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The Poetry of Han-shan: A Complete, Annotated Translation of Cold Mountain by Robert G. Henricks; Han-shan

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SCRIPT AND WORD IN MEDIEVAL VERNACULAR SINITIC

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A review of Robert Henricks' annotated translation of the complete poems of Han-shan reveals that the author has almost completely ignored what is undoubtedly the key to understanding these poems accurately, namely the high proportion of colloquial and vernacular elements in the language used to write them. This obliviousness to the distinctive lexical and grammatical features of Medieval Vernacular Sinitic stems partly from sheer unfamiliarity with the language, but it is also due to overemphasis on script at the expense of word. Fixation on the sinographs not only presents virtually insurmountable obstacles to the correct interpretation of MVS texts, it often seriously interferes with sinological readings of works written even in Classical Chinese, which is itself far from being exclusively monosyllabic. Unsegmented, equidistantly spaced strings of graphic forms merely give the appearance that languages written in the Chinese script consist entirely of monosyllabic words. Nothing could be further from the linguistic truth.

NO ONE WHO IS UNFAMILIAR WITH and insensitive to the nuances of Medieval Vernacular Sinitic (MVS) should attempt to translate the poems of Cold Mountain. For if there is anything distinctive about this collection of poems, it is the conspicuously large number of vernacularisms they contain. It is surprising, therefore, that Robert Henricks undertook a complete translation of the Cold Mountain collection. Not only does Henricks reveal himself at every turn to be thoroughly unschooled in the special qualities of MVS, he actively endeavors to forestall criticism of his inadequacies in that regard by denying that the Cold Mountain poems are vernacular at all. In the entire book, his only general comment on the subject is the following (p. 12): "... Han-shan is a very odd poet. First of all, as is well known, on occasion he uses colloquial expressions and phrases in his poems, which would rarely be done in 'good' verse. (Though, in my opinion, too much has been made of his use of the colloquial: many—I would say most—of his poems are written in good, classical Chinese.)" This is simply not true. The poems of Cold Mountain are *not* written in "good, classical Chinese" and Henricks' failure to recognize that is the most glaring deficiency of this volume.

Review article of: *The Poetry of Han-shan: A Complete, Annotated Translation of Cold Mountain*. Translated and annotated by ROBERT G. HENRICKS. SUNY Series in Buddhist Studies. Albany: STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK PRESS, 1990. Pp. x + 486.

In his annotations, Henricks mentions only two of the most obvious examples of T'ang vernacular usage. In note 1 to poem no. 63, he notes (following Iritani and Matsumura) that *ti-i mo* 第一莫 is a strong prohibition, but awkwardly overtranslates this as "the first thing is never..." *A-tu wu* 阿堵物, the well-known euphemism for money from the *Shih-shuo hsin yü* (*A New Account of Tales of the World*) 世說新語, following Richard Mather, is commented upon in note 4 to poem no. 183. Aside from these two annotations, there is no other reference to colloquial or vernacular usage by Cold Mountain. Of course, it would not have been necessary for Henricks to highlight every occurrence of MVS, so long as he provided accurate translations. The problem is that he does not recognize hundreds of non-classical usages in these poems and consequently mistranslates so often that the value of this volume as a guide to understanding and appreciating Cold Mountain is seriously vitiated.

The following are typical examples of Henricks' failure to comprehend the special qualities of MVS:

No. 111, l. 8: *huo-ch'ü* 活取 "to revive and retrieve." *Ch'ü* is a verbal suffix that functions the same as *che* 著 in Modern Standard Mandarin (MSM). See Chang Hsiang, *Shih tz'u ch'ü yü tz'u-hui shih*, 300–301. The correct translation is therefore "to revive."

No. 138, l. 1: "This is the son of what clan?" 個是誰家子? *Chia* 家 is a pronominal suffix (Chang Hsiang, pp. 342–44) and *tzu* 子 signifies a "person." Hence, "who is this fellow?"

No. 148, l. 7: *he-teng se* 何等色 “what type or sort?” *He-teng* is a very common question word in MVS (Chang Hsiang, p. 108). Thus the proper rendering of *he-teng se* is “what sort?”

No. 158, l. 1: *k'e-k'e p'in* 可貧 “poor, with just enough to get by.” *K'e-k'e* is an adverb meaning “quite” (Iriya Yoshitaka, p. 33) or “precisely” (Chang Hsiang, p. 74). The correct translation of *k'e-k'e p'in* is therefore “rather poor.”

