Tang dynasty (766-835), with the further development of rival principalities separatism as the emperor assigned each or more provinces a governor to deal with both civil and military affairs, the central political power was gradually weakened and local military governor forces were strengthened; and some military governors like Li Shidao were trying to draw the literati and officials over to their side so as to consolidate their powers (Zhou, 1999, p.48). Zhang Ji, as an official of central government, resolutely defended national unity and opposed to national separation (Li, 2013, p.128), so he wrote this poem as a reply to refuse the invitation of Li Shidao.

SFL recognizes three functions of language: ideational (construing our experience of the outer and inner world), interpersonal (maintaining and establishing interpersonal relationship) and textual (organizing a linear and coherent text), each of which gives rise to a distinctive strand of meaning and interpretation in the text. Transitivity belongs to the ideational metafunction and is used to realize experiential meaning. The application of transitivity to literary study was initiated by Halliday (1971) and then carried on by Kennedy (1982), Simpson (1993) and others. Among the studies, those by Hasan (1985), Hubbard (1999), Ji & Shen (2004) and more recently Yu & Wu (2016) focused on the function of transitivity in constructing the image of a character. This paper again tries to investigate the organization of authorial creation in presenting the image of the character, especially in a narrative-oriented poem.

Due to cultural and linguistic differences, some readers get to know a character through the translation, so the understanding and representing of the source text, including the image of a person established tend to pose challenges for translators (Carballeira, 2014), and it deserves to ask why “the translation has been shaped in such a way that it comes to mean what it does” (Malmkjær, 2003, p.39). Drawing on SFL, this paper seeks to demonstrate that transitivity approach to literary translations can make a significant contribution. There are three questions to be answered in this study:

- (1) What are the deviations of two translations from the original poem?
- (2) What are the differences between the two translations?
- (3) What are the contextual factors that might influence the translator’s options?

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) approach to language analysis is a model of linguistics established and developed by M.A.K Halliday (1925-2018) in the 1960s. The terms “systemic” and “functional” indicate the approach is concerned with the language in actual use and the organization for specific purposes in relation to context. Halliday (2014, p.33) points out context has three parameters: field (what is going on in the situation of social activity and the domain of experience it relates to), tenor (who is taking part in and the relationship between people) and mode (how the text is made and what role is being played by language). These three dimensions influence our language choices precisely because they reflect three metafunctions of language: ideational (including experiential and logical), interpersonal and textual.

The transitivity theory plays an important part in the experiential meaning of ideational metafunction, which represents the happenings and events of the world and the relations among states or ideas and values in the language, like “who does what to whom under what circumstances?”. The system of transitivity provides the lexico-grammatical resources for construing a quantum of change in the flow of events as a figure--as a configuration of elements centered on a process (Halliday, 2014, p.213), and it has three components: participants (nominal groups about the doer or recipient of action), process (verbal groups about activities) and circumstances (adverbial or preposition groups about space, time, manner, etc.). While the combination of process and participants constitutes the nucleus of transitivity, the circumstances usually remain at the periphery of the configuration (Matthiessen, 1995, p.197-198).

There are mainly six process types (Halliday, 2014, p.214): material (process of doing and happening, both concrete and abstract), mental (process of sensing, about the inner experience of human beings, such as know, see and believe), relational (process of being and having, serving to characterize or identify an entity), behavioral (process of physiological and psychological behavior, like breathe, cough and laugh), verbal (process of saying, such as tell and say) and existential (process of existing, to represent that something exists or happens, like be, exist and arise). Each process involves one or more participants and sometimes also has some circumstances. Different options of participants and process types in language can reveal the certain worldview “framed by the authorial ideology” in a literary text (Fowler, 1986, p.138), and the participants of each type have different names as shown in Table 1 (cited from Halliday, 2014, p.311).

