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**CONTEXT, TRANSLATOR AND HISTORY:
A STUDY OF THREE TRANSLATIONS OF *LUOTUO XIANGZI* IN THE USA**

LI YING JUN

MPHIL

LINGNAN UNIVERSITY

2007

**CONTEXT, TRANSLATOR AND HISTORY:
A STUDY OF THREE TRANSLATIONS OF *LUOTUO XIANGZI* IN THE USA**

**by
LI Ying Jun**

**A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Philosophy in Translation**

Lingnan University

2007

ABSTRACT

Context, Translator and History: A Study of Three Translations of *Luotuo Xiangzi* in the USA

By

Li Yingjun

Master of Philosophy

Three different English translations of Lao She's (老舍) *Luotuo Xiangzi* (骆驼祥子) were marketed in the USA from 1945 to 2005. What are the major historical occurrences and trends from the late 19th to the early 21st century that define the contexts of these translations? Beginning with an analysis of the stylistic features of each translation, the present study explores how each of the three translators and the corresponding historical context impacted on the production of the translated text, its marketing orientation and its reception in the USA.

With a comparison of the three translated texts and their meta-textual features, the study seeks to reveal the attitude of each translator and their translation strategies, which are, to a large extent, decreed by their historical times. The first translation *Rickshaw Boy* (1945) was a market success because it met the requirement of popular fiction and echoed the prevailing preconception about China immediately after the WWII. The second translation *Rickshaw* (1979) was an academic production associated with the revival of Sino-US diplomacy in the 1970s. The third translation *Camel Xiangzi* (1981), which was produced in China but published in both China and the USA, originated from China's wish to be better known by the world; while the reprint of *Camel Xiangzi* in 2005 by a Hong Kong publisher represented a new era when Chinese cultural products were turned into profitable commodities in the global cultural market.

The production and circulation of the three translations can be studied as historical texts themselves. The three translations, which are connected to all the great events since WWII, show the change of the Chinese image in the American media. They also shed light on the evolution of Chinese literary studies in American academia, which has gradually become an independent discipline during the same period.

DECLARATION

I declare that this is an original work based primarily on my own research, and I warrant that all citations of previous research, published or unpublished, have been duly acknowledged.

Signature of Student

()

Date

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Since my supervisors and I had different expectations toward this Master's thesis, the process of writing it was harsher than I had been prepared for. I would like to thank Prof. Chan, among other things, for his suggestions and encouragement, which supported me all the way, particularly in the last few months. And I am grateful for Dr. Chiu, my co-supervisor, who went through each version of my thesis, especially for her efforts in polishing the version submitted for the oral examination.

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Chapter One

Introduction

My interests in *Luotuo Xiangzi* and its translations began with my encounter of *Rickshaw Boy*, which was the first translation of *Luotuo Xiangzi*. This translation was a huge success in the American market and later found to be unfaithful. The stories surrounding the translations of *Luotuo Xiangzi* are interesting cases for study in several other ways. The Chinese original boasts of three versions of English translations available in the US market in different times, spanning a period of some sixty years. Each was rendered in a distinctive social, political, and economic environment, and the translators incorporated their own interpretations into their works. These interpretations of the translators, the environment that each translation found itself in, and the very fact that this novel was repeatedly translated all seem to call for attention.

By contextualizing the three versions of English translations in their specific social contexts, this study explores the impact of history on the production and shaping of translation, as reflected in the specifics of the translation, publication and reception associated with each of the three versions. It also examines the role played by the translators, which again reflect the impulses of their historical periods. It would be found that these translations are helpful tools with which to delve into American perception of China and its culture, and the evolution of the image of China from 1945 to 2005.

Translation studies in China have traditionally focused on translated literatures of western origins, with an emphasis on the impact of these literatures on Chinese modernization during the first half of the 20th century. There are few studies that attempt to analyze the impact of translated Chinese literature on their target languages and cultures. Among these works about translated Chinese literature, some are bibliographical

in nature, providing statistics and titles about works published (e.g. Ma Zuyi 1997), others emphasize the spread of classical Chinese literature (e.g. Huang Mingfen 1997), which seem to be still designated with a higher prestige in western academia. As for modern Chinese literature, scattered comments, which are mostly on their literary merits, are usually provided in the preface or afterword of anthologies of modern Chinese literature in English translations. Still they do not offer substantial in-depth analysis of the interaction between the target readers or cultures and these translations.

The present study endeavors to present both facts and analysis. On the one hand, it gathers historical facts about the publication of three translations of *Luotuo Xiangzi* and the individuals involved, and about the various social contexts that these translations found themselves in. On the other hand, it attempts to connect the translations to the historical events and reveal the causal relationship among them. This study can be read as a history of the three translations, or as an epitome of the history of America-China cultural exchange. The three translations under study have stemmed from the same original, yet each seems to have assumed a distinctive identity of its own, which is obvious in the way the main text is rendered and also in the arrangement of meta-texts like preface, introduction, book covers, illustrations, etc. A comparison of the translations will disclose the change of attitude toward the original novel at different times, the response toward the reality described in the novel and the American perception of China with reference to the historical development of the country on the other side of the Pacific Ocean.

1.1 “Context” and Others

Academic papers normally demand accurate definition of the key terms used. So I

would like to name the special signification of “context” in this study since “context” serves to link the other two major concepts given in the title of this thesis—translator and history. After a brief review of the scope of “context” in translations study, I will then discuss but briefly the term “history”.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary provides a convenient starting point. The basic meaning of “context”, as given in the dictionary, involves “the parts of a discourse that surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning”. This is very close to what Eugene A. Nida has understood as “context”. For him and the scholars before, research on translation is a sub-discipline of linguistics which serves to explain satisfactory translations; context is important to the translator for an accurate understanding of a text and thus facilitates the process of translating (Nida 2001, 160-69). In his search for dynamic equivalence in translation, Nida notices that many problems emerge in the process of translating due to the distance between the source and target cultures, as well as the differences between the source and target languages (Nida 2000, 130).

Even though he still takes the study of translation as a way to improve the quality of translation products, Nida starts to incorporate the idea of culture into translation studies. As a result, translators are advised to take into account both linguistic and cultural factors while they translate. This being so, the scope of context to be examined for translators includes cultural background, in addition to the concern about the variation between languages. In the present study, however, our understanding of the term “context” goes beyond linguistic and cultural discrepancies between the source and target languages; it points directly to the “cultural turn” that occurred in the 1970s and that led to a redefinition of the discipline in terms of scope, aims and perspectives.

With James S. Holmes's paper "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies" delivered in 1975, research on translation gains new dimensions. Holmes talks of a division between "pure" and "applied" translation studies. While "applied translation studies" inherit the traditional approach of providing aids for translation practice, "pure translation studies" focus on discovering, for instance, how translations are processed in the human brain and how translations are accepted in the target literary systems. Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), as a sub-discipline of pure translation studies, became the prominent trend in the following decade largely through the publications of Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury. Even-Zohar proposes the notion of "polysystem" which places translations in target literary systems and explains the life of these translations in target cultures. Toury insists that translation is governed by a set of norms that are social-cultural specific.

The development mentioned above actually takes the idea of "context" in translation studies to a new frontier. "Context" now refers to the whole system of the target literature, which may resist or respect the translated literatures, depending on the socio-cultural circumstances. With the expansion of scope in translation studies, "context" assumes greater significance as an active element that conditions the reception of translations.

In the 1980s and 1990s, functional-oriented DTS was in the mainstream and scholars such as André Lefevere and Susan Bassnet examined the interaction between culture and translation. Borrowing concepts and theories from cultural studies, some scholars engaged themselves in finding out the social effects of translation and its ethical and political implications (Venuti 2000, 333). "Context" in these studies equals the entire target society, and under some circumstances, history is also included in it. The term "culture" is normally used to signify the social background of a certain translation. To

give greater clarity to “culture”, Lefevere provides the sub-categories of “patronage, ideology and poetics”. There are further discussions of the connotations of, and divisions within, each of the three sub-categories.

Since the present study is historical in nature, I have chosen not to equate “context” with “culture” in order to avoid generalizations or theoretical complications, although my definition of “context” here overlaps largely with that discussed above. I would like to present a history of these three translations of *Luotuo Xiangzi*, as far as available materials and information will enable me to explain them. The context of each translation consists of the available materials and information surrounding it. In other words, the components of “context” in the present study are tangible factors such as government censorships, marketing strategies, and prevailing ideologies, all of which are related to the image of China in the American society. “Context” provides an understanding of the specific social background that underlies each translation. The study of each translation in its context is basically a synchronic one. By examining, one after another, the three translations in their immediate contexts, this thesis presents a diachronic research that covers a period of more than sixty years and will make a piece of history in itself.

Apart from context, the translator is another consistent element that impacts on the finished product. For many technical reasons, I have been able to contact only the last of the three translators, Shi Xiaojing (施晓菁), who recounted her experience of translating *Luotuo Xiangzi* nearly thirty years ago for me (see Appendix 1 for a detailed account of the interview). As for my understanding of the two other translators, I have relied mainly on close textual analysis of their translations and on meta-textual information gathered from the covers of their translations, websites and elsewhere.

As can be seen from the title of the present study, history is the third key term that

will repeatedly appear in the thesis. By history, I mean the collection of past events which are in one way or another related to the translations under study. Admittedly, I have ignored a great part of what happened between, or within, the USA and China during the past sixty years. So with reference to the subjects under study, I have tried to construct a history that includes the political, cultural and ideological contexts that set the background for, and in fact give shape to, each of the translations.

1.2 Lao She and *Luotuo Xiangzi*

Lao She (老舍) is the pen name of Shu Qingchun (舒庆春). “Qingchun” in Chinese means “celebrating the spring”, a fitting name for Lao She, who was born in the spring of 1899, in Beijing¹. Later he changed his name to Shu Sheyu (舒舍予). Even though Lao She was a Manchu, sharing the same racial origin with the ruling class of the Qing Dynasty, his family was no better off than the poor. He did not belong to the aristocracy, and his father was a guard of the Imperial Palace. What made his childhood even more poverty-stricken was the untimely death of his father in 1901, when the League of Eight Foreign Imperialist Nations conquered Beijing with the excuse of repressing the Boxer Rebellion². Since then, the family had to live on the meager pension from the government and money earned from the laundry work done by Lao She’s mother. The young Lao She

¹ Beijing is a city with a long history. After the founding of Republic of China in 1911, Nanjing became the capital of the new government instead of Beijing, which has been the capital for many dynasties. In 1928, the name of Beijing was changed to Beiping, which remained the official name of this city until 1949. When the People’s Republic of China decided to choose Beiping as its capital in 1949, the old name, Beijing was restored. To many foreigners and in many English books, this city was known as Peking, referring to the same name Beijing but transcribed differently in accordance with an older system of Romanization. As the 29th Olympics will be held in Beijing, Beijing becomes better known and more acceptable than Peking in the world. In the present paper, I will use Beijing to avoid any confusion.

² The Boxer Rebellion started in 1899 as a rebel against foreign churches in China. With the support of Empress Dowager Cixi, the rebels entered Beijing in 1900 and considered all foreigners their enemies. Being threatened, the league of eight imperial nations invaded Beijing, which forced Cixi and the Emperor Guangxu to escape to Xi’an.

finally decided to go to Beijing Teacher's College, where tuition and living expenses were paid for.

Upon graduation in 1918, he was appointed as the principal of an elementary school, and received quite a decent salary. Now well off and free most of the time, the young Lao She spent his spare time drinking and gambling until a severe disease almost claimed his life. When he recovered from that disease, he realized that his life-style needed to be improved and quit his first job. He found another job that paid less but demanded more effort. He also started to study English and got to know a British missionary who recommended him to become a lecturer of Chinese at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. From 1924 to 1929, Lao She read a lot of English novels in London and took up writing as a way of overcoming his loneliness and homesickness.

It happened that his writings were well received in China, and by the time he returned to China in 1930, his novels and short stories were welcomed by magazine editors. However, he was not sure if writing would bring him a stable income, so he chose to teach in Qilu University in Jinan City, and later in Qingdao University in Qingdao City, both in Shangdong Province. He kept writing in the summer holidays, and, in 1931, he married Hu Jieqing (胡絮青), who was to bear him four children. The period from his marriage to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War (1937) was Lao She's most prolific period as a novelist. Lao She wrote the best works of his lifetime: *Lihun* (1933; subsequently translated and published as *The Quest for Love of Lao Lee* in 1948), *Luotuo Xiangzi* (1936-37; later translated and published as *Rickshaw Boy* in 1945), and dozens of short stories.