No. 161, ll. 7–8:

I'll let you have your one thousand
sages appear,
For I have the true Buddha inside.
任你千聖現
我有天真佛

“I'll,” “your,” and “inside” are superfluous. *Jen-ni* 任你 is an unusual variant of *jen-t'a* 任他 “let,” the force of *-ni* and *-t'a* in these expressions being very weak (Iriya Yoshitaka, p. 131). The translation of Burton Watson (no. 89, ll. 7–8) is to be preferred:

Let a thousand saints appear before
me—

I have the Buddha of Heavenly Truth!

No. 165, l. 1: *Hsien-tzu* 閑自 “at my leisure, in person.” Henricks must have confused the modifying suffix *-tzu* with the reflexive pronoun *tzu*. Cf. Iriya Yoshitaka, p. 146; Red Pine, no. 165, l. 1; and Burton Watson, no. 88, l. 1. The correct translation of *hsien-tzu* would be “idle” or “aimless(ly).”

No. 184, l. 2:

Head and cheeks drooping down like
a timid, stuttering bumpkin.
頭頰底絮澀

The most egregious error in this line is the rendering of *ti* 底 as “drooping down.” It means neither “drooping” nor “down” but “somewhat” or “how” (interrogative of degree; Chang Hsiang, pp. 101–3). *T'ou-chia* 頭頰 denotes just “cheeks” and, in the present context, connotes “appearance.” Cf. *t'ou-ching* 頭頸 “neck,” *t'ou-hsiang* 頭項 “nape,” *t'ou-fa* 頭髮 “hair,” and so forth. *Chih-se* 絮澀 is a stative verb implying “rough” or “doltish,” not two adjectives and a noun as given by Henricks. I shall cite several more examples of this type of error where a single MVS or Classical Chinese expression is split up and translated syllable by syllable as though it were two or more words.

No. 247, ll. 5–6:

I asked about the method for
becoming an immortal;
He replied, “The way—to what does
it compare?”
余問神仙術
云道若為比

There are no major problems with the first line of this couplet, but there are two in the second. The verbal suffix *-tao* 道 is extremely common in MVS words for speaking and hearing, as it still is—though somewhat less frequently—in MSM. Cf. no. 33, l. 1 where Henricks misunderstands *wen-tao* 聞道 as “I’ve heard it said” instead of “I’ve heard.” *Jo-wei* 若為 is an MVS question word meaning “how?” (Mair, *Tun-huang Popular Narratives*, 27–28). The second line, therefore, should be interpreted as “He replied, ‘How can it be compared with anything else?’”—the last three words of the English sentence being added for syntactic clarity. Henricks’ jarring interpolation of “The Way” is directly the result of his inexperience in dealing with MVS.

No. 273, l. 1: *ch'ang wen* 常聞 “I’ve often heard.” As in MSM, *ch'ang* is here equal to 嘗, which is merely an indicator of past tense, hence the correct translation is “I’ve heard.”

No. 289, l. 9: “In this way you can, inside, produce and attain the true lord.” 可中作得主. Henrick’s reading is an embarrassment that has no relationship to what Cold Mountain wanted to say and, furthermore, clashes directly with his own following line: “This is knowledge that has *no inside* or out” (emphasis added). *K'e-chung* 可中 is a good MVS word expressing a supposition (Chiang Li-hung, pp. 396–97; Chang Hsiang, p. 84). *Te* 得 is the potential complement, exactly as in MSM. And “true” is a figment of Henricks’ imagination. The correct interpretation of this line, then, is “if one can be independent” or, more literally, “if one can be his own master.” In the context of the poem as a whole, this refers to the ability to form one’s own judgments about the contents of the sutras.

The above are samples of the kinds of problems that constantly arise in Henricks’ translation as a result of his disregard of MVS grammar and lexicon. The list could be multiplied scores of times, but the perils that come from ignoring vernacular language at the expense of undeviating adherence to the surface signification of the individual sinographs should be apparent by now. This leads, however, to the next category of defect in Henricks’ translations, namely, the compulsion to render separately the individual syllables of polysyllabic words. There are literally hundreds of examples of such mistranslations covering the pages of this book. Here are several that are representative:

No. 23, l. 6: *liu-lien* 留連 “linger and tarry.” Choose one or the other; Red Pine, Burton Watson, and Wu all render this suitably as “stay.”