TABLE I.  
PARTICIPANTS IN EACH PROCESS

Process types	Participants, directly involved	Participants, obliquely involved
<b>Material</b>	Actor, Goal	Recipient, Client; Scope; Initiator; Attribute
<b>Behavioral</b>	Behaver	Behavior
<b>Mental</b>	Senser, Phenomenon	Inducer
<b>Verbal</b>	Sayer, Target	Receiver; Verbiage
<b>Relational</b>	Attributing: Carrier, Attribute; Identifying: Identified, identifier	Attributor; Beneficiary Assigner
<b>Existential</b>	Existent	

As noted by Munday (2008, p.89-90), when “discourse analysis came to prominence in translation studies”, it is particularly the SFL model that “had the greatest influence”. In the process of translation, the reproduction of meaning, instead of wording, should be put at the central place (Newmark, 1988; Nida & Taber, 2003). But because of various cultural traditions and linguistic habits, translation shifts seem to be inevitable in the recreating of meaning (Matthiessen, 2014, p.275), which may affect readers’ appreciation of the text and the image of the person depicted. Based on the analysis of linguistic choices in SFL, the following part aims to investigate how the transitivity in experiential metafunction contributes to the creation of the image of a “chaste wife” and how shifts in meaning lead to variations in the image.

## III. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION: *JIE FU YIN* AND TWO TRANSLATIONS

### A. Initial Readings of *Jie Fu Yin*

Zhang Ji’s poem tells a story of a married woman refusing a third person’s love, thus creating an image of a “chaste wife”, at the same time serving as a metaphor to indicate Zhang Ji’s reply to Li Shidao’s appreciation and invitation (Li, 2013, p.128). It narrates from the third person *jun* (the pursuer) and *qie* (the married woman) with the absence of the woman’s husband, and links almost all the wife’s reactions and behaviors with the progression of receiving the gift “twin pearls” and giving it back so as to form a complete artistic whole. The poem, consisting of ten lines, can be classified into five parts (see Appendix). The first four lines are about the wife’s recalling of receiving “twin pearls” (Line 1-2) and tying it to show appreciation of being recognized (Line 3-4); while the rest are about the wife’s description of her family situation (Line 5-6), vow of her loyalty to husband (Line 7-8) implying the attitude, and her refusal and gratitude to the pursuer (Line 9-10) for cutting off the relation.

However, as a reply Zhang wrote to Li Shidao, this interpretation about the theme of love is from the very basic level. At a second level, it’s in fact a political-oriented one to express personal political position as Zhang served for the

central government and Li Shidao was a local military governor (Zhou, 1999, p.47). The poem of this kind can be a tradition in ancient China, for some male poets wrote in imitation of female tone to express their political aspirations and devotion to the emperor (Chen, 2008, p.146), like Li Po's *Chang Gan Xing*. Zhang Ji uses the "Jie fu" (or *qie*, a chaste wife) as a metaphor of himself, and the pursuer "jun" as the Li Shidao, expressing his personal attitudes and choices, and stressing his loyalty to the absent husband (the emperor) because in Chinese traditional culture, Confucianism advocates a woman should "be faithful to one's husband unto death", or "be an absolutely one-man wife", just as a widow remarrying a man also means being disloyal.

By briefly reading the two English versions, the wife's loyalty can be noticed as some key words "swear", "faithful" appear in translations. But about whether that political theme stands out and how the image of a "chaste wife" recreates, it still demands close reading and exploring. Here comes how Zhang Ji and the two translators organize their interpretation into writing and how their themes foreground. By analyzing the transitivity of *Jie Fu Yin* and its two translations, the next part seeks to account for these questions.

### B. Transitivity Analysis of *Jie Fu Yin* and Two Translations

The experiential meaning is about the construal of experience of the world and is mainly realized through transitivity as it is concerned with "who does what in relation to whom/what, where, when, how and why" (Hasan, 1988, p.63). The unit of transitivity analysis is about the clause, and it is recognized by identifying process (in the form of a verbal group), which is "the one obligatory constituent of a clause" (Butt et al., 2012, p.35). Table 2 presents the transitivity of process types, participants and circumstances in Zhang Ji's *Jie Fu Yin* based on Li's (2007) SFL account of Chinese grammar.