From 1937 to the end of the Sino-Japanese War in 1945, Lao She's life was consumed by patriotism. When the Sino-Japanese War broke out in Beijing, he was worried about

his country. As a writer, he took it as his responsibility to advocate the anti-Japanese cause through his writings since he knew that his weak body was of little use in the battlefield. However, his family, now with three young children, could not travel with him, and he felt perturbed about having to leave them in northern Shangdong, which was then threatened by Japanese occupation. It was a hard decision for him, but he finally traveled alone to the south and stayed in Wuhan City to promote the anti-Japanese cause. During this period, he attempted to write in popular genres with the hope of reaching a wider audience. For instance, he produced lyrics for folk artists and plays for teahouses, all intended to comfort and encourage the masses in a time of national crisis.

In 1946, Lao She's life underwent an abrupt change. He was invited by the American Department of State to lecture for one year in the States, presumably due to the success of *Rickshaw Boy*, an English translation of *Luotuo Xiangzi* rendered by Evan King and published in 1945. In the ensuing four years, he stayed in the States and advanced his literary career. He arranged the translation of his previous works including *Lihun* (*The Quest for Love of Lao Lee*, 1948) and *Sishi Tongtang* (*The Yellow Storm*, 1951), apart from a new book *Gushu Yiren* (*The Drum Singers*, 1952) written in the same period. He took part in the production of a play adapted from his famous novel *Luotuo Xiangzi*.

In 1950, he was reunited with his family in Beijing after a short stay in Hong Kong and found a new nation in the making. He was amazed by the changes. With the same enthusiasm he had shown in promoting the anti-Japanese War effort, he devoted himself to working for a better society. He engaged himself in writing plays since he believed it was most effective in influencing the masses (Hu 1980, 478). He was very successful in the first ten years of the era of the People's Republic of China (PRC), and was given the accolade of "People's Artist" in 1951. In 1955, Lao She published *Luotuo Xiangzi* in the

PRC, and he cut off the last chapter and deleted unclean language before it was published.

However, the world views of Lao She had been recognizably transformed since 1955, as expressed in his play *Xiwang Chang'an* (looking westward to Chang'an), in which he exposed and ridiculed the characterization of superheroes in the propaganda literature that the Communist Party had fostered. The superheroes' righteousness is in sharp contrast to the cadres' bureaucracy and empty slogans that were corrupting the government (Vohra 1974, 155-6). In an era of ever-increasing fervor for political revolution in the PRC, Lao She's prestige and literary fame were suspected and suppressed. Then came the Cultural Revolution in the mid-1960s. After being humiliated by the Red Guard, the despondent Lao She drowned himself on August 24, 1966.

With the dying out of the Cultural Revolution in the latter half of the 1970s, Lao She was rehabilitated and a 16-volume collection of his works was published by People's Literature Press in the 1980s. In this collection his most famous novel *Luotuo Xiangzi* was restored to its original length. His works were also included in high school textbooks and have been widely read in the PRC since then. In 1999, a 19-volume *Lao She Quanji* (complete collection of Lao She's works) was published by People's Literature Press.

Luotuo Xiangzi (literally, "Camel Xiangzi") is one of the most frequently read novels of Lao She. It was written between 1936 and 1937 and viewed as the best realistic novels produced in China up to its time (Hsia 1961, 187). Lao She himself considered *Luotuo Xiangzi* as most satisfactory when he finished it (Hu 1980, 69). The novel first appeared in serial form in the magazine *Yuzhou Feng* (宇宙风, the Cosmic Wind) founded by Lin Yutang in September 1936. It was expected to conclude in one year. Unfortunately, the Sino-Japanese War broke out and the magazine ceased publication. The complete version of the novel was not available until 1939, when it was finally published in book form by

Renjian Shuwu (人间书屋) in Shanghai. In the early days of the PRC, ideological correctness was of primary concern in judging the merits of literary works. As a result, *Luotuo Xiangzi*, when published in a new edition in 1955, underwent serious editing by Lao She himself to meet the ideological demands of the Communist Party. Lao She deleted “certain unclean language” and “digressive passages” (Kao 1980, 37), and notably also the last chapter, in which the main character Xiangzi (祥子) degenerates into a despicable villain. After the Cultural Revolution, *Luotuo Xiangzi* was restored to its original length in Volume 3 of *Lao She Wenji* (a collection of Lao She’s literary works), published by People’s Literature Press in 1982.

Luotuo Xiangzi has been translated into thirty-seven languages by now³. This study will discuss three translations, which are all renditions in the English language and published or sold in the USA. The first translation concerned was rendered by Evan King and published in 1945 by Reynal & Hitchcock in New York, when “the warm feelings towards China, the wartime ally, were still widespread” (Kao 1980, 37). This translation was a huge success in terms of sales. It became the bestseller of the year after being short-listed by the Book-of-the-Month Club in 1945. The success of *Luotuo Xiangzi* led to the publication of other works by Lao She in the USA, including *Lihun* (*Divorce*, 1948) and *Sishi Tongtang* (*Yellow Storm*, 1951), the latter of which was also welcomed by American readers. Since Lao She was invited by the State Department to lecture for one year in the USA and did not leave until 1949, he directed the translations of his works. At the same time, the translations of these works also provoked several arguments between Lao She and his translators concerning issues of fidelity and the translators’ share of royalties.

³ I got this message from a personal visit in December 2005 to Lao She’s Residence in Beijing--a traditional square courtyard now open to visitors. This courtyard is a museum now, with many pictures and items on exhibition that bear witness to Lao She’s life and literary achievements.

As Lao She later found out, *Rickshaw Boy*, the first English translation of *Luotuo Xiangzi* that brought him fame in the USA, was not at all a faithful attempt. When the next translation, *Rickshaw*, appeared in June 1979, the translator Jean M. James claimed in “A Note on the Text and the Translation” that her translation was absolutely faithful, and she went on to specify the unwarranted alterations made by Evan King in the earlier translation⁴. James’s translation was published by the University of Hawaii Press. This was a translation widely used as a textbook for literature classes in American universities. Many other translations in languages other than English were based on the two translations mentioned above—King’s or James’s.

The third translation of *Luotuo Xiangzi*, rendered by Shi Xiaojing, was published in 1981 by Indiana University Press in association with Foreign Languages Press in Beijing. However, this translation did not sell well.⁵ Since Shi based her translation on a censored version of the novel published in 1955 in the PRC, the translation was incomplete without the last chapter. It was a regrettable disadvantage compared to James’s “faithful” translation published two years before. Even though Shi’s book was published jointly by a PRC publisher and an American one, the content and design of the translation betray the fact that its editing was done in the PRC. The translation had a preface by Lao She’s widow, an afterword written by Lao She in September 1954, and in the end an essay in which Lao She explained the process of writing this novel. The preface and afterword

⁴ James stated that Evan King had “cut, rearranged, [rewritten], invented characters, and changed the ending.” The invented characters include the girl student and one pocket Li. James also commented that King had “added considerable embellishment to the two seduction scenes”.

⁵ Professor Lee Ou-fan stated in one of his articles that he had been personally involved in the publication of translations of Chinese Literature in Indiana University Press in association with FLP (see p562, *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol.44, No.3, 1985). I wrote an email to ask him about the sales of these books in The USA. In his reply on April 28, 2007, Lee said they did not sell well and referred me to John Gallman, the director of Indiana University Press at that time, for details. I was able to get an email reply from Gallman on June 5, 2007, who has retired since 2000 and did not have up-to-date information about the sales of *Camel Xiangzi*. However, he forwarded my question to the current director, Janet Rabinowitch, who has not responded to my question yet.

were pervaded with proletariat ideology. The illustrations inserted in the translation also portrayed the protagonist Xiangzi as a real hero. This partly accounts for the poor sales of the translation in the USA in the early 1980s.

However, the fate of Shi's translation seems to have changed in the new millennium with a reprint in Hong Kong. In 2005, the Chinese University Press in Hong Kong published *Camel Xiangzi* as the tenth book in their Modern Chinese Literature/Translation series. This reprint includes the translation of the last chapter not found in the 1981 edition. It has attracted international readers through online bookstores. The publisher claimed that this translation aims to bridge the gap between Chinese and Western cultures (Lao She 2005 trans. Shi, vii).

The three English translations of *Luotuo Xiangzi*—by King, James, and Shi, respectively—are the focus of the present study. As can be seen from the discussion above, my approach is not fundamentally theoretical; instead, it endeavors to produce a history of three English translations of the same novel in the USA. This history of three translations will not only reveal the various influences of context on translation, and but will also shed light on American perception of China and on the development of Chinese literary studies as an academic discipline over the last sixty years.

Chapter Two

Style, Translator, and History

2.1 Introduction

The story of *Luotuo Xiangzi* is set in pre-Japanese War Beijing. It is about Xiangzi, a young man who has come to Beijing from the countryside and struggles to own a rickshaw of his own. His dream is to earn an independent living in Beijing and he spares no pains to realize his dream. With his robust body and strong will, he possesses all that are required to realize this humble wish. However, every time he is close to materializing his dream, something unfortunate happens and unsettles him. He has to start anew and deny himself all the comforts in life to save even more money. When for the third time he is deprived of his rickshaw, because of the death of his wife Huniu (虎妞) in childbirth (he needs money to bury her), he gives up whatever he still has in terms of self-respect. He follows the track of other rickshaw pullers: as long as there is money in their hands, they will not work but spend the money drinking, gambling, smoking or sleeping in a brothel. The story seems about to end here, but not without another twist of fate. One day Xiangzi runs into a former employee Mr. Cao (曹先生), who expresses the wish that Xiangzi return to work for him. In Xiangzi's mind, Mr. Cao is as wise and kind as Confucius. He is so delighted that he resolves to restore his righteousness and frugality, and to marry Xiao Fuzi (小福子), a poor girl who loves him and whom he also loves. But when he finds out about her death in a whorehouse, Xiangzi loses all the illusions that he has for this world and throws himself into an even more corrupted life.

In the following, we will analyze *Luotuo Xiangzi's* stylistic features as realized in the original and examine their rendition in the three translations under study. Style is a

personal thing; but after studying the background of Lao She and of each of the translators, we may see that history also plays an intricate role in the formation of their styles. Whenever possible, we will also analyze the style as displayed in other works by the three translators. However, our main focus will be on the three translations, from which I would like to draw tentative conclusions about the translators' styles. Their styles can largely be explained with reference to the translators' educational backgrounds and career paths, which are in turn made clear by the socio-political setting.

2.2 Lao She's Style

Lao She is a renowned master of style who comes out particularly impressive when characterizing the rhythm of life in old Beijing. The Beijing vernacular and the eloquence of *Luotuo Xiangzi* certainly account for part of the literary excellence in this novel. Lao She's language is closely related to the culture that nourished him. He was born and raised in Beijing. Even today, local Beijing people are still known to be a talkative lot. Lao She loved *xiangsheng* (相声, comic dialogue), a traditional Chinese talk-show that has entertained the masses in Tianjin and Beijing for centuries. It is usually performed by two stand-up comedians who engage in dialogue and tell funny stories about ridiculous personages. Lao She grew up in a poor Manchu family and watched *xiangsheng* performed in teahouses and on other occasions since a young age. The skillful manipulation of words by those *xiangsheng* players must have contributed to Lao She's stock of colorful and lively language. Watching *Xiangsheng*, together with other folk cultural forms of Beijing, enhanced Lao She's sensitivity to humor or satire as realized in his characters and novels. In real life, Lao She had a reputation for being eloquent and humorous among his friends. While he taught in Qilu University in Shangdong Province,

his lectures and speeches were always well attended for this reason (Hu 1977, 82).

However, as Lao She himself pointed out, *Luotuo Xiangzi* stands out from his previous works. With *Luotuo Xiangzi*, Lao She decided to stop making fun of his characters and adopted a plain and simple writing style. Unless the situation called for satire, he would not write in a humorous tone. Lao She's decision reflected his serious intention: to depict a realistic society and to tell the story of an ordinary, or even underprivileged, citizen. Another noticeable feature of this novel is the Beijing dialect, with which Lao She was most familiar since it was his mother tongue. He did not know that this local dialect could be written down using a set of corresponding Chinese characters until a friend of his showed it to him. He employed this vocabulary of the Beijing dialect to enrich his literary expression (Lao She 1981, 91).