No. 49, ll. 1–2:

Once I sat down facing Han-shan;

And I've lingered and tarried here
 now thirty years.
 一向寒山坐
 淹留三十年

Again Henricks uses the same three English words (though in a different tense) for one Sinitic word. There are other problems with his reading of this couplet. *i-hsiang* 一向 most likely does not mean "Once . . . facing" but "all along" or "a period of time that seems to pass quietly" (Chiang Li-hung, pp. 369–70; Chang Hsiang, pp. 374–75). *Tso* 坐 does not refer specifically to sitting down in meditation, as Henricks indicates in a note, but to locating oneself or taking up residence in a certain place. Compare Gary Snyder's (no. 10) eloquently plain rendition: "I have lived at Cold Mountain/These thirty long years." In the next line of Henricks' translation, *tso-lai* 昨來 does not mean "Yesterday I came" but simply "yesterday."

No. 168, l. 2: *wu lan-ke* 無闌隔 "Neither railings nor screens." Cf. Red Pine, no. 167, l. 2 who properly has just "no partitions." The tendency for Henricks to overtranslate is also evident in line 15 of this poem: "Carefully, carefully—think it over real well" 好好善思量. If Henricks insists on "carefully" for *hao-hao* 好好, he should at least spare us the plodding repetition. His "real," furthermore, is totally superfluous and unaesthetic. I much prefer Red Pine's straightforward "think about this well."

No. 186, l. 6: *shu-k'uo* 疏闊 "vague, distant, and imprecise!" Enough already! Through logorrheic magic, Henricks is able to conjure up three nearly synonymous English words out of his thesaurus where only one is called for by the Chinese. I suggest "obtuse."

No. 245, ll. 1, 3: *jung-lan* 慵懶 "lazy and lax"; *shih-yeh* 事業 "trade or career." Choose one for each, please.

The impulse to translate every character as if it were a word should be rigorously restrained by language teachers at each step of the beginning levels of instruction in MSM. Unfortunately, Henricks is not alone in arriving at scholarly maturity with this bad habit still firmly entrenched. This is, in fact, a prevalent disease among Sinologists. I call it "graphemic fixation." Instead of trying to understand the import of Chinese words and sentences, scholars hallucinate on the intoxicating shapes of the script. Too often, the effusions they spew forth have precious little to do with the texts they are professedly explicating or translating.

Even in Classical Chinese, there are thousands of *lien-mien-tz'u* 聯綿詞 ("polysyllabic words"), including rhyming and alliterative binomes, that must be treated as single words and not, unwittingly, reduced to

the separate values of their constituent graphs. Anyone who doubts this should take a peek at Chu Ch'i-feng's 朱起鳳 1934 *Tz'u-t'ung* 辭通 [*Interchangeable Orthographies*] (Shanghai: K'ai-ming) which includes thousands of cases of well-known Classical Chinese expressions that were written with as many as ten or even more different sets of sinographs. This proves irrefutably that Chinese words and Chinese characters are not coterminous. One of the great virtues of Axel Schuessler's *A Dictionary of Early Zhou Chinese* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1987) is that it has a clear concept of word apart from graph, in spite of the fact that it deals with an archaic stage of the written language.

If bronze inscriptions and Classical Chinese texts throughout history are full of polysyllabic words, how much more so are the vernacular and semi-vernacular texts whence so many of these expressions are derived. Certainly, a great deal of MVS crept into the works of the great T'ang masters, as Hu Shih 胡適 demonstrated in his celebrated *Pai-hua wen-hsüeh shih* 白話文學史 [*A History of Vernacular Literature*], so we should be heedful of words instead of merely graphs even when reading "good, classical Chinese"—which Cold Mountain is not! The conscientious philologist should always strive to grasp the message of the *language* that lies behind the *script* used to record it.

The poems of Cold Mountain are not written in pure vernacular. Indeed, I believe that it is virtually impossible to write any pure, vernacular Sinitic language in characters. Witness the extreme difficulty of trying to wrench Cantonese, Taiwanese, or even Pekingese onto the page without resort to some sort of phonetic crutch. Still, the Cold Mountain poems have a greater percentage of vernacular elements than those of almost any other T'ang poet except perhaps his spiritual brother and early T'ang predecessor, Wang Fan-chih 王梵志 ("Brahmacārin" Wang). The relatively high incidence of vernacularisms in their poetry is not surprising in light of the Zen atmosphere in which much of it was written. We may recall the Zen *yü-lu* 語錄 ("recorded discourses") as being among the most heavily vernacular of medieval Chinese texts.