TABLE II.  
TRANSITIVITY SELECTIONS IN ZHANG'S *JIE FU YIN*

Line	Participants	Process	Circumstance
1-2	君-senser, 妾有夫-phenomenon; 妾-carrier, 夫-attribute; 双明珠-goal, 妾-recipient	知-mental, 有-relational, 赠-material	
3-4	君缠绵意-phenomenon	感-mental, 系-behavioral	红罗襦-space
5-6	高楼-carrier; 苑-attribute; 良人-actor, 戟-goal	连-relational, 起、执-material (2)	妾家、明光里-space (2)
7-8	君用心-phenomenon; 君-actor, 心、夫-goal (2); 同生死-verbiage	知-mental, 用、事-material (2), 誓-verbal	如日月-manner
9-10	明珠-goal, 君-recipient, 泪-actor; 不相逢-phenomenon	还、垂、逢、嫁-material (4), 恨-mental	未嫁时-time

As can be seen, there are all together 9 material, 4 mental and 1 verbal processes; while 2 relational, 1 behavioral, and no existential processes. Halliday (2014, p.215) notes that material, mental and relational are the main types of process in the English transitivity system (the most frequent type is material process). So, except for material process, the more of using other process types deserves attention. As material process is concerned with our experience of the material world, the mental process is related to the world of our own consciousness, and relational process, description and identification. The transitivity selections in Zhang's *Jie Fu Yin* suggest the poet's emphasis on the wife's mental thoughts in the flow of events taking place, and the description of current relations between her and her pursuer, her and her husband (or the emperor). In addition, verbal process also exerts an important effect on showing her appreciation of being recognized and highlighting her proclamation of love: being loyal to her husband (or the emperor).

In detail, the above foregrounding verbs in Table 2, in Line 1-4 "知" (*zhi*, know) illustrates the pursuer's mental cognition of observing the fact or phenomena that the wife has a husband (or the emperor, a master to serve as "有" (*you*, have) indicates their relation), but he still sends her a gift "twin pearls"; and "感" (*gan*, appreciate or thank) shows the wife's gratitude as she hangs it within her red silk. Here, the image of a seemingly disloyal wife stands out in the lines: a wife accepts the courtship of a third person, against or in regardless of social ethics and the etiquette. In Line 5-8, "连" (*lian*, be or be connected to) implies the wife's good family background (or the high official position of Zhang Ji) and again emphasizes the close relation between the wife and husband (or the emperor); and "知" (*zhi*, know), being as a consolation to the pursuer, indicates the wife's cognition of the pursuer's action and intention that are open and aboveboard, while verbal process of "誓" (*shi*, vow) demonstrates her devoted attitude and unswerving determination to live with or work together with her husband (or the emperor) forever. Here, the image of a "chaste wife" foregrounds: refusing the pursuer and being loyalty to husband (or the emperor). In addition, the mental process of "恨" (*hen*, not "hate", but being sorry) in last lines again presents the appreciation of being recognized in a humorous way as 4 material processes appear to show her sadness or depression in a frank or honest way. However, there are some differences in Fletcher's and Hart's translations. Table 3 and Table 4 present respectively the transitivity selections in two translations.