Combined with his accurate depiction of Beijing streets and lifestyle, the novel bears an unmistakably "Beijing flavor". As if writing a play, Lao She habitually creates an complete background for his characters to act and move in; that is, Lao She describes meticulously the physical surroundings in each major event, such as the streets and buildings Xiangzi passes by on a particular day, or the setting for a birthday ceremony, which I will discuss in the next section. The background matter may not necessarily contribute to the development of the plot, but they exhibit the rich cultural heritage in Beijing and add to the Beijing flavor, as well as render the whole story believable.

2.3 A Comparison of the Translators' Styles

In the following I will examine the style of each translator through a comparative reading of the translations. It is impossible to do justice to the full range of Lao She's style in the few paragraphs. However, given the limited space of this chapter, I have

chosen three representative paragraphs to demonstrate the power of Lao She's language. Detailed comparison will reveal the approach adopted by each translator to represent the original, as well as their understanding of and attitude toward the original.

Example 1 Descriptions of Natural Settings

The natural environment in fiction often serves as an indication of the character's inner feelings, and it sometimes contains the author's message. Both can be seen in the following passage:

街上的柳树，像病了似的，叶子挂着层灰土在枝上打着卷；枝条一动也懒得动的，无精打采的低垂着。马路上一个水点也没有，干巴巴的发着些白光。便道上尘土飞起多高，与天上的灰气连接起来，结成一片恶毒的灰沙阵，烫着行人的脸。处处干燥，处处烫手，处处憋闷，整个的老城像烧透的砖窑，使人喘不出气 (Lao She 2005 trans. Shi, 431)。

Lao She personifies every element in this scenery. The trees, leaves, dust, and people who are barely visible—all live in a world of suffering. The relationship between the gusty wind, scorching sun and helpless trees resembles what can be seen in society, where the powerful torture the weak. The willow trees symbolize the oppressed. The sun, the oppressor, scorches their leaves; the wind blows the branches about. The rain is about to pour down, but the willow trees can only wait in horror, helpless. These phenomena, presumably, are observed through the eyes of Xiangzi, and thus they are reflections of how Xiangzi feels about the situation that he is in. The way Xiangzi experiences the external world is tied to his inner feelings, and he is just like the willow trees which have no control over their own fate. Elsewhere Lao She once talked about the significance of describing the physical setting in a novel: “Before we start to describe people's actions, we depict the natural environment. However, these descriptions of the natural environment are not for the sake of realistic presentation; they are intended to intensify

the emotions” (Lao She 1981, 61).⁶ Here in this paragraph the suffering of the willow trees symbolizes the suffering of the poor people like Xiangzi, who has to work even in harsh weather conditions.

The full translation of the paragraph by each of the translators can be found in Appendix 2. Here let us focus on the first sentence and its three different renditions, where we could see the stylistic contrasts between the three translators:

Chinese original	街上的柳树，像病了似的，叶子挂着层灰土在枝上打着卷；枝条一动也懒得动的，无精打采的低垂着 (Lao She 2005 trans. Shi, 431)。
Evan King’s translation	The willow trees on the street were as if they were sick; their leaves, covered by a layer of dust, were curling back on the stems; their branches could not find the energy to make even the slightest movement, and only hung listlessly down toward the earth (Lao She 1945 trans. King, 278).
Jean M. James’s translation	The willows along the street looked sick. Their leaves were all curled up and covered with dust; their branches, barely moving, drooped in utter dejection (Lao She 1979 trans. James, 176).
Shi Xiaojing’s translation	The willows lining the streets seemed sick, their dusty leaves curling, their branches hanging limp and motionless (Lao She 2005 trans. Shi, 430).

Table 1 Comparison of Translation Styles

King’s and James’s sentences are structured in a much more complex manner. King expands every piece of information into a clause, which is linked to the next clause or sentence through various devices, using subordination, past participles, colons, and semi-colons. Shi reduces the number of words used to the minimum by translating several verbal or adjectival phrases into a single adjective or adverb, such as “dusty” for “挂着层灰土”, “motionless” for “一动也懒得动的”, and “limp” for “无精打采”. At the same time, James’s rendition of “无精打采” as “in utter dejection” is more abstract and less

⁶ The original reads: “在描写人的动作之前，先去写景，并不为写景而写景，而是有意的这样布置，使感情加厚。”

vivid when compared to King's "(hung) listlessly" and Shi's "(hung) limp".

Evan King's translation is the most elaborate of the three. He carefully renders every piece of information in the original, but his translation does not capture the original style. In Lao She's original, the short clauses present a quick flow of information and an impressive picture of a blazing summer day. In comparison with the other two translations, King's version seems verbose. For example, it would have sufficed to translate "(柳树) 像病了似的" as "(The willows) looked sick" (as in James) or "(The willows) seemed sick" (as in Shi). But King's translation is "(The willow trees) were as if they were sick". Also in the case of "低垂着", it is obvious that the branches, if hanging, would have to be hanging "down towards the earth", and there is no need to say what is obvious. King's choice of expression is sometimes problematic, too. For instance, "行人" in English can easily be rendered as "passers-by" or "pedestrians". But King takes a detour and renders it as "people who walked the paths beneath it". This may be more accurate in terms of literary correspondence, but at the same time it makes the expression lengthy, going against the style of Lao She's original, which is generally concise and straightforward.

With the examples mentioned above and the occasional addition of phrases that do not exist in the original, such as "like heat becomes visible", the overall style of King departs seriously from Lao She's. The information contained in the original is like wine. When water is added, the taste is diluted although in the end, the same amount of alcohol will still be consumed. Even though King has translated every piece of information in the original, his verbose translation has a flavor different from that of the original.

In sharp contrast to King's translation, Shi's translation is the shortest and reads most economical: the sentences are mostly short, with few conjunctions and subordinate or coordinate clauses. As mentioned earlier, Shi's efficient use of adjectives and adverbs to

some extent gives rise to less complex sentence structures. She sometimes ignores the images in the original, and paraphrases them in idiomatic English, which otherwise would sound awkward to English readers. For example, “马路上一个水点也没有” is translated as “the street was bone dry”. Shi shows her respect for the original by trying to create in the target language a style similar to that of the original. Since her sentences are simpler and shorter than those in the other two translations, her readers may discover in her translation an ease of expression that is close to that of the original.

James’s language has a feature that is uniquely her own. She sometimes chooses abstract vocabulary, such as “utter dejection”, as opposed to “listless” (as in King) and “limp” (as in Shi) in the passage discussed above. Her translation also bears clearly the style of an academic language. She tends to use complex sentence structure. Consider her translation “Then the dust from the dirty streets flew up and joined the dust in the sky to make a poisonous layer of gray dust that burned people’s faces” (Lao She 1979, 176). The long sentence reads a little awkward because there is not even a pause in the middle. James’s translation occasionally chooses more difficult words and expressions. At the same time, the repeated use of “there was/were”, “it was/were” and “of” in her translation also gives a flavor of academic language. Here is another paragraph which is representative of James’s translation:

There were still twenty-four hours in a day but these were not ordinary days. They would not let anyone follow his own *predilections*. Everyone had to do something *in preparation for* the coming holidays. *It was as if* time suddenly had *consciousness and emotions* which made people obey it in their thoughts and *their rush of activity* (Emphasis added; Lao She 1979 trans James, 77).

Example 2 Dialogues

The writing of dialogues is rather difficult due to the differences between the spoken

language and the written language. Sentences in the written language are usually grammatical and complete, while in the spoken languages there may be fragments and ungrammatical constructions. A dialogue becomes vivid when it reflects the character of the speaker. The following is a piece of dialogue between Xiangzi and Huniu, a woman approaching forty who forces Xiangzi to marry her. The passage chosen occurs after Xiangzi is seduced into sleeping with Huniu. Xiangzi regrets the sexual relationship afterwards and leaves the rickshaw agency run by Huniu and her father to work elsewhere. While wishing to put an end to the relationship, he apparently fails. Huniu tracks him down and declares that she is pregnant. This is stunning news and Xiangzi is totally at a loss. Actually, all this is Huniu's scheme to force Xiangzi into marrying her. She has planned it in advance, and Xiangzi, rather bewildered, is deceived, unable to refuse her marriage proposal. What Huniu says in the passage concerned tells us a lot about her character, too. She is a rude woman and at this moment she feels a sense of superiority over Xiangzi, as revealed in her tone. She pretends to be angry when Xiangzi asks her to speak more softly, but the next moment she coaxes and threatens him in turn. Here is the dialogue from the original text:

“别嚷行不行？”祥子躲开她一步。

“怕嚷啊，当初别贪便宜呀！你是了味啦⁷，叫我一个人背黑锅，你也不挣开死××皮看看我是谁！”

“你慢慢说，我听！”祥子本来觉得很冷，被这一顿骂骂得突然发了热，热气要顶开冻僵巴的皮肤，浑身有些发痒痒，头皮上特别的刺闹得慌。

“这不结啦！甭找不自在！”她撇开嘴，露出两个虎牙来。

“不屈心，我真疼你，你也别不知好歹！跟我犯牛脖子，没你的好儿，告诉你！”(Lao She 2005 trans. Shi, 207)

The translations by the three translators can be found in Appendix 3, from which we can see that King's translation is again the longest of the three. Huniu talks in long

⁷ It means “satisfied”.

sentences and King puts into her mouth formal English expressions, such as “there’s no use making it any more uncomfortable for yourself than you have to” (甬找不自在). It is obvious that Huniu, a rude and uneducated woman, is unlikely to have uttered such words. What is more, lengthy expressions are unlikely at a time when people feel agitated. It can be observed from King’s translation that he is very eager to introduce Chinese idioms to his readers, taking pains to introduce every bit of detail. For instance, a minor expression like “背黑锅”, which the other two translators paraphrase as “take the blame” (James) and “take the consequences” (Shi), is literally translated as “carry the black pot” in King’s edition.

The spoken language is harder to master than the written language because of its many varieties and ungrammatical usage. From the translation of this dialogue, one sees that Shi, ethnically Chinese, is more accurate in interpreting the original meaning. In the case of “这不结啦！甬找不自在！”, James totally misunderstands it by translating it as: “This doesn’t settle anything. I’m not looking for ways to upset you”. King only gets it half right with his translation: “This thing isn’t going to end here, and there’s no use making it any more uncomfortable for yourself than you have to”. Shi’s translation appears much better stylistically and is also more accurate in meaning: “Now, that’s better. Don’t make things hard for yourself!” Shi’s translation conveys Huniu’s sense of superiority, and stylistically it is also the best rendition. It is obvious that Lao She’s obscure spoken Beijing vernacular poses some difficulties for non-native Chinese readers, however proficient they might be in their mastery of Chinese. Even though Shi is not a Beijinger either, she could have consulted many local people since she translated this novel in Beijing. This is one possible reason why Shi is generally more accurate in capturing the nuances of meaning and stylistic features in the dialogue.

It has been generally regarded as a virtue for translators to try to translate every bit of information contained in the original. However, if a translator follows the original too rigidly, problems are likely to occur in his or her rendering of either meaning or style, if not both. King's translation, in general, displays problems of style. Occasionally, he also makes mistakes in conveying the meaning, when he follows the original too closely. Here is one example. When Huniu says “你也不挣开死××皮看看我是谁！”, the expression “挣开死××皮” conveys her anger in a vague curse. The literal meaning is of little importance. But King translates it in a rather weird manner as “pull back the skin on your dead jeebah”, which may actually distract readers' attention, and lead them to focus on the literal meaning and ignore the force of the curse. “Jeebah” is the phonetic rendering of a Chinese expression denoting the male sexual organ. Presumably, western readers will take some time to figure out what “jeebah” means. Perhaps having used King's translation as a reference, James makes the same mistake: she translates the sentence as “Why don't you pull back the skin on your dead prick and take a look at who I am!” If we look at Shi's translation, we could not help but admit that it is a job well done. Shi translates the whole sentence as “Who the balls do you think I am anyway?” “The balls” fits the part “挣开死××皮” very well since it also refers to the male sexual organ and is a common enough form of cursing in English: it expresses Huniu's indignation and exposes her rudeness at the same time. The other two translators, by following too closely the original, use a more roundabout expression, and as a result, their renditions read less forceful as curses.

