

**Maghiel van Crevel and Lucas Klein eds.**  
***Chinese Poetry and Translation: Rights  
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Translating poetry is a widely acknowledged bugbear, if not something unachievable. Translating poetry between two languages with huge linguistic and cultural distances even adds to its difficulty. The notorious complexity of the Chinese language makes translation activities into and from it one of the most challenging tasks. Nevertheless, the many contributors to the groundbreaking anthology *Chinese Poetry and Translation* have bravely taken on this challenge and revealed to us that behind the arduousness of this task lies a fruitful outcome: a fascinating diversity of perspectives for us to view not only literature-related activities, but probably all aspects of the human society at large.

As its editors Maghiel van Crevel and Lucas Klein explain, the anthology is compiled around three key concepts: poetry, translation, and Chinese, any one of which would fit for a chunky monograph (or many monographs). As pointed out by Crevel and Klein (14), in Chinese culture, the number three possesses special meaning. In Daoism, the Dao has given birth to One, the One has given birth to Two, the Two to Three, and it is the Three that gives birth to everything. In this sense, Three is magically interrelated with the Universe. This embodiment echoes with Crevel and Klein's ambitious aspiration for the full coverage of discussions relevant to the three concepts, regardless of subgenre, historical scope, language orientation, or methodological foundation.

The wide coverage of topics unsurprisingly causes trouble when it comes to grouping the articles. To cope with that, Crevel and Klein once again resort to the magic number: the anthology is divided into three parts, respectively focusing on the translator's task, theoretics, and impact. "Part One: The Translator's Task" comprises four articles, starting with Jenn Marie Nunes's rationalization of her somewhat radical renditions of the works of China's phenomenal female poet Yu

Xiuhua. She is in a disadvantaged position — from a rural area, poorly educated, and physically challenged — but she defiantly writes to challenge the patriarchal hierarchy that causes her sufferings. In this case, the translator deliberately adopts a queer-feminist approach that evokes discomfort from the audience to foreground the existence of the translator, and to give recognition to the vulnerability and marginalized identity of the author. Following Nunes’s evocative confession, Eleanor Goodman introspects how her own encounters with English poets have shaped her translation of Chinese migrant worker poets Zheng Xiaoqiong, Wang Xiaoni, and Zang Di. The next two chapters divert to classical poetry: Joseph R. Allen elaborates his explanatory translation of *Shijing* by means of multivocal commentaries, with the purpose of overcoming the spatial and temporal distances and bringing as much of the subtlety of the book to the audience as possible. Wilt L. Idema puts emphasis on the formality of classical Chinese poetry, addressing issues in its translation that can be applicable to any language with the example of a poem by Tang Dynasty poet Han Shan.

“Part Two: Theoretics” consists of five chapters. In Chapter 5, Nick Admussen challenges the traditional textual-equivalence regulation of translation and points out that the interrelationship between the source and target texts could transcend words and become physical and emotional. Next, Jacob Edmond uncommonly addresses the importance of theory in translating poetry, exemplifying with the influence of Russian Formalism on Bei Dao’s translation of Boris Pasternak. Zhou Min investigates the translation of Chinese *ci* poetry, a kind of classical lyric poetry, and argues that different from the usual lack of narrativity in lyrics, the translation of *ci* requires the translator to mentally immerse into the text and construct his or her own narrative, which can serve as the evidence of the translators’ subjectivity. Nicholas Morrow Williams zooms in on the contradictory meanings of the very title of *Li Sao*, suggesting that the translation should preserve the polysemy of the title. Finally, Chapter 9 touches on both the modern and classical poetry of China. By revealing the intertextual authenticity in both ancient *Shijing* and contemporary migrant worker poetry, Lucas Klein explores the meaning of translation in a wider sense.

“Part Three: Impact” comprises six articles. First, Liansu Meng reveals the female translator Chen Jingrong’s agency in her renditions of Baudelaire in an eco-feminist way, which is ahead of her time. Christ Song follows with an examination of the translations of Western surrealist poet Ronald Mar in Hong Kong and how the translation is intertwined with the evolving social context. Tara Coleman then directs attention to the background of Taiwan, examining its modernist

post-war poetry, which is characterized by the juxtaposition of images from the perspectives of intralingual, interlingual, and cultural translation. Following Meng and Coleman's contribution, Joanna Krenz delves into the discourse on poetry and poetics in mainland China today through the polemic among Wang Jiaxin, Bei Dao, and Yi Sha on the translation of Celan. Moreover, Rui Kunze explores the role of trauma in the translation of Liao Yiwu's poem. Maghiel van Crevel then wrap up the book with an exhaustive analysis of the Chinese-to-English translation of multiple author poetry anthologies.

The brief summary of the fifteen articles in the anthology indicates that it is indeed an amazingly comprehensive selection, covering translations both in and from the Chinese language, Chinese poetry from different historical periods and regions, contributors of varying ethnicities, and a wide range of topics. This makes the book an ideal introductory and informative volume for those seeking an introduction to Chinese poetry and/or its translation. The avant-garde studies also bestow on the book high reference value for academics. My only quibble would be the organization of these articles. It seems the tripartite scheme did not work out well. It is, however, doubtful that a perfect categorization scheme exists. Considering the complexity of each focus, the articles under each topic seem to lack a close connection with each other. Take Part One, for example. The abrupt jump from modernity (Chapters 1 and 2) to antiquity (Chapters 3 and 4) may cause bewilderment and affect the reading experience. Finally, it should be noted that, although the editors claim that the concept of "China" in this book is more of a linguistic and cultural presence than a "political entity" (14), the topic selection still does not completely dispense with the Western lens. Readers must therefore approach the text with a dialectical view.

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