TABLE III.  
PROCESS TYPES IN TWO TRANSLATIONS

Line	Fletcher	Hart
1-2	am-relational, know-mental, send-material	have-relational, know-mental, sent-material
3-4	be-relational, hung-behavioral, show-material	prompted, cherish-mental (2), lain-relational
5-6	is, is-relational (2), guard-material	lies-relational, have taken, live-material (2), may-mental
7-8	recognize-mental, swear-verbal, serve-material	know-mental, tell-verbal, be, are-relational (2)
9-10	send, met, placed-material (3), regretting-mental	are, lying-existential (2), willed-mental, send, find, fall, met, had crossed-material (5), look-behavioral, telling-verbal

TABLE IV.  
PROCESS TYPES IN ZHANG'S POEM AND EACH TRANSLATION

	Material	Mental	Behavioral	Relational	Verbal	Existential	Total
Zhang	9	4	1	2	1	0	17
Fletcher	7	3	1	4	1	0	16
Hart	8	6	1	5	2	2	24

For convenient discussion, the translation lines are measured one-to-one corresponding to the original poem and then looked into their process types because in Hart's translation, the original lines of the poem (Line 1-8) are adjusted. From above, it's obvious that the process types in Hart's translation (total 24, especially mental process) are more than Zhang's poem (total 17) and Fletcher's translation (total 16), which may imply the richer emotion or more complex flow of the wife's consciousness as it stands out distinctly and explicitly. Besides, both translations have more relational processes than the original poem, as Fletcher's 4, Hart's 5, while the poem 2. It indicates the relations between the wife and the pursuer, the wife and husband are made more specific in both translations. For example, "be" in Fletcher's and "have" and "be" in Hart's highlight the close relationship between the wife and husband, and underline the distant relationship between the wife and a third person. Thus, the image of a "chaste wife" who abides by ethics and morality is revealed.

Look separately, in Fletcher's translation, the process types are roughly the same as the original poem with less material and mental verbs, only to lay stress on relational processes to tell the relations between each other, between the woman and her husband, and emphasize the verbal process to make her loyalty to husband clearly. As a result, with all relational verbs only concerned with the woman, like "I am duly married", "my dwelling is a lofty one", "my heart must be grateful" and "my husband is a soldier", then combined with a verbal process "swear to serve my husband" to express her devoted attitude and unswerving determination, it may create an alienating effect when refusing the pursuer, at the same time demonstrating the woman's dealing of this affair in a relatively mature and sober manner. As for mental processes, "I recognize" and "regretting that" contribute to the gratitude of being recognized and the refusal of being sorry "we had not met ere" owing to the arrangement of fate. Therefore, the image of a "chaste wife" is completed: a tender "chaste wife" with calm consideration of current situation and mature thoughts about love.

Different from Fletcher, in Hart's translation, it can be noticed that there are much more other types of verbs excluding the material, as 6 mental, 5 relational, together more than the material processes. Among them, in Line 1-4 two mental verbs "know" and "prompted" are about the pursuer while the "cherish" is about the wife, which writes more about the imagination of the wife to the pursuer, to his feelings or emotions, and it may go away from a "chaste wife", but expressing the joy and excitement when receiving the gift as she "cherish in my bosom with the jewels". However, being a married woman, she "ever shall be faithful", so she just puts the gift "twin pearls" hidden in the silk. The other two mental verbs "know" and "willed" are to show that the wife understands the pursuer's true and pure heart, but "that perverse life" doesn't allow her to be with him as she has already belonged to her husband on that fateful wedding day, so she cannot help but send back the gift with complaints and in deep sorrow. This complicated consciousness flows and emotional changes can be found in Hart's translation of the original poem in Line 9-10. There are totally 10 process types, nearly half of the whole translation, while in Fletcher's translation, it's only 4, and the original poem, only 5.

Additionally, there are 2 relational, 2 verbal and 1 behavioral processes not concerned with the woman, but the pursuer and his gift, like "you need not tell me" and "if you look closely", which also suggests that the woman blends her own emotional consciousness into that man, with illusion and desire and against the image of a traditional "chaste wife", but instead, creating a young or inexperienced wife who has great enthusiasm but doesn't know how to deal with such affairs; and "they've laid hidden" and "telling of a breaking heart", these two are about the gift, indicating the woman's love of it and the great sadness to return it. Anyway, eventually the woman sends the gift back, keeping the image of a "chaste wife". Therefore, it can be concluded that Hart recreates a young "chaste wife" with complicated emotions from receiving to returning the gift, being more enthusiastic, even passionate, and her emotions (joy, excitement and sorrow) are displayed in a direct and explicit way.