Shi is well-equipped to understand the original for two reasons. First, as mentioned above, she could find help immediately if she ran into any problem with the Beijing

dialect, since she was living in Beijing when she translated the novel⁸. Second, her personal experience also allowed her to be equally proficient in both languages—Chinese and English. Shi is ethnically Chinese though she spent her teenage years in Switzerland. Shi is able to perceive the nuances in the oral language and consequently carry them over into English by employing a functionally equivalent style. In the dialogue quoted above, Shi obviously sees that her translation needs to be brief and “oral” in order to resemble the original in style. Compared with the other two translations, Shi’s dialogue is indeed more conversational, especially with the inclusion of phrases like “No fooling” and “got a thing for you”.

Example 3 Culture-related Items

Translation invariably involves the consideration of cultural elements. *Luotuo Xiangzi* is set in Beijing, a city that has accumulated a rich cultural tradition in the course of its 3,000 years of history as the capital of various dynasties. James remarks in the introduction to her translation that “Lao She was a social novelist, a chronicler of life in Beijing as Dickens was the chronicler of London” (Lao She 1979 trans. James, vii). In this novel, Lao She meticulously depicts aspects of folk culture that belong to Beijing, such as the activities in the Tian Qiao District where folk artists put on their shows, the famous food items that can be found in the streets and restaurants even today, and the birthday and wedding rituals that were practiced in Beijing those days. I have selected for discussion here a paragraph which gives an elaborate account of Liusi’s (刘四爷, Huniu’s father) birthday celebration. Lao She introduces the physical setting of the ceremony and the intricate relationship between the three Liusi, Huniu, and Xiangzi. The Chinese original goes as follows:

⁸ See my interview with Shi Xiaojing in Appendix 1.

第二天早上，棚匠来找补活。彩屏悬上，画的是“三国”里的战景，三战吕布，长坂坡，火烧连营等等，大花脸二花脸都骑马持着刀枪。刘老头子仰着头看了一遍，觉得很满意。紧跟着家伙铺来卸家伙：棚里放八个座儿，围裙椅垫凳套全是大红绣花的。一份寿堂，放在堂屋，香炉蜡扦都是景泰蓝的，桌前放了四块红毡子。刘老头子马上教祥子去请一堂苹果，虎妞背地里掖给他两块钱，教他去叫寿桃寿面，寿桃上要一份儿八仙人，作为是祥子送的。苹果买到，马上摆好；待了不大会儿，寿桃寿面也来到，放在苹果后面，大寿桃点着红嘴，插着八仙人，非常大气。

(Lao She 2005 trans. Shi, 313, 315)

The full translations are given in Appendix 4. This paragraph can be divided into two parts, the second part starting from “刘老头子马上教祥子去请一堂苹果”. The first part describes the process of decorating the mat shed and installing the furniture. The second part depicts Xiangzi running in and out to set things up properly at the order of Liusi and Huniu.

In the first part, all the three translators show their concern for the Chinese culture depicted in the original text, although they have adopted diversified strategies in dealing with culture-related items. King again pays attention to every single detail. He adds a summary of the plot of the stories from *The Three Kingdoms*. It goes as follows: “there were pictures of war scenes from “The Three Kingdoms”: the three battles in which Liu Pei fought Lü Bu; the fighting in the hillside where Chao Yun saved the defeated Liu Pei’s son; the debacle in which Liu Pei’s encampments were destroyed by fire, and from which the hero himself escaped only by the grace of a miracle; and other stories happening” (Lao She 1945 trans. King, 190). James, on the contrary, does not even bother to give the names in the stories: “The paintings showed famous battles from the period of the Three Kingdoms” (Lao She 1979 trans. James, 123). Shi notes the names of the story and translates the content of the painting in this way: “They depicted the three battles against Lü Bu, the Changban Slope, the burning of the united forces’ camp and other scenes from

the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*". Although James does not provide as detailed information on the stories as King is, she is more meticulous in introducing the customs or rituals, and she accurately describes the setup of tables and chairs for the birthday celebration.

When we read the translations of this passage by King and James, several sharp contrasts stand out. These contrasts give the impression that James is deliberately trying to translate differently from King. King introduces the stories from *The Three Kingdoms*, but James uses the vaguest generalizations. Whereas King simply follows the original text and introduces the furniture used in the ceremony, such as the eight tables and their covers, an altar with its censers and candelabra of cloisonné and four red rugs, James pays attention also to the setup of the furniture: "There were eight tables inside the mat shed. The cushions on the chairs and stools all had large red flowers embroidered on them. An altar was set up in the central section" (Lao She 1979 trans. James, 123).

In the other parts of their translations, there are similar contrasts. King preserves the literal images in the original when rendering Chinese idioms and popular sayings, such as "carry the black pot", as mentioned in the previous section; however, James—who in translating other parts of the novel is faithful to Lao She's original—seldom cares for the original images contained in the Chinese idioms and goes for English equivalents. For example, the Beijing slangy expression "炸了酱", which appears at the beginning of chapter 7, is rather freely rendered by James as "the end of", in contrast to King's literal translation "fried in bean sauce". In the translation of names, the two also adopt totally opposite strategies. King keeps the meaning of the Chinese names and does not use transliteration; he uses "Happy Boy" for "祥子" and Little Lucky One for "小福子". James preserves the sound of the names with no consideration for the meaning in most

cases: “祥子” and “小福子” are translated as “Hsiang Tzu” and “Hsiao Fu Tzu”, respectively.

Shi’s translation again presents itself as more reliable in the interpretation of culture-related items. For example, “大花脸” and “二花脸” are the names of two main roles in Beijing opera. They represent different kinds of facial make-ups on stage. King and James understand these names literally: King translates them as “the big painted faces and the small ones” and James takes them to be “all the warriors, great and small”. In Beijing opera, actually “大花脸” refers to a high official who sings most of the time, and “二花脸” denotes a martial character who dashes around energetically all the time. Shi’s translation reads, “the figures were made up as if on the stage”, which is better than calling these characters “the big painted faces and the small ones” (King) or “the warriors, great and small” (James).

To conclude, King tends to elaborate on the original. This is perhaps because in King’s time, the general readership basically knew nothing about China except for the impression they may have gained from Pearl S. Buck’s novels about the vulgar farmers and their backward rural life. It is thus necessary for King to help his readers along by providing some explanations. James seems determined to come up with a translation different from King’s. Perhaps due to her interest in art⁹, James pays special attention to the design and setup of the ritualistic items described in example 3 above, and she has no interest in detailing the stories as King does. Shi’s translation is brief but she is good at grasping the most important details in the original.

All these culture-related items provide only the background for the action, so they

⁹ James received her Ph.D. degree in Art History three years after her translation of *Luotuo Xiangzi*. The title of her thesis is “An Iconographic Study of Two Late Han Funerary Monuments”. She has continued to publish papers on ancient Chinese art history since that time.

should not occupy centre stage. While King takes pains to narrate the interesting stories in *The Three Kingdoms* and James meticulously describes the particulars of the ceremonial setup, Shi is more concerned about portraying the relationship between the characters in this passage. Huniu is here trying to show her father that Xiangzi knows how to behave in a decent manner, so she asks Xiangzi to buy some gifts for her father at her own expense; Xiangzi, basically out of his mind after his money is taken away by the evil detective, does not give much thought to what he is doing and just follows the commands of Huniu and his father. Shi emphasizes in the second part what Xiangzi does and Huniu's suggestion that they obtain some peaches and longevity noodles, while King and James focus only on the finished setup of the ritual and ignore the fact that it is Xiangzi who keeps moving in and out to set things straight. By using "Xiangzi" as the subject of action, Shi emphasizes the importance of Xiangzi. The following table shows the three translations of the second part of the paragraph in question:

Original	苹果买到，马上摆好；待了不大会儿，寿桃寿面也来到，放在苹果后面，...(Lao She 2005 trans. Shi, 315)
King's translation	When he had bought the apples, they went to work to set them out, and after what was not a very long while the peaches and cakes of longevity that he had ordered arrived too, and they put them in back of the apples. (Lao She 1945 trans. King, 190-1).
James's translation	Hsiang Tzu bought the apples and they were set out nicely. After a short wait the noodles and peaches arrived and were placed behind the apples on the altar. (Lao She 1979 trans. James, 124)
Shi's translation	Xiangzi bought the apples and set them out on the altar. Presently, the longevity peaches and noodles arrived and he placed them behind the apples. (Lao She 2005 trans. Shi, 314)

Table 2 Comparison of Culture-related Items

2.4 Stylistic Features of Each Translation

To use only three selected passages to set in contrast the language style adopted by the three translators may be far from doing them justice, no matter how I strive to be

objective. It is also inevitable that the selections are based on personal preferences and may not represent the full range of stylistic peculiarities in the original and in the translations. Nevertheless, the above analysis represents what I can do within the scope of the present thesis. With regard to what has been discussed above, I would like to draw a few tentative conclusions about the language used by the three translators.

Literary language is different from the spoken language we use in daily conversations, and it is also different from academic writing. The latter two may uphold clarity in meaning as a primary consideration. However, in literature, the language used is as important as, if not more important than, the information conveyed in the writing. If we take this as a criterion for judging the three translations, King's translation is not to be commended. Especially after reading his other writings, we will find that he has not cared much about Lao She's style, since he has simply chosen to rewrite *Rickshaw Boy* in his own verbose style. The same style is manifested in his novel *Children of the Black-haired People*, from which I will cite a rather typical passage:

Nor did she consider herself as being in any way related to the impoverished 'generations of the Locust Grove.' In fact, she despised the whole hapless lot of them. This was not because many of her patrons came from the other side of Persimmon Hollow, from among those who lived in walled compounds and who farmed their own land, or even because she was secure in the patronage of the West Wall families, who were surnamed Li, and some of whom lived in houses built of brick, in brick-walled compounds. Rather it was for very different reasons indeed (King 1956, 15).

Stylistically, this paragraph resonates with many passages in King's translation *Rickshaw Boy*. Here we note a good number of expressions that are tedious in one way or another. The first sentence can well be more effective without "as being"; and the second sentence can do without "the whole hapless lot of them"; and in the third sentence, "from among those who lived in walled compounds and who farmed their own land" can be trimmed down to "who lived in walled compounds and farmed their own land". Another

stylistic feature that is also found in King's translation of *Luotuo Xiangzi* is that the sentences are unbearably long and convoluted, which makes readers lose sight of the train of thought. The third sentence alone is a telling example.

I do not want to be unfair to King since his translation does have its merits. For instance, he has tried his best to introduce Chinese culture to his countrymen. The Chinese idioms are almost always explained, and Chinese cultural items, such as the story on the painted screen mentioned in Liusi's birthday, are carefully introduced. Also, one must not ignore King's painstaking effort to translate every bit of information in the original. Except for the last two chapters in which he rewrote the original substantially, adding in sexual descriptions of his own, elsewhere he is consistently faithful in his rendition of *Luotuo Xiangzi*. Having said that, I do not wish to downplay the effect of the alterations he made, but it is true that King wants to introduce an exotic Chinese flavor into his translation, an act that would attract American readers. That is probably why he has clung to everything Chinese and translated them with great care.

Only half the length of King's translation, James's translation steers clear of being wordy. A Ph.D. student in Art history when she did the translation, James translated this novel as if she were writing an academic paper. Very likely to be influenced by academic reading, she did her translation using a very precise language. However, this strength is also her shortcoming. In trying to be accurate and faithful, she followed the original too closely. Her language is not colloquial enough, nor can it echo the vividness and eloquence of Lao She's original. For example, she renders “马路上一个水点也没有” as “There was not a spot of dampness anywhere in the main street” (see Appendix 2) and “虎妞背地里掖给他两块钱，教他去叫寿桃寿面，寿桃上要一份儿八仙人，作为是祥子送的” as “Huniu gave Hsiang Tzu two more dollars behind Liu's back to pay for an

order of noodles and the ‘Longevity’ peaches made of dough which have pictures of the Eight Taoist Immortals on them and symbolize long life” (see Appendix 4). These two examples demonstrate the same problems we see in King’s translation: they cling too closely to the original and are awkward English sentences. Taking King’s *Rickshaw Boy* as an example of bad translation, James tries to translate differently from King, but such an attempt does not lead to a style any closer to Lao She’s.

James closely follows the original sentence structure and one can actually back-translate her work to see that even the sequence of words and phrases has not been changed much may give an example. In her introduction to her translation, she justifies her practice by saying that this novel should not be taken as a literary work in the first place. James goes on to say “*Rickshaw* is the first important study of a laborer in modern Chinese fiction. Hsiang Tzu [Xiangzi] is not mocked, not blamed, not praised, but analyzed and despaired of” (Lao She 1979 trans. James, viii). Obviously, James takes the novel more as a piece of social documentation than as a literary masterpiece. In this light, it becomes understandable why she has chosen to translate the novel as one may do a document, and strives for strict semantic equivalence. James makes everything in her translation clear, and if the reader is occasionally puzzled by the information load in Lao She’s original, he/she may consult James’s translation. Where James understands the original very well, she does not leave her readers in the dark. But the reader should also be reminded that James is probably the weakest of the three in translating the Beijing dialect, since her knowledge of the Chinese language was apparently acquired only from her academic training.