It is odd that so much attention is being paid to Cold Mountain these days. We now have two complete English translations of all his poems (Red Pine in 1983 and Henricks in 1990). He has attracted such luminaries as Arthur Waley, Gary Snyder, and Burton Watson. There are also versions in French, Dutch, German, Japanese, and other languages (see Henricks, p. 459, for bibliographical references). Brahmacārin Wang, too, is now ripe for at least one complete translation into English (see Mair, "Tun-huang Popular Literature," end of

section V, for the reasons why). The attention paid to Cold Mountain and Brahmācārin Wang is out of all proportion to the literary merits of their poetry. And, in both cases, we are in all likelihood concerned with a category of versification rather than the works of an identifiable poet. In any event, the biographical information contained in their poems reveals marked inconsistencies that indicate composite authorship (cf. Stalberg), and there is precious little else to go on in any attempt to resurrect those who were responsible for composing these verses.

The proposed dates for Cold Mountain vary wildly, from the late sixth century to the late eighth and or early ninth century. Even the famous preface of Lü-ch'iu Yin 閻丘胤, which established the primary legend about Cold Mountain, is so fraught with contradictions and inconsistencies (see Hu Shih, pp. 173–78; Burton Watson, pp. 8–9; Wu, pp. 397–98; and Henricks, pp. 4–5) that we can put absolutely no faith in it. For all we know, Cold Mountain and his sidekick, Shih-te 拾得 ("Foundling"), may be fictitious. According to legends, the latter was ostensibly a cook in a temple and the former was no more than a lunatic hanger-on at the temple. Supposedly, Cold Mountain had inscribed his poems, numbering about 300, on trees, rocks, and the walls of homes and offices, while Foundling is said to have scribbled a few on the shrine of the local earth god.

I am suspicious of the number 300 for the poems that are attributed to Cold Mountain. This immediately leads me to think of the number of poems in the *Shih-ching* 詩經 (*Book of Odes*), which is also 300. Even more curious is the fact that in both cases 300 is merely a round number. The *exact* number of poems in both the Cold Mountain collection and in the *Book of Odes* is 311. It is beyond belief that Cold Mountain wandered around the Kuo-ch'ing ssu 國清寺 ("Temple of National Purity") on T'ien-T'ai 天台 ("Celestial Terrace") Mountain until he got to 311, and then stopped. Rather, the compiler must have wanted 311 unconventional Taoistic and Zen poems to act as a foil for the prototypical Confucian repository of verse. He may have picked up a portion of these poems from strange places, including the mouths of temple cooks and hangers-on as well as previous uncirculated collections of local versifiers. But to get exactly 311 poems, he or some later redactor probably would have had to write a considerable number himself. Perhaps, not entirely incidentally, the number of poems attributed to Brahmācārin Wang is also somewhat over 300 and the most famous collection of the elite poetry of the T'ang dynasty, the *T'ang-shih san-pai shou* 唐詩三百首

(*Three Hundred T'ang Poems*), obviously also clings to the same talismanic figure, in spite of its being compiled by a self-confessed Taoist in the Ch'ing period.

I am similarly suspicious of Cold Mountain's alleged literacy. On the face of things, it does not seem likely that someone of his status would have been able to write even these less-than-polished pieces. Furthermore, while there is some indication of schooling in the poems, there is also sharply contradictory evidence of a disdain for learning (e.g., nos. 80, 129, 207—for the sake of convenience, I use the poem numbers given by Henricks, although his translations must be consulted with caution). Of course, somebody had to write down these poems, but I doubt seriously that it was Cold Mountain, whoever he may have been.

In my estimation, the most credible candidate for authorship of the bulk of the Cold Mountain poems is their compiler, Tao-ch'iao 道翹, a name that apparently has hitherto not been proposed as a possible author. Tao-ch'iao is cited in the Lü-ch'iu Yin preface as the compiler of the poems. Given the lack of literary polish in both the poems and the preface, Tao-ch'iao, an undistinguished local monk who seems not to have fully mastered Classical Chinese, would be an eligible sort of person for the task. Not being completely conversant with Classical Chinese, the compiler/author (?) of the Cold Mountain poems would have had a natural predilection to rely on MVS. In no. 286, he readily admits that he is ignorant of the basic, formal rules of prosody and that he uses common language. Several of the poems in the Cold Mountain series actually do approach pure MVS and would be intelligible today to someone who knows only written MSM but has no acquaintance with Classical Chinese. An excellent example of this type of poem is no. 212.

To provide some sort of justification for his collection, Tao-ch'iao may have created Cold Mountain, Foundling, and Feng-kan 豐干 ("Broad Shield"), the person who allegedly introduced them to Lü-ch'iu Yin, as characters in a poetic fable. He may even have borrowed Lü-ch'iu Yin, the presumed Prefect of T'ai-chou 台州, to lend legitimacy to his humble enterprise.