### C. Participant Roles in *Jie Fu Yin* and Two Translations

Transitivity is recognized by identifying process in a clause, but the two functional constituents--participants and circumstances are also of vital importance in transitivity system. According to Halliday, our most powerful impression of experience is that it consists of a flow of events, or happenings of the world, focusing on “who does what to whom under what circumstances?”, and this flow of events is related to quanta of change by the grammar of the clause modeled as a figure of happening, doing, sensing, saying, being or having (Halliday, 2014, p.213), which means an action or interaction cannot be separated from the doer and the recipient in various situations. Since the process types have been analyzed before, this part will draw attention on the use of participants and circumstances in order to explore their functions and deviations created in translations. Table 5 presents the different participants in *Jie Fu Yin* and its two translations.

TABLE V.  
PARTICIPANTS IN ZHANG'S POEM AND EACH TRANSLATION

	Actor /Goal	Senser /Phenomenon	Behavior /Behavior	Carrier /Attribute	Sayer /Receiver	Existent	Total
<b>Zhang</b>	10	5	0	4	1	0	20
<b>Fletcher</b>	12	5	1	8	1	0	27
<b>Hart</b>	13	10	1	10	4	2	40

For convenient discussion, participants like recipient, verbiage as shown in Table 2 are classified into actor/goal, sayer/receiver category in terms of their original process types, and others in the translations are the same. As illustrated in Table 5, obviously, the participants in two translations are more than Zhang Ji's poem. That's possible because the tendency to omit personal nouns in Chinese wherever possibly (Lü, 1999, p.8). “妾” (*qie*) and “君” (*jun*) are two important pronouns functioning in the original poem as actor who performs the action and goal that is affected by the action, as senser to express the inner world feelings and emotions, and as carrier related to the identification of relation. What's more, *qie* and *jun* themselves contain abundant social ethical implications. In ancient China, *jun* generally refers to the rulers (the husband, the emperor or others), while *qie* means a sinful or slave woman (Chen, 2008, p.144), which suggests that the *jun* is superior and powerful and the *qie* is inferior and obedient.

Zhang Ji uses *qie* and *jun* to imply an unequal status of relationship between a married woman and a third person, corresponding to the unequal position between the poet and the military governor. Nevertheless, due to different cultural and linguistic differences, *qie* and *jun* in the original poem are replaced as “I” and “you”, or “my”, “we” and “your” in both translations, showing equal position or equivalent status and promoting to create a one-to-one relationship (Smith, 2004), which possibly leads to the loss of China's ancient ethical values, but creating a new one and meeting western readers' expectations and traditional egalitarianism. Consequently, this deviation in the choices of personal pronouns as actor/goal or other participants brings about the deficiency of interpreting the political theme in translations.

Moreover, in Table 2, we can see the “双明珠” (*shuang ming zhu*, twin pearls) plays as goal both in the beginning and the ending, echoing the events of “receiving and “returning” (or “accepting” and “refusing”) as the word “twin” (or *shuang*) has the meaning of “two things or people that are connected”, or “to make a close relationship between each other”, thus the coherence and unity of event flows are ensured. But this is not completely reflected in both translations. Additionally, in Hart's translation, *ming zhu* is translated as “pearls” in the beginning and “gems” in the ending, respectively serving as goal and existent, which may be an indicator to show the wife's self-cognition of the gift since “pearls” mean pure and noble, not related to much about interest, while “gems” are apt to arouse the desire and attract attention. Here, a young wife's emotion of being unwilling to send the gift back again stands out.