In a review of James’s translation, Ranbir Vohra give a brief introduction to this novel and acknowledges that translating from the Chinese language is “a particularly difficult

task” (1980, 589). It is a constant struggle to translate adequately the verbal meanings in Chinese and capture the intended connotations. Even though James claims confidently that she “omits nothing and alters nothing”, Vohra considers her commitment to faithfulness to be less of a virtue and says that James would have done better by trying less hard in being faithful. In trying to be faithful, James’s language reads unnatural since she follows the original too closely and tries to achieve equivalence even at the sentence level. Another flaw is that her language is too formal and academic to echo Lao She’s informal street language. It is true that James has worked up to every word of her claim; however, it does not make her translation a satisfactory work.

Shi appears to be the only translator who treats this novel as a literary classic and sees Lao She’s language as an essential part in its composition. In order to translate adequately Lao She’s lively spoken language, Shi takes greater care in her choice of vocabulary and syntax. Her diction is invariably simple and her sentences short. During my interview with her, she said that she was deeply impressed by Lao She’s fluency in language, and to retain the original fluency, she has avoided difficult vocabulary and complex sentences. Furthermore, she rarely uses “there” or “it” as grammatical subjects. Her verbs are in the active voice whenever possible. Owing to these means, each sentence in her translation contains a maximum amount of information. Consequently her translation is very fluent and it echoes closely Lao She’s style.

Shi also takes greater liberty with the literal meaning and aims instead to achieve general stylistic equivalence. While the other two translators follow closely every clause and image in the original, Shi is more flexible and prefers functional to literal equivalence. Thus her rendition is fluent since the translated text is not constrained by the grammar of the Chinese original. What is more, Shi outshines the other two in her mastery of the

Chinese language, in particular the Beijing Dialect. With the obvious help available when she translated the novel in Beijing, she naturally had an edge over the other two translators and came up with a more satisfactory translation.

Based on my linguistic analysis of the three translations under study, I would like to argue that the style of each translator is closely related to his/her background and career path. King began his literary career as a translator, and later took up creative writing. The style of the novel he has written is more or less identical with the style he adopted in his translations. It is noticeable that, as a translator, he displays his own creativity (considering the alterations made in the last two chapters of his translation *Rickshaw Boy*). His inherent creative impulse, which dominates his later career, casts a shadow over his work as a translator. Perhaps that is why he subsequently chose to be a novelist instead.

In the case of James, it is her educational background and continuous commitment to academic work that leave a mark on her translation. Her translation of *Luotuo Xiangzi* is designed for use in academia. It is a scholar's translation, published by a university press and used primarily as textbook in Chinese language and literary courses. To James, *Luotuo Xiangzi* is a piece of social documentation, and calls for the accuracy of academic writing. James's attitude towards the novel partly accounts for her translation approach, but I would argue that even if James had regarded it as a literary work, she would still have written in a similar style, because she might not have been able to write in another style—her language was shaped by her education. Academic training ensures that one will be capable of writing research papers, but excellent literary translators are not trained that way.

Shi's language proficiency in both Chinese and English is nurtured by her unique experience, which gives her equal exposure to the two languages. She left for Europe

around 1950 at a young age and attended high school in Switzerland. She learned and spoke English at school while her mother taught her Chinese at home. She returned to China in 1966 and studied Chinese at Beijing University in the early 1970s. She had worked in Beijing for some time before she started translating *Luotuo Xiangzi*. One day Yang Xianyi (杨宪益) asked her if she would like to translate the novel, and she said she would. Shi told me that she was impressed by Lao She's style even though she did not know who Lao She was at that time. After she had translated one chapter and given it to Yang, Yang encouraged her to translate the whole book (see Appendix 1). It is fair to say that her translation was done under the supervision of an experienced translator, who saw Shi's translation fit for publication due to its literary excellence. Shi's later success as a translator and interpreter also testifies to her competence as a translator. Shi has translated several other literary works for the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing and she was later an interpreter for the United Nations. Her education and experience make her a competent translator. And from the perspective of a translator, Shi took it as her primary goal to preserve the style in Lao She's original as she understood it.

2.5 Translators and History

Even though style may appear to be a matter of personal preference, as discussed in Evan King's case, the fact that these three translations are translated by different translators with distinctive backgrounds is by no mean a coincidence. The historical time and circumstances that each translator found themselves in also affect the style of the translation. I will elucidate how history has left an imprint on these three translations. However, in this chapter I will focus my discussion on how history has chosen the three translators to do the three translations.

The early disseminators of Chinese culture in the west were missionaries, who since the 18th century had conducted research about China in order to understand this country and facilitate their missionary activities. The distance between East and West, together with the rarity of materials available for studies of Chinese in the west, made it hard for westerners to break through the barrier of Chinese language, let alone really understanding Chinese culture if they had not lived in China for several years themselves. As a result, those experts on China normally lived in China for a period of time, learned to speak Chinese in China, and even went on to study Chinese culture. The life of Pearl S. Buck is a case in point. As the unchallenged authority on Chinese matters in the first half of 20th century, Pearl S. Buck came to China as a baby in 1892 with her missionary parents, grew up in China, and then earned her degrees in the USA. She wrote numerous novels on China and several essays about China. When she returned to the USA in the 1930s, she was recognized as an expert on China even though she had no formal training in Chinese or its culture. Her life in China for more than twenty years is the source of her authority. The first translator of *Luotuo Xiangzi*, Evan King, is the pseudonym of Robert Spencer Ward, a onetime U.S. career diplomat, and *Time Magazine* claimed that he was one of those already vanishing Americans who knew China right down to its “grass and ashes”(Time Magazine 1955), presumably due to his working experience in China. At a time when there appeared to be no better authority on China, those who had some contact with China became translators since they at least knew the language.

The expansion of higher education after World War II gradually had created by the 1970s a sizeable group of experts who were academic trained and who studied China systematically. For these academic elites, the experience of living in China was preferred, but not a necessity. The most prominent scholar of this type is Jonathan D. Spence, who

rose to fame with his publications on late imperial and contemporary Chinese history. He did not have the experience of living in China perhaps because China was not open to westerners between the 1950s and the 1970s. Spence focused on studying the history of modern China, which was of direct assistance to the government when it dealt with China. As more students entered the field since the 1960s, the scope of Chinese studies naturally expanded to include Chinese literature, arts and so on. James was a member of this group of academically trained scholars on China. Perhaps she had never gone to China by the time she translated *Luotuo Xiangzi*, but her academic qualifications enabled her to translate and finally publish her translation. Another historical event related to James is the women's liberation movement in the 1960s, which strove for equal educational opportunity for women. The higher education system, in response to these social changes, also enlarged its admission of women into higher education. James must have been one of these women admitted to higher education under this social climate. Such background information also explains James's concern for underprivileged women in China.

The third translation differs from the previous two translations since it was initiated within China and was translated by a Chinese. It is introduced to the USA twice and since the second translation was published just two years ago, it is still in the process of being accepted by the Americans. However, this mode of transmission is determined by current political and economic changes. With the opening-door policy and economical reform, the PRC has sought to be accepted by the western world since the 1970s, and its effort has encountered successes as well as obstacles. As a means to achieve greater understanding, Yang Xianyi suggested to translate the literature of the PRC and of earlier times as well. He managed, together with his wife Gladys Yang and other associates, to bring out a large quantity of English translations of China's literature, history, etc., the most famous

translation series being the Panda Books. Even though Yang and his associates were frustrated by the poor reception of the series due to ideological discrepancies between China and the USA, as manifested in the reception of *Camel Xiangzi* in 1981, their efforts represented an emerging initiative to introduce their literary works into other parts of the world. Then in the early 1990s, the literature of the avant-garde was warmly reviewed and Zhang Yimou's (张艺谋) films based on these works gained much greater popularity in the USA, which contributed to China's entrance into the international cultural market. Nowadays Chinese culture and literary heritage do not just belong to the PRC, but are shared within a greater China, including Hong Kong and Taiwan, as well as by many overseas Chinese, writers, artists and intellectuals alike. With the joined effort of Chinese people from various parts of the world, Chinese films, literature and translations are more efficiently introduced to the west. The 2005 edition of *Camel Xiangzi* in Hong Kong is just one example. Translated by a mainland translator Shi Xiaojing, it is recommended by literary scholars educated in the West and published by the Chinese University Press of Hong Kong, which is well connected in the international market.

Chapter Three

Evan King's Translation: An Invented Success

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the first English translation of *Luotuo Xiangzi*, rendered by Evan King and published in 1945 with the title *Rickshaw Boy*. This translation was selected by the Book-of-the-month Club and became a runaway bestseller. In view of *Rickshaw Boy*'s huge success in the market, The US State Department decided to bring Lao She (老舍), the Chinese writer of the original novel, to the USA in 1946. Soon it was found out that the translation that brought Lao She to the USA was not at all a faithful translation of *Luotuo Xiangzi*, but one with substantial modifications.

All the same, millions of copies of *Rickshaw Boy* were sold and the translation went through four editions in two years (Ma 1997, 396). Its huge success in circulation stimulates my interest to examine this translation closely and hopefully discover its "secrets" for success. So in the following I will analyze the alterations made by King and the reception of the translation together with a review in *The New Yorker* contributed by Hamilton Basso on this translation, all of which will elucidate the social environment that produced and accepted this translation.

3.2 *Rickshaw Boy*: Evan King's Translation of *Luotuo Xiangzi*

King's translation was first published by Reynal & Hitchcock of New York in 1945. In 1946, the same translation was published in London by Michael Joseph. Reynal & Hitchcock was a commercial press and had previously published several books by Lin Yutang (林语堂) and Pearl S. Buck. Reviews on this translation generally praised King's

translation which had “made us forget the medium of language” and was “sufficiently colloquial to give us the color of pungent Chinese phrases” (Kao 1980, 38). For my research purpose here, I will first ignore these praises and summarize the major alterations made by King instead.

The most important change in the translation appears at the end of the novel. In the original, Xiangzi (祥子), the protagonist, ends up lost in complete corruption of his body and soul. He dawdles a living by holding a flag or scroll in a wedding or funeral procession, which is a custom of traditional Beijing. This tragic ending is totally reversed by King. King creates a happy reunion between Xiangzi and Xiao Fuzi (小福子), who has determined to die but changes her mind when Xiangzi finds her in a brothel. Both Xiangzi and Xiao Fuzi gather up the courage to live on, according to King’s translation. The last paragraph of the translation goes as follows:

In the mild coolness of summer evening the burden in his arms stirred slightly, nestling closer to his body as he ran. She was alive. He was alive. They were free (1945, 384).

This happy ending is in sharp contrast to that in Lao She’s original, which, in Perry Link’s rather literal translation reads like this:

The honorable, ambitious, dream-filled, enterprising, egocentric, robust, magnificent Hsiang-tzu [Xiangzi] walked with other people on any number of funeral marches; who knows when and where he will eventually bury himself—this degenerate, selfish, unfortunate offspring of an ailing society, this hopeless wreck of an individualist (Kao 1980, 50)!

The above quotation reveals Lao She’s fury toward Xiangzi and Chinese society. Xiangzi is the product of “an ailing society”, as well as a “hopeless wreck of an individualist”. Lao She’s general tone in the last chapter and the one before goes slightly incongruent with previous chapters. Xiangzi is a character deserving sympathy until the last two chapters in which he turns lazy and immoral. He is honest, hardworking, and

even respectable all along, in the sense that he never gives himself up to the annoying but excusable misbehavior of other rickshaw pullers, all of whom are overwhelmed by the hardship of life and demand some kind of comfort that their money could afford—nice food, gambling or occasional whoring. Because of his determination not to lead the lives of his fellow rickshaw pullers, Xiangzi has lived with physical torment, stress and isolation—these Lao She has depicted with tear and blood. The ending in the original, however, displays Lao She's strong contempt toward Xiangzi, who gives up his aspirations and lives in the same manner as the others. Lao She himself later expressed his regret and explained the change in tone. Since the novel was first released in serial form in a magazine, he had to provide an abrupt ending when only two chapters' space was offered to him at the point (Hu 1980, 71). Having possibly noticed the abrupt change in tone, King abandons Lao She's original sad ending, and makes up a happy reunion that would fit in with a righteous and diligent Xiangzi. By doing this, King removes Lao She's indignant criticism of the society, and converts the novel into a slightly depressing (though lighthearted) story. King's translation, however, promises a happy future life for the couple. It reads as if Xiangzi, after all his misfortune, is finally rewarded and the two would live happily ever after, as many fairy tales would end.