To return to the question of why Cold Mountain and Brahmācārin Wang are receiving so much attention these days, there would seem to be two chief factors. First is the charm that Zen has held for many Western intellectuals and artists during the past generation. Since Cold Mountain and Brahmācārin Wang are as close to being Zen poets as one can find in China, it is natural that Zen aficionados in the West and in Japan would pay homage to them. The serendipitous reemergence of Brahmācārin Wang's oeuvre among the Tun-

huang manuscripts is also cause for rejoicing for those who appreciate his values.

The second factor in the Cold Mountain-Brahma-cārin Wang “boom,” and the one that accounts for my own deep interest in these poems, is their preservation of vernacular elements of normative spoken Sinitic from the T’ang period. This is no small treasure, considering the fact that vernacular Sinitic had, for the most part, been ruthlessly expunged from the written record in China before the second millennium began. As accomplished poets in the traditional mode, Cold Mountain and Brahma-cārin Wang were far inferior to hundreds of other well-known T’ang figures. It is ironic, therefore, that Henricks overlooks the vernacular aspects of Cold Mountain’s poetry in so blatant a fashion. Henricks’ disregard of the vernacular may be justly characterized as blatant, because Iriya Yoshitaka, probably the greatest authority in the world when it comes to reading T’ang vernacular, worked on these poems more than thirty years ago. Henricks is aware of Iriya’s study of Cold Mountain but inexplicably omits specific references to it in his annotations. This is regrettable, because close consultation of Iriya’s *Kanzan* could have rescued him from many of the pitfalls described at the beginning of this review. Henricks does pay due homage to the Zen in Cold Mountain’s poems (he states clearly and candidly in the opening sentences of his preface that this was the chief motivation for undertaking this sizable translation project). Unfortunately, he appears to have been oblivious to their true linguistic significance.

Since we are now blessed with two complete renditions of the Cold Mountain collection, it is my duty to say something about them by way of comparison. After having carefully read all of the poems in both volumes against the originals, I have no hesitation whatsoever in declaring that, as poetry, the translations of Red Pine are far superior to those of Henricks. What is even more unexpected is that Red Pine is generally more accurate than Henricks. This is remarkable in light of the fact that Henricks is a well-known Sinologist and Red Pine is someone who claims to be neither a poet nor a Sinologist. I had a brief encounter with Red Pine once when he came down off the mountain for a few days in Taipei. Apparently he is now living in a cabin he built for himself somewhere in the Sierra Nevada—at least that is what he told me last year he was planning to do after spending nearly two decades in Taiwan.

The mysterious excellence of Red Pine’s translations of Cold Mountain may be attributable to the fact that he is better attuned to the vernacular because his knowledge of Chinese was acquired primarily through

discourse with latter-day mountain men in the mold of Cold Mountain himself. Henricks, on the other hand, has a fatal attraction to the characters, so he ends up missing a lot of what is really going on in the poems. It is rather amazing that, even with such distinguished predecessors as Arthur Waley, Gary Snyder, Burton Watson, and Wu Chi-yu having worked on these poems before him, Henricks’ versions invariably pale in comparison. This is true of virtually every poem, but I shall give just some random samples.

No. 15: Father and mother left me plenty of books,
Fields and gardens—I long now for
nothing more.

My wife works the shuttle—her loom goes
creak! creak!

Our son is at play—his mouth babbles wa!
wa!

Clapping my hands, I urge the flowers to
dance;

Propping my chin, I listen to the birds
sing.

Who can come and admire [this scene]?
The woodcutters always pass by.

父母續經多
田園不羨他
婦搖機軋軋
兒弄口啞啞
拍手催花舞
捨隨聽鳥歌
誰當來歎賀
樵客屢經過

Hsü-ching 續經 is admittedly an obscure expression, but there is no reason to bring up “books” in this setting of bucolic bliss. I suspect that *ching* here has somewhat the meaning that it does in *ching-ying* 經營 (“[to carry on] an occupation or trade”) or *ching-shih* 經世 (“to manage affairs” or “to develop the land”). In line 3, either “loom” or “shuttle” should be dropped. In line 4, *nung* 弄 seems to break the usual caesural pattern by linking up with *k’ou*, as *yao* does with *chi* in the previous line. Henricks probably derives “can” of line 7 from *tang* 當, but this is an impossible reading since *-tang* is an interrogative enclitic, as correctly pointed out by Iriya, p. 25. In the same line, the brackets should be omitted if Henricks wishes his translation to be accepted as literature rather than Sinological exegesis. *Lü* 屢 in the last line means “frequently, often,” not “always.”