Taken together in Table 5, we can find in the original poem, except for the actor/goal, the senser/phenomenon and carrier/attribute also play an important role, mainly showing the gratitude and emphasizing the relation between each other. Fletcher's translation is similar to the poem, but the number of participants of actor/goal in his translation is much more, shedding lights on that the participants are able to affect or bring changes to the surrounding environment, which contributes to recreating the image of a “chaste wife” with action motivated when “I” plays as the actor. As for Hart, from the data, it displays a high amount of senser/phenomenon, carrier/attribute and sayer/receiver, which demonstrates the married woman's complex consciousness flows combined with all emotions foregrounding, and with more considerations about the relation and current situation. Thus, a more passionate image of “chaste wife” occurs.

As for circumstantial elements, Halliday (2014, p.213) argues that “all figures consist of a process unfolding through time and of participants being directly involved in this process in some way; and in addition, there may be circumstances of time, space, cause, manner or one of a few other types”. But these circumstances are not directly involved in the process, rather they are attendant on it. Circumstances take part in the mode of action or interaction to give or demand goods, services and information, thus imposing linguistic order on our experience of the endless variation and flow of events. The grammatical system by which this is achieved is that of transitivity. Table 6 presents the circumstance divisions in the poem and two translations.

TABLE VI.  
CIRCUMSTANCE DIVISIONS IN ZHANG'S POEM AND EACH TRANSLATION

Circumstance	Zhang	Fletcher	Hart
space	3	4	8
time	1	1	4
manner	1	2	3
others	0	3	5
Total	5	10	20

Considering the amount, both translations have more circumstances than the original poem, especially in Hart's translation. Excluding the most common space, time, both translations also have more other types like manner, cause and comparison. For example, in Fletcher's translation, circumstances play as manner like "I am duly married" to emphasize the appropriateness or correctness in her choice of marriage, and as cause "for this your kind devotion" or as comparison "as bright as shining sun or moon" to foreground the gratitude with an implicit refusal; while in Hart's translation, not similarly, manners like "if you look closely" indicates the woman's desire to make a connection to or built a relationship with the pursuer, and "in sadness /with a sigh" highlights the grief and depression; other circumstances like "with the jewels" and "with...twin gems lying" again make the gift "pearls" with some more imagination of being pleasing, good, or helpful unlike Fletcher's. With these adding elements of prepositions, conjunctions or adjuncts, the flow of events and the change of the woman's emotions are made specific, meanwhile keeping the readers well informed.

However, in the original poem, the total circumstances appear only 5 times, while Fletcher's 10, Hart's 20. This in fact also demonstrates the big difference of language-using habits of various countries and cultural traditions. Chinese language tends to give prominence to parataxis, while English hypotaxis (Nida, 1982). By nature, it results from the different ways of thinking between Chinese and western people. Chinese are influenced by the philosophy of "the unity of Heaven and Man" in traditional culture, thus laying emphasis on integration and pursuing harmony through the semantic association between words and sentences; while western people, affected by the idea of "separation of Heaven and Man" in ancient Greece, focus on the use of logical grammar to express the logical relationship between sentences and within sentences (Yang, 2011). Therefore, with more circumstances, both translations try to make it more clearly in the poem, especially Hart's translation, about what is connected to the character and what he or she wants to express for implied readers.

#### IV. CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATION

From the above analysis and discussion, it can be seen that different translator favors different using of transitivity, thus creating different images of the same "chaste wife". It should be admitted that variations in meaning are inevitable in translating a certain poem. But a text cannot be separated from its context, it is of interest to consider the motivation behind the occurring linguistic choices that make up a certain style of a translation. Thus, to account for the deviations and differences in the translation, it is necessary to take the context (field, tenor and mode) into consideration as "no translations should ever be studied outside of the context in which it came into being" (Toury, 2012, p.22).