Another crucial difference is the sexual description. In the original, Lao She hardly includes any sex scene in his narration. Chapter six tells of an occasion when Xiangzi is seduced by Huniu (虎妞), the daughter of the rich rickshaw owner, Liusi (刘四). That night Huniu invites Xiangzi to some wine when the latter is in low spirits. He accepts the offer without much thinking. Losing his mind after a few cups of wine, Xiangzi sleeps with Huniu that night. Later he is forced to marry Huniu because she claims to be pregnant with his child. Lao She uses the play of stars to suggest their sexual intercourse

that night¹⁰, while King entertains his reader with a paragraph of explicit description. When portraying the character of Huniu, King also adds some words of his own to create the image of a lustful woman. For example, King elaborates on Huniu's desire after her marriage by depicting her as follows:

A she-wolf who steals at night into the darkened chambers of lonely men and sucks them empty of semen, drinking so deep of their manhood that the well runs dry, and they wander through the rest of their time staring vacantly at the world about them and mumbling to themselves (trans. Evan King 1945, 242).

This is a rather ferocious image, but King further dramatizes her lust by suggesting that she is her father's mistress before she marries Xiangzi. In Lao She's original, Huniu rents her room to Xiao Fuzi, a poor neighbor who supports her family by prostitution, and Huniu enjoys peeping at Xiao Fuzi entertaining her "guests". Then Huniu imitates the way Xiao Fuzi entertains her guests and runs after Xiangzi each night. However, by adding that "she (Huniu) had broken her father"¹¹, King implies that she has also seduced her father, and this is something absent from Lao She's Chinese original.

A third noticeable feature of the translation is the inclusion of illustrations in the published book. Immediately after the first edition sold well, a second edition of the translation appeared. The new edition included many sketches of characters and scenes in the novel. They were drawn by Cyrus LeRoy Baldridge, who illustrated also Arthur

¹⁰ The Chinese original are as follows: 屋内灭了灯。天上很黑。不时有一两个星刺入了银河，或划进黑暗中，带着发红或发白的光尾，轻飘的或硬挺的，直坠或横扫着，有时也点动着，颤抖着，给天上一些光热的动荡，给黑暗一些闪烁的爆裂。有时一两个星，有时好几个星，同时飞落，使静寂的秋空微，使万星一时迷乱起来。有时一个单独的巨星横刺入天角，光尾极长，放射着星花；红，渐黄；在最后的挺进，忽然狂悦似的把天角照白了一条，好象刺开万重的黑暗，透进并逗留一些乳白的光。余光散尽，黑暗似晃动了几下，又包合起来，静静懒懒的群星又复了原，在秋风上微笑。地上飞着些寻求情侣的秋萤，也作着星样的游戏 (Lao She 1985, 52-53)。

¹¹ The whole paragraph runs as follows: That night (when Huniu settled the rate of renting her room to Xiao Fuzi and her "guest") when Happy Boy came back, Tiger Girl told him nothing of what had happened but he paid, too, in the sleep he lost. With a full, deep, passionate joy Tiger Girl went after him: she had broken her father, she had just that day helped ruin the friend that she hated and envied, and now she would take it out of Happy Boy (Lao She 1945, 272).

Waley's *Translations from the Chinese*. Although the later editions of the translation did not keep these sketches, their appearance still exposes the marketing strategy of King, or of his publisher, as well as their attitude toward the character Xiangzi. For instance, on the front cover of the translation is a sketch of Xiangzi, who stands confidently in the centre, hands resting on his waist, muscles bulging on his chest (see Illustration 1). This image is very different from that of the underprivileged rickshaw pullers in real life, as reflected in the photographs of rickshaw pullers of that time (see Illustration 2). Xiangzi seems to be ambitious and Americanized in the sketches, while in historical photographs, rickshaw pullers look timid and humble.

Illustration 1 A Sketch of Xiangzi by Cyrus LeRoy Baldridge on the cover of *Rickshaw Boy* (second edition)

Illustration 2 A Photograph of Rickshaw Pullers in Beijing taken by a Westerner in the 1920s

The illustrations in King's translation may have reduced the distance between China and the USA, but it is done by means of distortion and simplified characterization. From Baldridge's sketches to King's translation of names, we may conclude that King did not intend the whole novel as a piece of incisive social criticism; he was translating it as a lighthearted story. Let us first look at the names of the main characters:

Lao She's original in <i>pinyin</i> and Chinese Character	Evan King's translation
Xiangzi 祥子	Happy Boy
Huniu 虎妞	Tiger Girl
Xiao Fuzi 小福子	Little Lucky One

Table 3 Character Names in King's Translation

It is very hard to decide whether they are faithful or not, but these translated names collectively suggest a lighthearted tale. Huniu is a woman in her thirties when she first

appears in the novel, and Xiangzi is about twenty years old. Still they are named “Girl” and “Boy”. These names may also be slightly derogatory if applied to adults. And Little Lucky One sounds childish in English, although this is a strict word-for-word translation of the original. In a word, King seems to be contemptuous of the whole lot of them. They are just boys and girls, or little ones, so nothing serious will ensue. Readers are supposed amuse themselves reading the story.

Another difference introduced by King is the adaptation of the original plot. In his translation, King creates new characters, minor as these characters may be. King also changes the plot, not only in the last two chapters but also at various points in the novel. In his translation, a student girl is created to persuade Xiangzi to revolt against the evil society. She is later executed for the cause she advocates. In the parade before her execution, she still shouts before the crowd: “Freedom for publication!”, “Overthrow the secret police! Oppose crooked politicians and the sale of justice! Drive out corruption from government!”(trans. Evan King 1945, 375-76) The girl’s bravery, however, rouses only the derision of many spectators who think she is acting on behalf of some rich publisher. This fabricated character reflects either the translator’s imagination about conditions in China or problems in the translator’s own society. In view of this novel’s appeal to the American public, the latter looks more probable.

Changes of plots also appear in Chapter twelve where half of the content in this chapter is moved to the penultimate chapter. In Chapter twelve of the original novel, Mr. Cao (曹先生), Xiangzi’s employer at that time, is being followed by secret detectives and in a hurry to run away. A detective Sun (孙侦探) runs into Xiangzi and threatens to send him to jail if Xiangzi do not give him money because Xiangzi is Mr. Cao’s rickshaw puller and therefore associated to Mr. Cao, who were wanted by the government. None of

the major characters knows what is happening to them and why Mr. Cao is followed by secret detectives. In the original, the narrator appears and addresses the reader directly to clear up the confusion within the main characters and also the reader. Instead of letting the characters know immediately, King deletes the part explaining why Mr. Cao is followed by the secret detectives, and releases the information when Xiangzi runs into Mr. Cao again at the end of the novel and King lets Xiangzi ask for the reason. King's rearrangement makes the translation smoother since the reshuffling allows the novel to consistently follow the life of Xiangzi without being interrupted by the observations of the narrator.

I will examine the effect of those alterations to the original before I try to explain why King made those alterations and how they appealed to the taste of the public. Alterations are made almost every time when a piece of literature is translated. As a result, some new meanings are added to the translation, while some existing ones are forever lost. Based on the alterations itself and a review of the translation from that time, I would like reconstruct to a certain extent the impression that the American readership might have obtained from the translation.

"New Bottle, Old Wine" published in 1945 by *The New Yorker* provides additional information that enables us to understand the impact of the translation on American readers at that time. This reviewer Hamilton Basso regards the novel as a truly realistic work about contemporary China, since this translation, based on a Chinese original, is more credible than Pearl S. Puck's books and could update their impression of China, which has so far depended on traditional Chinese fiction about "good fairies and bad devils, its wise dragons and foolish demons" (Basso 1945, 66). He compares *Rickshaw Boy* to many works available to the American public, and concludes that this translation

was the best in being realistic.

The review shows an interest in contemporary China by praising King's translation as "a novel about China written for a Chinese, of the Chinese, and by a Chinese", and for this reason, Basso believes it should not be missed. Yet Basso does not go into any detail about how this novel is realistic in its depiction of China. It could be inferred that he thinks it realistic because the image of Chinese presented corresponds with the image he previously had about China. When he discusses the significance of this work, he simply refers to the literary tradition that is familiar to him, and comments that the translation is realistic in terms of those traditions. To substantiate his views, Basso mentions the themes of realistic novels written by Scott Fitzgerald who classified realistic novels into two kinds: those of Cinderella or Jack the Giant Killer. As a disillusioned scrambling of the two themes, Basso concludes that this translated novel of modern China constructs a reality in which "Jack, instead of killing the Giant (now the capitalist society), is ground down by him" (1945, 67). It leaves the impression that Basso believes that *Rickshaw Boy* is realistic because it reflects some common concerns in American realistic novels.

As for the story (the one adapted by King), Basso sees it as hardly new, in fact, "the essential design...almost as fixed and conventional as that of some of the traditional tales of old China" (1945, 66). Basso contemplates that the theme of *Rickshaw Boy* makes concrete the beginning sentences of a twelfth or thirteenth century Chinese tale, which runs as follows:

The road of life is a tortuous one and the heart of man is hard to fathom. The great Way has receded farther and farther from the world and the ways of men have become more and more multifarious. Every one bustles about for the sake of gain but in their ignorance they often reap nothing but calamities (Wang 1944, 127).

This quotation leaves me further confirmed that Basso does not take this novel as a

uniquely Chinese novel since there is nothing “Chinese” in his understanding. This kind of conclusion about life reflects a sense of frustrations in the hearts of human beings who wish to lead a good life but encounter resistance from the outside world, a world that seems to be working maliciously against them. The emotion is general and universal. There is nothing particularly Chinese about it except that it is derived from a Chinese tale.

However, Basso’s review discloses an interest in Chinese life and “reality”, which Americans knew very little at that time. However, the review also reveals that Basso tended to understand Chinese “reality” in American terms and it seems that the adapted novel catered to American expectations. Considering the influence of *The New Yorker*, it would be safe to say the understanding of general readers was unlikely to be profounder than what Basso has said. Basso mentions in his review that “the picture he (Lao She) gives of Peking [Beijing] seems very right and true”. He pays exclusive attention to the effect of environment or society on an individual while failing to see that the Chinese themselves are also responsible for their own disaster, an idea shared by many Chinese intellectuals at Lao She’s time. However, with insufficient background information about the prevailing thoughts among Chinese intellectuals, Basso could not be alert to the characterizations, which are very informative of Chinese people and culture.

To understand *Luotuo Xiangzi* in its original, we need to know more about Lao She and his time. Lao She wrote an article about how he conceived the idea of writing *Luotuo Xiangzi*, which was based on a true story he had heard from a friend. *Luotuo Xiangzi* was his first novel as a professional novelist. So naturally, he felt the urgency to write a work that would appeal to readers so he could continue his career as a novelist (Hu 1980, 65). To do this, he carefully observed the life of rickshaw pullers and also drew upon his personal experience. Since Lao She grew up in a destitute family and lived in a poor

district of Beijing, he was fairly familiar with the life of the underprivileged, and many descriptions of poor people's lives were actually based on what he observed of his poor friends. Lao She had seen how society bullied the poor, while at the same time he was well aware of the poor people's own deficiencies in character, particularly after Lao She had spent five years in London, which is very likely to give him a different perspective to look at Beijing and its people. Although he had no solutions to offer, Lao She believed it was helpful to expose the problems of Chinese society and the poor as profoundly as he could. *Luotuo Xiangzi* presents Xiangzi as crushed by a society which gives no chance to the poor, as well as his own inflexibility to adjust to the situation. The last chapter, with its mounting satire of Beijing and its indifferent people, highlights the theme of the novel: Chinese people are self-centered individuals. Their self-centeredness has rendered them blind to the sufferings of their fellow countrymen. Their irresponsibility finally leads to their own destruction even though as an individual, each of them is striving to be better off. In other words, Beijing serves only as the backstage for the action and the characters, but the deficiencies of these characters are precisely what Lao She wished to reveal in the novel.

