

Honorable Mention (LT)

WU Yujuan

Master of Arts in Language Studies
(Pedagogical Linguistics stream)

黃鳥歌

翩翩黃鳥

Yellow birds are dancing

雌雄相依

In lovers' company.

念我之獨

Alas, I'm lonely.

誰其與歸

Who will be back with me?

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Commentary

For me, the yellow bird is the most attractive and interesting imagery of this poem. It is believed that this poem was written by a Korean poet at first and then it was translated into Chinese later. Sometimes it is hard for me to understand the literature from other countries because of historical and social and cultural differences. In this literary work, it is the yellow birds that enable me to have a deep understanding of the theme for the reason that yellow birds also occur in Chinese poems again and again, especially in *The Book of Songs*. There are some poems which mention yellow birds.

鄭《箋》云：倉庚仲春而鳴，嫁娶之候也。

梁·蕭子顯《春別》：幽宮積草自芳菲，黃鳥芳樹情相依。

孔穎達《疏》：“黃鳥於飛，喻女當嫁。”

The connotation of yellow birds may vary in different contexts. These poems indicate that the yellow birds are the symbol of love and marriage in ancient China and thus, the symbolism of yellow birds in China is similar to that in Korea. The experience of some Chinese poems about yellow birds enables me to understand the context of this poem. When I read it, it seems that I can see a lonely man, who has lost his beloved wife, watching the excited yellow birds dancing with their lovers. He is deeply grieved but the yellow birds are joyful. There is an obvious contrast between the depressed man and the cheerful yellow birds. The yellow birds have beloved companions while he is lonely. If I know nothing about the symbolism of yellow birds, I may not understand the meaning that the poet wants to convey. The yellow birds perhaps can be substituted by other subjects that symbolize love or marriage. That may be not that important and the most important thing is that these subjects should share the same connotation in the culture of both China and Korea. In a word, yellow birds are not real yellow birds and they convey the meaning of love or marriage in both Korean culture as well as Chinese culture.