W. J. B. Fletcher was a celebrated British diplomat and translator in the 20th century, who published the earliest English-translated collections of Tang poetry (Wang, 2013, p.100). After his retirement, he once taught English at Sun Yat-sen University in China. In his two collections, *Gems of Chinese Verse* in 1918 and *More Gems of Chinese Poetry* in 1919, Fletcher translated 286 poems in total and first displayed Tang poetry, the greatest "gems" of Chinese literature to western readers, which profoundly helps to spread classical Chinese poetry into English world. It can be noticed that in Fletcher's collections, Fletcher favors a formation of intertextuality of classic English poems and Tang poetry with many notes about where the translation is from and what a special term means in China, especially the words about Chinese culture (Wang, 2013, p.107), like "Chingmen is at Wuchang". Besides, Fletcher often tries to maintain the original rhyme style, as he writes "I have usually followed closely the original form of the poems, frequently keeping their meter, but fear that I have lost much of their nuances and fragile delicacy" (Fletcher, 1918). For example, Fletcher has retained and represented the original rhymes in Line 1-2 and Line 5-6 of *Jie Fu Yin* in his translation.

As a diplomat with relatively enough knowledge of Chinese, Fletcher translated the poem with less mental verbs and other types of verbs, giving some words like "married" and "kind devotion" in an implicit way to show the refusal. Meanwhile he titled it as "*The Retort Courteous*" in a British gentleman style with a mild and calm, but distant tone, not representing the "chaste" wife directly. Furthermore, the era when Fletcher translated Tang poetry was the early years of the Republic of China. At that time China's economy and international status were far behind many western countries. With the barrier of understanding different culture, the classical Chinese literature was much more difficult to attract attention and go abroad. Considering about the western readers, Fletcher translated Tang poetry in an English-poem style. For instance, he translated the husband's position as "soldier who guards the Emperor's home", which may go far against the husband's exalted social status in the original poem, thus cutting off the imagination and interpretation of "loyalty to husband" being as a metaphor of "loyalty to the emperor". However, this kind of translation exactly fits western readers' favors, which also benefits the spreading of Chinese culture.

Unlike Fletcher, Henry H. Hart was a renowned American sinologist and translator in 20th century, who was devoted

into the study of Chinese culture. His most famous Chinese literary translation works are *The West Chamber—A Medieval Drama* in 1936, and *The Hundred Names: A Short Introduction to the Study of Chinese Poetry with Illustrative Translations* in 1933. According to the forward that British sinologist E.T.C. Werner wrote for Hart in *A Chinese Market: Lyrics from the Chinese in English Verse* (1931), Hart was especially proficient in Chinese poetry as he once studied Chinese language and culture in China and the United States for a long time. Besides, in the book of *A Garden of Peonies: Translations of Chinese Poems into English Verse* (1938), Hart himself names China as “Mother China” and shows his sincere love for Chinese poetry as he thinks Chinese poetry is written on the thinnest paper with the softest pen, and as a record of the Han people’s life and culture, it is more immortal than poems carved on stone.

Hart deems that many beautiful poems in China are still unknown to western readers, with only one thousand being translated into foreign languages and most of them are repetitive translations (Hart, 1933, p.1), so it demands a great deal for translating and spreading. With the increasing exchange between China and America that time, Hart hopes that the translation of these poems being neglected can help young western people to understand the culture and customs of ancient China and appreciate its charm and elegance (Hart, 1933, p.3). Therefore, with sufficient knowledge of Chinese, Hart chose to reduce the difficulty of western readers’ aesthetic reading of Chinese classical poetry and improve their reception and interpretation of Chinese culture. For example, he translated the title directly as “A LETTER”, adjusted the structure of some lines for better understanding and used many straightforward words like “Pearls!”, “So!”, “Alas” and “with a sign” so as to unfold the implicit expression in the original poem and describe a married woman with much more colorful inner activities under his own imagination and creative translation, thus a passionate “chaste wife” image comes into being. But with the influence of western cultural traditions, even though there is one mental process “may he live ten thousand years” presented to show the good wishes or as an indicator of loyalty, the political theme is also apt to be ignored as many participants like “I” and “you” and other conjunctive elements are added.