The translated novel, without the last two chapters, lacks Lao She's criticism of the sick Chinese society and its self-centered individuals, yet Lao She's intended theme is by no means noticeable only in the last two chapters. The social and even natural forces that grind Xiangzi down, the isolation of Xiangzi from other rickshaw pullers, and his refusal to join a club whose members help each other in turn with money—all point to the same theme even before the last two chapters. Still Basso in his review fails to note this, and instead interprets the novel as a realistic work that reveals a universal sense of frustration. Basso is ignorant of Lao She's perception of the illness of Chinese people as a group and

as individuals.

In conclusion, Evan King created a piece of popular fiction out of *Luotuo Xiangzi*, and his translation *Rickshaw Boy* adhered to the American definition of realistic novels, conforming to the American perception of their world. King amplified the exotic settings of Beijing, making the novel look unfamiliar but presenting the life in this city according to an acceptable and even familiar model to American readers.

3.3 Factors contributing to the shaping of *Rickshaw Boy*

The Translator

Scholars of translation studies have generally acknowledged the mediating position of the translator, who acts as a negotiator between the original and the target language. The translator has to bear the blame if the translation is not well received by the target audience, while the credit goes to the author when the translation turns into a bestseller. Such stereotypical image of the translator is challenged in the case of *Rickshaw Boy*. Evan King was different from the average translator, demonstrating his creativity in a variety of ways throughout his translation. He also took a lot of credit for the success of the translation.

Evan King is the pseudonym of Robert Ward, a one-time U.S. career diplomat, and one of those already vanishing Americans who knows China right down to its "grass and ashes", as noted in a book review on King's novel *Children of the Black-haired People*, which appeared on April 25, 1955 in *Time Magazine*. It is hard to find out whether he could live up to that claim now. However, from the translations he did, he seemed to know the Chinese language fairly well. It is quite possible that his previous job as a diplomat might have given him opportunities to stay in Beijing for some time and pick up

some Beijing dialect as well, since he translates most of Lao She's Beijing dialect correctly. King is also the translator of Xiao Jun's *Bayue de Xiangcun* (*Village in August*, 1942).

Other facts about King's character might help us explain why he undertook to rewrite the original in the process of translating. Going through the correspondence between Lao She and his friends in the USA, I have found out some facts related to the translation of *Lihun*, another of Lao She's novels published during his sojourn in the States. After Lao She's arrival in the USA, King asked Lao She if he should translate *Lihun* and Lao She agreed. In 1947, King started to translate *Lihun*, and signed a contract with Reynal & Hitchcock to publish the translation when it was finished. Later Lao She requested to see how the translation was done. Upon reading it, Lao She was angry to discover that King treated his novel more or less in the same manner as he had done with *Luotuo Xiangzi*—King had made several changes in plot and serious alterations at the end in *Lihun*. Lao She urged King to do a more faithful job this time. However, King rejected Lao She's request and insisted that only with his "translation" could Lao She's work become worthwhile; otherwise his novel would be worthless, at least in the eyes of Americans. King even stated that he possessed the right to his translated work and threatened to sue Lao She if Lao She did not sanction it (Lao She 1993, 135). Forced into taking up his own defense, Lao She started to translate *Lihun* with Helena Kuo and finally managed to stop King from using his own name in King's translation. After a complicated lawsuit, King went ahead and published his translation all the same, but the sales were restricted to his own bookstore. Meanwhile, the translation of Helena Kuo, approved by Lao She, was published by Reynal & Hitchcock under the title *The Quest for Love of Lao Lee*, to be distinctive from King's *Divorce*. From the disrespect which King had shown to the author,

it is not hard to see his general attitude toward Lao She's novels.

Besides being a diplomat and translator, King was also a novelist. In 1955, he published *Children of the Black-haired People*, which *Time* magazine gave a review of together with Eileen Chang's (Zhang Ailing) first novel in English, *The Rice-Sprout Song*. Confident with his fictional creativity, King probably thought that he possessed the ability to further polish and adapt Lao She's work. So he translated as well as seriously edited both *Luotuo Xiangzi* (*Rickshaw Boy*) and *Lihun* (*Divorce*). It is reasonable to say King's career path and disrespectful attitude toward Lao She partly account for the extensive adaptation in both translations.

It is true that King is in a better position than Lao She in judging what American readers wanted to read about China at that time. When both translations of *Lihun* were available in the market, King's version sold better (Ma 1997, 398), even though the sales of his translation were limited to his own bookstore. Viewing this from another perspective, it appears that Americans had their own expectations about what China was, or stereotypes of what Chinese people were like. In the following part, I will discuss the stereotypes of China and its people that had found their way into King's translation.

Stereotypes

Admittedly, the image of China in the West could be traced back to Marco Polo and his *The Travels of Marco Polo*, then to Christian missionaries and colonizers with their stories of China, among many other things. For my purpose, I will briefly examine some major events that have shaped the image of China in the USA. These include: Chinese laborers migrating to California in the nineteenth century and their descendents settling down in the USA; the popularity of Fu Manchu story in the early twentieth century; the wide circulation of influential books such as *The Dragon Lady*; and the success of Anna

May Wong's film *Shanghai Express* in 1932. These events are in themselves very complex and my treatment here is bound to be superficial and incomplete. However, within limited space, I will discuss their relevance to the stereotypes formed of the Chinese people.

The stereotypes of Chinese people that circulated among the general public in the 1940s can be traced back to the first wave of Chinese immigrants in the USA. Many Chinese, mostly from Fujian and Canton, sailed across the Pacific, either following the Gold Rush in California in the 1840s or looking for labor work in building the transcontinental railroad in the 1860s. For as long as a century, the stereotypes of Chinese in the USA are habitually associated with the lives of these Chinese immigrants and their descendants in the USA.

Because of the geographical separation, communication between the USA and China was scarce in the 19th century and before. Most Americans had not seen a Chinese before, not to say having any contact. When the Gold Rush in California brought worldwide immigration to the USA, Chinese must be an unattractive group, being slim and ugly to the western eye. But in the building of the transcontinental railroad in the 1860s, Chinese workers were employed on a large scale for their diligence and perseverance. These workers and those in the Gold Rush built the first Chinatown in California. The diligent Chinese people captured many job opportunities and consequently they were not welcomed by other races. What is more, fear, ignorance, and the Post-Civil War economic depression combined to create an isolationist and xenophobic atmosphere¹². The Chinese immigrants were referred to as the "yellow peril" and the American government even

¹² Dr. David Smith from the History Department of Lingnan University has generously offered the slices of his courses "Western Image of China" for my reference. These slices help me find out information about the American perception of China from the late 19th century to the first half of the 20th century. I am paraphrasing some of his ideas.

passed various laws to prevent the settlement of Chinese in 1882. In the years that followed, the situation did not improve also due to the lack of communication between the Chinese community and the white community. The almost inscrutable Chinese “exterior” was viewed with suspicion of evil lurking within (Smith 2006). Early Chinese immigrants lived almost exclusively in Chinatowns and avoided contacts with other ethnic groups. They earned their living by running restaurants or laundries. Due to their general poverty and lack of political power, the word “Chinese” was most frequently associated with lower class people. To most Americans, the impression of the Chinese in Chinatown was further generalized to represent the image of all Chinese—in China and out of it. In *Rickshaw Boy*, King preserved a picture of Chinese life in the lower class, which corresponded with the lives of Chinese people in Chinatowns. It is natural that Americans were ready to accept the depiction of a rickshaw puller and his acquaintances who were struggling at the bottom of society as credible.

The first half of 20th century has seen the emergence of a fictional character Fu Manchu, a mandarin who aspires to overthrow European civilization. The sheer image of Fu Manchu would have made people tremble in fear. In Sax Rohmer’s Fu Manchu series, Fu is described as “tall, lean and feline, high-shouldered, with a brow like Shakespeare and a face like Satan, a close-shaven skull, and long, magnetic eyes of the true cat-green”. He is invested “with all the cruel cunning of an entire Eastern race, accumulated in one giant intellect, with all the resources of science past and present, with all the resources, if you will, of a wealthy government--which, however, already has denied all knowledge of his existence” (1913, 24-25). This awful being is the “yellow peril incarnate in one man.” When the Box Rebellion erupted in 1900, most foreigners in China were shocked and saw Chinese people as dangerous instead of submissive. And Fu Manchu was a reflection of

the hostility or even hatred toward the Chinese after this event, though this event was not the only cause of such feelings. The success of the Fu Manchu stories also made it habitual to add a tinge of evil to the stereotypes of the Chinese. *Rickshaw Boy* contains characters of this type. Liusi (Huniu's father), and detective Sun, an evil police man who once blackmails Xiangzi, both resemble Fu Manchu in their evil and cruel ways.

The image of Chinese women as lustful and immoral was created through the popular biographies of Empress Cixi in the west, like *China under the Empress Dowager* (1910) and *Annals and Memoirs of the Court Peking* (1914). These two books portray a merciless Empress who makes her way to the throne by murder and malice. In their books, Cixi is a sexually corrupt Dowager who seduces high-ranking and powerful officials. The first of the two biographies are particularly popular: it became the best seller of the year and went through eight prints in eighteen months (Seagrave 1992, 443-45). The seductive and manipulating image of Dowager was so successful that later it became a stereotyped impression of Chinese or Asian women.

We can see how firmly established this stereotype was from the career and life of the actress Anna May Wong (黄柳霜), who was active on the silver screen during the 1920s and 1930s. Wong was the first Chinese American woman in Hollywood who achieved national fame. The roles she played, however, were always immoral mistresses who desired to be loved by white men but who invariably failed in her ambition. In what is considered to be her best movie, *Shanghai Express*, she portrays a prostitute who is raped and then takes her revenge by killing the person who has humiliated her. An important character in the movie, Wong is sexually attractive and has no concern for morals. When this movie was shown in Shanghai, it aroused the anger of the Chinese audience and the

newspapers condemned Hollywood for insulting the image of Chinese women¹³.

Wong was also dissatisfied with the roles she had to play. When *The Good Earth*, Pearl S. Buck's Nobel Prize-winning novel about China, was about to be adapted into a movie in 1938, Wong thought she might be able to play the wife of the protagonist Wang Lung since she was such a famous Asian-American actress. However, she was denied the role after an audition, for the reason that Chinese women were invariably regarded as lustful and immoral at that time while O-Lan, the wife of Wang Lung, is a diligent and plain woman. Mindful of the feelings of the audience, Hollywood chose a Caucasian actress to play the wife. It is clear that King, when building up an impression of Huniu, has alluded to the stereotype of Chinese women. As a woman who desires more from her life, Huniu has the manipulative power to capture Xiangzi, although her personal life before marriage is not documented by Lao She in the original. To complete the image of an ambitious and seductive dragon lady, King hints that she is her father's mistress before marrying Xiangzi. And after her marriage with Xiangzi, King again dramatizes her as "a she-wolf" who goes after Xiangzi every night.

The above analysis reveals that many characters in *Rickshaw Boy* are actually related to the stereotypes held about Chinese by the American public. On a broader scale, the story of Xiangzi is also familiar to the American readers due to the popularity of Buck's *The Good Earth* and the similarity between these two novels. With a brief summary of the plot of *The Good Earth*, we will see that the story of Xiangzi, especially the adapted and translated version of *Rickshaw Boy*, is similar in more than one respect to that of Wang Lung.

¹³Asia TV (Hong Kong) broadcasted a program in August, 2006 about Anna May Wong. The title of the program is "魅影妙歌四天后·黄柳霜", which provides information about Anna May Wong in my research.

Just as Xiangzi aims to own a rickshaw of his own, the hero of *The Good Earth*, Wang Lung, is committed to buying more land. Wang Lung starts as a poor peasant in the countryside. At some point of his life, Wang is forced to leave the countryside for the city with his family because of a famine, and has worked during that time as a rickshaw puller. Unlike Xiangzi, Wang returns to his land as soon as he finds his longing for land irrepressible. Later Wang grows into a prosperous farmer and a land owner. He does not have to work himself but hires others to till his land. After settling down, he takes a concubine and lives gradually like the previous land owner whose house and land he now possesses and whom he used to hate. In the end, even though Wang's life will never be threatened by hunger or cold again, the corrupted lifestyle of his offspring and the conflicts within the family suggest a future of decline. Seeing the family problems around him, Wang can find no way out and then decides to dawdle away his remaining days. Wang Lung and Xiangzi have several things in common: their background, their experience living in the city, the hardships they suffer in life, and their final choice of giving up and accepting what life offers to them.