We may now compare Henricks' translation with several others. First, Waley, no. 1:

From my father and mother I inherited land
enough
And need not envy others' orchards and
fields.
Creak, creak goes the sound of my wife's
loom;
Back and forth my children prattle at their
play.
They clap their hands to make the flowers
dance;
Then chin on palm listen to the birds' song.
Does anyone ever come to pay his respects?
Yes, there is a woodcutter who often comes
this way.

Next, Watson, no. 1:

My father and mother left me a good living;
I need not envy the fields of other men.
Clack—clack—my wife works her loom,
Jabber, jabber, goes my son at play.
I clap hands, urging on the swirling petals,
Chin in hand, I listen to singing birds.
Who comes to commend me on my way of
life?
Well, the woodcutter sometimes passes by.

Finally, Red Pine, no. 21:

my parents' endeavors were many
I don't covet others' fields and groves
my wife works her loom clack clack
our baby his mouth gu gu
I clap and urge the flowers to dance
prop up my chin and listen to birds
but who comes to commend me
woodcutters often come by

* * *

No. 36: In the house to the east there lives an old
broad
Who's been wealthy now four or five
years.

In former days she was poorer than me;
Now she laughs at my lack of coins.

She laughs at me for being behind;
While I laugh at her for being ahead.

If we don't stop laughing at each other,
The east will again be the west.

東家一老婆
當來三五年
昔日貧於我
今笑我無錢
渠笑我在後
我笑渠在前
相笑儻不止
東邊復西邊

"Old broad" decidedly has the wrong tone for *lao-p'o* 老婆 in line 1. The same is true of "lack of coins" for *wu ch'ien* 無錢 in line 4. *San-wu* 三五 in line 2 does not require the annotation Henricks gives it, both because this is a standard locution in Sinitic and because a direct translation as "three or five" would be unacceptably unidiomatic in English. The objective case first-person pronoun at the end of line 3 is poor English grammar. In the last line, *fu* 復 means not "again" but "in turn." Compare this with Watson, no. 23:

In the house east of here lives an old woman.
Three or four years ago, she got rich.
In the old days she was poorer than I;
Now she laughs at me for not having a penny.
She laughs at me for being behind;
I laugh at her for getting ahead.
We laugh as though we'd never stop:
She from the east and I from the west!

and Red Pine, no. 40:

an old lady to the east
got rich a few years ago
before poorer than me
she laughs that I'm broke
she laughs that I'm behind
I laugh that she's ahead
we laugh like we won't stop
from the east and from the west

* * *

No. 39, ll. 7–8:
He retreated, returned to the nest from
whence he had come,
But his wife and his child no longer
recognized him.

卻歸舊來巢
妻子不相識

“Returned” should be dropped as a first step in repairing this terribly prolix and unpoetical couplet. Henricks mistakenly leaves out “old” when he should omit “come” from the English translation since *-lai* 來 is not a separate word but a suffix for *chiu* 舊 (see Morohashi, *Dai Kan-Wa jiten*, 30249.327). In the last line, *ch'i-tzu* 妻子 may be either “wife and children” or just “wife.” Compare this with Watson, no. 83, ll. 7–8:

But when he hurried home to his nest,
He found that his wife no longer knew him.

and Red Pine, no. 43, ll. 7–8

returning to his old nest
his wife and children don't know him

* * *

No. 43, l. 4: *I-chung hao mien-shou* 一種好面首. “And of the same kind their good looks.” *I-chung* is a modifier meaning “similar(ly)” (Chang Hsiang, pp. 378–79, cf. MSM *i-yang* 一樣); there is no need to bring in “kind.” Henricks specifically says that he translates *hao mien-shou* as “good looks,” but this leaves the line in the awkward situation of having no verb. *Hao* (“to like”), naturally, is the verb. Hence, Red Pine, no. 47, l. 4: “their love of face the same.”

* * *

No. 70, ll. 3–4, 7–8:

Pigs don't seem to mind human stench,
And men—to the contrary—say pig meat
smells sweet.

...

If they never ate one another,
Lotus blossoms would sprout in water that
bubbles and boils.

豬不嫌人臭
人反道豬香

...