## V. CONCLUSION

This study is the application of transitivity in SFL into two English translations of Zhang Ji’s *Jie Fu Yin*. It has been found that in different options of transitivity (process types, participants and circumstances), Fletcher, as a British diplomat, favors an implicit way to express the wife’s refusal to the pursuer in an English-poem style with less material and mental verbs, only to lay stress on relational and verbal processes to emphasize their relations and her loyalty to husband, thus recreating a calm and tender image of a mature “chaste wife”; differently, Hart, as an American sinologist, focuses on the expression of emotions and the reader’s receiving, with much more mental processes and sensors, relational processes and carriers to show the complicated consciousness flows and emotional changes of a married woman, even including her illusion and desire on the pursuer, thus representing a more enthusiastic even passionate image of a young or inexperienced “chaste wife” in a relatively direct and explicit way. Moreover, both translations reveal the theme about love of the original poem, but failing to present the political theme (Zhang’s refusal to Li Shidao, and his loyalty to the emperor) because of the misunderstanding of the most important participants *qie* and *jun*, the different language-using habits in constructing circumstances, and the careful considerations for implied western readers.

It should be noted that the focus of this comparative study is on the images of a “chaste wife” projected through the linguistic choices and clues in translations, not equivalent to the images actually formulated in the mind of the implied readers, which may be of interest for further studies. Since translating is a process of making choices, and the translator needs to select “among a certain (and very often exactly definable) number of alternatives” (Levý, 2012, p.72), this study not only investigates the different linguistic choices of translators under the basis of transitivity in SFL, but also explores their consequences and contextual considerations. At the same time, it demonstrates that a text can be better understood in terms of its context. Although there are some deviations and differences between the translations and the original poem, in a certain field, tenor or mode, each of the translations can be one kind of classic poem going beyond nations and times.

## APPENDIX. JIE FU YIN AND TWO TRANSLATIONS

节妇吟 寄东平李司空师道——(唐) 张籍

君知妾有夫，/赠妾双明珠。/感君缠绵意，/系在红罗襦。/妾家高楼连苑起，/良人执戟明光里。/知君用心如日月，/事夫誓拟同生死。/还君明珠双泪垂，/恨不相逢未嫁时。

The Retort Courteous——W. J. B. Fletcher

That I am duly married, assuredly you know, /And yet to me you send as gift twin pearls of mystic glow. /For this your kind devotion my heart must grateful be. /I hung within my red silk vest those pearls I might not show. /My dwelling is a lofty one within a stately dome. /My husband is a soldier who guards the Emperor’s home. /I recognize your love as bright as shining sun or moon. /Yet swear to serve my husband, and never from him roam. /With your bright pearls I send again twin tears as crystal clear, /Regretting that we had not met ere Fortune placed me here.

A LETTER——Henry H. Hart

Pearls! /Twins pearls, /Bright gems of ocean, /To me, a married woman /You have sent! //Yet you know I have a husband /In attendance, in the palace, /On the Lord of Light, the Emperor-- /May he live ten thousand years! //But the

thought that prompted you /I cherish /In my bosom with the jewels. /There they've lain hidden till this hour, /In the soft, enfolding silk. //I know--you need not tell me--/That your thoughts are pure as moonlight, /Or as the glowing sun at midday /Overhead. //My home lies noble on its gardens. /There the marriage oath I've taken, /And I ever shall be faithful, /Even past the gates of death. //So!-- /The twin pearls are in this letter. /I send them back to you in sadness /With a sigh. //If you look closely, you'll find with them /Two other twin gems lying, /Twin tears fallen from my eyelids, /Telling of a breaking heart. //Alas, that perverse life so willed it /That we met too late, after /I had crossed my husband's threshold /On that fateful wed- ding day!

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