彼此莫相噉
蓮花生沸湯

Henricks’ “to the contrary” is logically contradictory to the previous line. Cold Mountain’s original, however, is not, since *fan* 返 here means “in turn” or “for their part.” Line 8 is grossly overtranslated, especially the part with “water that bubbles and boils.” Henricks’ comment on this line (“I assume this is Han-shan’s way of saying this is never going to happen”) underestimates

the sincerity of Buddhist vows. The lotus blossoms symbolize rebirth in the paradise of Amitābha which Cold Mountain clearly hopes will replace the scalding broth. Compare this with Red Pine, no. 72, ll. 3–4, 7–8:

pigs don't mind that humans stink
humans say pigs smell fine

...

when neither eats the other
lilies will bloom in boiling soup

* * *

No. 82, ll. 1, 8:

At present I have but one coat;

...

Throughout the whole year I've just got this
one.

我今有一襦

...

長年只者是

“At present” is too strong for *chin* 今; at best it should be rendered as “now.” *Che* 者 is a demonstrative pronoun equal to *che* 這 in MSM. Compare Red Pine, no. 82, ll. 1, 8:

I have a coat

...

year long only this

* * *

No. 95, l. 1: *Hung-hung mai yü jou* 嘖嘖買魚肉. “Midst the clamor and din, you buy fish and meat.” The meaning of *hung-hung* is difficult to determine, but Henricks’ note on the term only obfuscates it further: “Iritani and Matsumura (*Kanzanshi*, p. 133 [this should be p. 134]) follow Irida [*sic*] in reading *hung-hung* as ‘power’ or ‘authority’ (*wei-shih*). I can make no sense of that reading. *Hung* by itself means ‘singing’, and it seems clear to me that *hung-hung* represents the noise made at a Chinese market by buyers and sellers.” Because there are so many errors and misstatements in this note, I am compelled to rectify some of them. In the first place, if Henricks had ever visited a Chinese market and witnessed the blustery bargaining that invariably goes on there, he would readily comprehend what Iriya means. Iriya is also cited by Iritani and Matsumura as offering *go-kigen* 御機嫌 (“coaxing”) as an interpretation for *hung-hung*. In *Kanzan*, p. 178, he

further suggests *hanna-uta* 鼻聲 as another probable alternative. Henricks is wrong to say that *hung* by itself means “singing.” Perhaps he was prompted to hazard that guess by the expression *lo-hung* 囉嘖, which is the name of a tune title. My own surmise is that *hung-hung* may have some relation to *hung-hsiao* 嘖嘖. Both Morohashi, 4058.1, and *Han-yü ta tz'u-tien* 漢語大詞典 [Unabridged Dictionary of Sinitic], 3.454b give this word as a Buddhō-Taoist term for cheating others (something that went on in old Chinese markets constantly—from both sides). Compare Henricks with Red Pine, no. 95, l. 1: “they haggle over fish and meat.”

* * *

No. 96, ll. 5, 8:

They throw away gold—to the contrary,
shoulder off weeds;

...

You'll still have trouble turning it into one
unified lump.

棄金卻擔草

...

成團也大難

“To the contrary” is an overtranslation for *ch'üeh* 卻 which is merely a lightly suggestive conjunctive particle closely linked to the following verb (Chang Hsiang, pp. 66ff.). “Shoulder off” is hard to make sense of without rereading several times or looking at the Chinese text. “Still” is a jarring, clumsy effort to duplicate in English the force of *yeh* 也, which is actually very slight and nuanced. The “one unified lump” at the end falls so flat that the reader is left deflated and dispirited. Compare Red Pine, no. 96, ll. 5, 8:

they abandon gold and shoulder straw

...

it's hard to make a ball

* * *

No. 120, ll. 1–3:

This is what poor scribe?
Who repeatedly comes to be tested at
Southern Court?

Years? Possibly thirty or more. . . .

個是何措大
時來省南院
年可三十餘

The strained syntax of lines 1 and 3 are due to the mistaken notion that following Chinese word order will somehow make one's translation sound more poetic. Henricks apparently understands *shih-lai* 時來 as *shih-shih lai* (“comes all the time”), but *lai* seems to be more closely connected to *shih*. In classical usage, *shih-lai* signifies “when the right moment arrives” (*Chung-wen ta tz'u-tien* 中文大辭典 [Unabridged Dictionary of Chinese], 14222.124–26) and, in colloquial usage, it may mean “all along” (cf. *i-lai* 一來 in MSM). Iritani and Matsumura, p. 167, take it as referring to the arrival of the time for the posting of the new assignments by the Bureau of Appointments (in the Ministry of Personnel), which was located in the Southern Court. *Hsing* 省 in the same line refers not to examinations but to the worried candidate's visits to the Southern Court (Liu Chien, p.23, n. 13). Compare Red Pine, no. 119, ll. 1–3:

who's this would-be great
always coming to check South Hall
surely over thirty

* * *

No. 158, l. 6: “Sitting with village friends, stomach always painful and sore.” 坐社頻復痛. Iritani and Matsumura, p. 225, have an excellent note on *tso-she* 坐社 which includes an exact reference to Tun-huang manuscript S5813, showing that it refers to an individual's monthly duty at the village shrine. I have no idea how (or why) Henricks derives “painful and sore” from *t'ung* 痛. Compare Red Pine, no. 161, l. 6: “my belly aches at the shrine.”

* * *

No. 161, ll. 1–2:

In my house there is one cave;
In the cave there is not one thing.

余家有一窟
窟中無一物

This is a prosaic manner of describing something so ethereal as Cold Mountain's metaphor for the heart-mind (cf. no. 168, ll. 1–2). The wooden repetition of the initial “in,” the expletive “there,” and especially the cardinal number “one” in both lines makes Henricks' translation incredibly dull. Taking numbers too literally is a bad habit of Henricks (there are 14 entries under “ten thousand” in his index, “tears flow down in two steams” [no. 49, l. 8], there is “one drop of water”

in the ocean [no. 258, l. 3], and so forth). Compare Red Pine, no. 163, ll. 1–2:

I have a cave of my own
a cave with nothing inside

* * *

This list of gaucheries could be extended *ad libitum*. In fact, only rarely in the entire volume does one meet with an inspired line of poetry. Therefore, if I were asked to recommend either Henricks' *Han-shan* or Red Pine's *Cold Mountain* to someone who is incapable of reading MVS himself but who wishes to get a taste of this unusual brand of T'ang poetry, I would definitely choose the latter.

The sole area in which Henricks wins out over Red Pine is in having a more elaborate scholarly apparatus. Henricks provides a substantial introduction (although John Blofeld's introduction and Red Pine's preface offer their own sort of appeal and insight) and has more extensive annotation and commentary for the poems (though, here again, Red Pine gives succinct and informative notes when necessary). In addition, Henricks includes four appendices (inconclusive internal evidence for the dates of *Cold Mountain*, a checklist of previous English translations by Snyder, Waley, Watson, and Wu plus a finding list for the *Ch'üan T'ang shih* [*Complete T'ang Poems*] 全唐詩, a novel index to themes, plus very useful indices [Chinese and Sanskrit] of Buddhist terms, metaphors, and stories, as well as a list of 28 metaphors/stories associated with specific texts). The book concludes with a bibliography and a helpful general index. The latter, however, is not without certain idiosyncratic features, e.g., adjective-noun combinations are usually listed under the adjective instead of the noun, hence "beautiful brow, beautiful maid, beautiful men, beautiful pearls, beautiful sing-song girls, beautiful woman/women, beautiful youth."

This is a hefty volume for a poet whose collected works occupy less than 50 pages of the *Complete T'ang Poems*. The large bulk of Henricks' book gives some indication of how much he has added to the poems themselves. The size is a bit deceptive, however, because about a third of the volume consists of empty space. We may contrast Henricks' ponderous tome with Red Pine's svelte opusculum which weighs in at less than 200 unpaginated pages. The brilliant design of the latter permits the translator to provide, on facing pages together with his notes, the Chinese texts of all the poems.

I have detailed a rather sizable number of instances (and it would have been easy to find many more) where Henricks' translations are either disappointingly inaccurate or woefully infelicitous. It has been no pleasure to catalogue such shortcomings, but I have done so because I believe their prevalence in the writing of a reputable scholar with many publications to his credit points to a serious drawback in current American Sinological transliteration, namely, overemphasis on the surface signification of the morphosyllabic *sinographs* instead of upon the *words* they represent and the *spirit* the words were intended to convey. The gravity of the problem is evident in the utter inability of many Sinologists to distinguish between word and character. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that Chinese characters are neither coequal to nor coeval with Sinitic languages, but are only one possible vehicle for conveying the sounds and ideas of those languages.

Surely we must be scrupulously attentive to the concept of word when we attempt to make sense of MVS. Even when reading such ancient Classical Chinese texts as the *Tao Te Ching* 道德經 (*The Classic Book of Integrity and the Way*), we must take care not to be so captivated by the seductive *sinographs* that we lose sight of the words that underlay them. Otherwise, we are liable to end up with a lot of complicated, long-winded, mesmerizing, pseudo-Sinological close-sesame.

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