Both frustrated in their career, the aged Wang Lung choose to close his mind to the disturbing news about their sons, while the young Xiangzi in King's translation seems to find his hope in his sweetheart. I regard King's adaptation as a deliberate move to attract American readers, rather than an attempt to improve the aesthetic effect (the last two chapters are slightly obtrusive as Xiangzi becomes a contemptible dawdler, which is in contrast to the hardworking Xiangzi in previous chapters), particularly after considering King's rewriting of Lao She's novel *Lihun* when he translated it. In Lao She's original story, the protagonist fails to marry his sweetheart in the end. He leaves the corrupted city life of Beijing and retreats to the countryside. However, King arranges a happy marriage

between the protagonist and his sweetheart and closes the story again in a joyful mood (Ma 1997, 398). King's adaptation worked out as he had expected: both *Rickshaw Boy* and *Divorce* sold well, the latter of which even sold better than *The Quest for Love of Lao Li*, the translation of *Lihun* sanctioned by Lao She.

Lao She had been a popular novelist since the 1930s, and his fame was at its peak after the publication of *Luotuo Xiangzi* in 1936. It should be noted that Lao She is not the only important novelist of his time in China during the 1930s and 1940s. The literary world in his time had not only produced realistic novelists like him; there was a group of politically committed writers represented by Mao Dun, and a group of neo-sensationalists writers represented by Shi Zhecun (施蛰存) and Liu Na'ou (刘呐鸥), not to mention the unaffiliated Shen Congwen. However, Lao She was the only one whose novels were popular among the American public in the 1940s. It is reasonable to say that an important reason for this is that the characters and society created in his work fitted in with the Chinese stereotypes already in circulation among the American people.

Ideology

The 19th century was heavily shaped by industrialization in the west and colonization in the rest of the world; these brought the West and the East into much closer contact. One result of western industrialization is that they started to believe people like the Chinese to be uncivilized and even biologically inferior. At the turn of the century, however, industrialized countries were engaged in serious conflicts, which resulted in WWI. Seeing the massive-killing in the war and residuum in the city as well as increasing social unrest, they felt the crisis of modernity. To many western intellectuals, because of industrialization, the west was becoming more materialistic, soulless, ugly and alienated (see note 3).

For intellectuals in the West, the World War I had seriously eroded their confidence in western civilization. They started to doubt the values that had been upheld by their tradition. And what used to appear as backward or barbaric, including Chinese civilization, gradually came to be appreciated as timeless. First in the circle of intellectuals, interests in China emerged and this later spread to the middle class people through books about China. In the USA, the following books and events particularly enriched their perception of China's image: Ezra Pound's translation of Chinese poems in 1915 under the title *Cathay*; the popularity of Pearl S. Buck's novels, particularly *The Good Earth*; Edgar Snow's book *Red Star over China* in the 1930s; and China's forming an alliance with the USA in World War II.

Since the 19th century, Asian countries like Japan were modernizing fast and potentially threatening the European hegemony. In contrast, China was a sympathetic nation that still needed western assistance. China had long been in a chaotic state since the Qing Court was unable to exercise control over the country. As Jonathan D. Spence has put it, "there emerged a heightened sense of moral obligation toward China, particularly evident in the Protestant Churches and their missionary arms, which began to pump massive funding into Chinese medical and educational facilities". The fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911 further convinced the USA that China demanded help in terms of developing democracy. American companies also believed that China could be their potential consumers (Spence 1998, 166).

A combination of the above trends and others attracted attention from the USA and also led to a fascination with traditional Chinese artistic expression, philosophy, and even lifestyle as an alternative to western materialism. This was a general trend that could be observed from Ezra Pound's translation of Chinese poetry, Lin Yutang's writings on

Chinese culture and Pearl Buck's novel *The Good Earth*. These works generally set China in a timeless framework and in the opposite of western logic and mechanism. They found a way to adapt Chinese culture to the American contemporary political and economical situation, by emphasizing selective aspects of the Chinese exotic.

Though China in the American imagination was a country made up of peaceful citizens who were satisfied with simple joy, the Chinese Republic established by Sun Yat-sen was far from a united nation that advanced toward prosperity. The civil war between the Communist Party led by Mao Zedong and the Kuomintang led by Chiang Kai-shek was further complicated by the invasion of Japan at the beginning of the 1930s. Edgar Snow's book *Red Star over China* not only introduced the Chinese leftwing to the west; it also stimulated the western imagination with regard to Chinese radicals. When this book was published in 1937, it became a bestseller in both England and the USA, missing selection as the Book-of-the-Month Club's main choice only by a single vote (Spence 1998, 200). This book remained an importance source for the study of Mao in the ensuing decades.

As George Kao says in *Two Writers and the Cultural Revolution*, *Rickshaw Boy* was published "when warm feelings toward China the wartime ally were still widespread" (1980, 37). During the WWII, China was an ally of the USA and Britain. China and the USA shared a common enemy, Japan, which was referred to as the "Yellow Peril", a term that had been applied to Chinese years ago. This "warm feeling" towards China was also reflected in the extraordinary welcome that was given to Mayling Soong Chiang, and reached its climax when Mayling Soong Chiang came to the USA and called for support in China's Anti-Japanese War. To many Americans, her personal charm was as appealing as the cause of her visit, if not more. She was considered a product of American education

and culture. Her bravery and elegance was viewed as the best combination of the American spirit with Chinese culture. She not only obtained support for China's Anti-Japanese War, but also secured affection for China, America's wartime ally.

After reviewing the social circumstances in the historical period preceding the publication of *Rickshaw Boy*, one can easily see the relevance of this novel to American life. King knew the attraction of an exotic China, so he meticulously translated every detail in Chinese rituals and scenery, while adding some elaboration of his own. Xiangzi's clumsy association with the revolutionaries also reminded one of the memories of Mao and his comrades in their early period, trying in vain to develop their bases in the city poor. In a word, the sympathetic connotations of the name "China" affected a wide audience from American society, especially the middle class. Other than *Rickshaw Boy*, *The Yellow Storm*, in which Lao She describes the experiences of a family during the Anti-Japanese War, was also welcomed by the public.

3.4 Conclusion

The above analysis supports the impression that *Rickshaw Boy* is a translation that fits very well with the presuppositions about China among the general public in the 1940s. To some extent, King used a superficial setting to create an exotic novel which was familiar to American values in its essential making-up.

Many traits in *Rickshaw Boy* made it an enormous commercial success. First, it was published by a commercial publisher, Reynal & Hitchcock, which should have at its disposal the right strategies to promote this translation. Second, its plot showed some degree of similarities to previous works such as *The Good Earth*, and its characterization followed stereotypes already very familiar to the public. Third, the translation added

something new in design—that is, the incorporation of Beijing as the background, which was vastly different from American society. At the same when China was viewed with warm feelings, it was not hard in the beginning to sell this translation.

However, it should not be forgotten that *Rickshaw Boy* was very different from *Luotuo Xiangzi*. Basso's review made it clear that Americans liked this story because they found some universal feelings they could sympathize with. King had successfully made Xiangzi's story acceptable to American by changing the end into a happy reunion which comply with Americans' "happy go lucky" model.

A noticeable feature of the American perception of China is the unchanging and unchangeable character of Chinese society and life. The stereotypes of Chinese people had all been established years before King and his readers came across this novel. However, King confidently adopted the novel to enliven those old clichés and his readers also loved such a translation. Basso even used an obscure tale from the twelfth century China to sum up the theme of *Rickshaw Boy*. As late as 1955, when King published his novel *Child of the Black-Haired People*, *Time* magazine threw out a review with the title "The Unchangeable Heart", referring again to the perennial tales about poor Chinese people and society.

Chapter Four

Jean M. James's Translation: An Academic Textbook

4.1 Introduction

Thirty-four years after the success of *Rickshaw Boy*, a second translation of *Luotuo Xiangzi* appeared in the USA. However, this new translation, under the title of *Rickshaw*, was not a book intended for general readers like the first translation. It was published by The University of Hawaii Press, and the translator was Jean M. James, a Ph.D. candidate in University of Iowa when she translated this novel. The publisher categorized this translation as a textbook. The above information suffices to indicate *Rickshaw*'s close association with academia.

Rickshaw was produced in a time when mutual enmity between the PRC and the USA began to subside. After President Nixon visited China in 1972, it took another seven years before normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries was achieved. While diplomatic relationships would be adjusted quickly to serve shared interests, the ideological prejudices and misunderstandings accumulated during the Cold War continued to hamper meaningful communication between the two nations. However, with lessons learned from the Vietnam War and other involvement in Asian matters, the USA was serious about studying the PRC, its history and culture. Richard Madsen summarizes the interest of most Americans as follows:

The most widely shared interest was cultural... Normalization seemed to confirm and amplify the hope that China would now become part of a revitalized liberal world order, beneficently and progressively presided over by the United States; a world in which economic growth would be unleashed by the transformation of China's socialist system into a market economy fully open to world trade; a world enlightened by reason and held together by common understandings grounded in scientific knowledge; a world in which democratic values would eventually triumph (1995, 136).

American academia hoped to transform China with its own assumptions about what was good for China—market economy, celebration of sciences and technology, adoption of a democratic political system, etc. The expansion of higher education since the 1960s had produced a large number of intellectuals who were eager to conduct research about China and prove the universality of American values, and ultimately, pave the way for the hope to force these values on China. With growing concerns about China, more graduate students were enrolled to study Chinese, and apparently Jean M. James was one of those academics born of such a time.

4.2 Translations of Lao She in Relation to Modern Chinese Literary Studies

Perhaps due to the political standing in Lao She's works before the founding of the PRC, studies of Lao She and translations of his works flourished after the success of *Rickshaw Boy* in 1945 and published even in the Cold War period. By 1979 five novels and several short stories of Lao She were translated. In addition to *Rickshaw Boy* and *Rickshaw*, which were both translations of *Luotuo Xiangzi*, *Lihun* (*Divorce*, 1948), *Gushu Yiren* (*The Drum Singers*, 1952), *Sishi Tongtang* (*Yellow Storm*, 1951) and *Maocheng Ji* (*City of Cats*, 1964) were also rendered into English. Among them, *Lihun* led to a lawsuit between Lao She and King, which I have discussed in the last chapter (page 49-50). The translation and publication of Lao She's works slowed down when anti-Communist sentiments emerged in the USA in the 1950s, but the efforts were revived after the death of Lao She in 1966, which triggered a series of articles speculating on whether it was suicide or murder.

To gain a general picture of the translations of Lao She in the USA, let us examine a period a little broader than the period of 1945-1979. One year before King's translation of

Luotuo Xiangzi became popular in 1945, Wang Chi-Chen (王际真) translated five of Lao She's short stories and included them in a book named *Contemporary Chinese Stories*. Also one year after she published *Rickshaw* in 1979, James translated a second novel of Lao She, *Er Ma* (The two Mas) as *Ma and Son: A Novel by Lao She*, which was published by the Chinese Materials Center in San Francisco. *Ma and Son* received several reviews and it was said to have mainly "dealt with English stereotypes of Chinese," according to Robert E. Hegel in one review (1982, 298). Also Perry Link translated the last two chapters of *Luotuo Xiangzi* and published it in Hong Kong in *Renditions* in 1980. The third complete translation of *Luotuo Xiangzi* appeared in the US shortly after James's *Rickshaw*. It was translated by Shi Xiaojing, and published by Indiana University Press in association with Foreign Languages Press in Beijing in 1981. This translation will be discussed in the following chapter. There were numerous other translations of Lao She's works outside the USA, but since they do not concern the present study here, I will not list them here. Below is a chronological list of the major translations published in the USA:

Original work (in Chinese Pinyin)	Translation in English	Years Publis- hed	Translator
Five short stories	Included in <i>Contemporary Chinese Stories</i>	1944	Wang Chi-Chen
Luotuo Xiangzi	<i>Rickshaw Boy</i>	1945	Evan King
Lihun	<i>Divorce</i>	1948	Evan King
Lihun	<i>The Quest for Love of Lao Lee</i>	1948	Helena Kuo
Sishi tongtang	<i>Yellow Storm</i>	1951	Ida Pruitt
Gushu yiren	<i>The Drum Singers</i>	1952	Helena Kuo
Maocheng Ji	<i>City of Cats</i>	1964	James E. Dew
Maocheng Ji	<i>Cat Country; A Satirical Novel of China in the 1930's</i>	1970	William A. Lyell Jr.
Luotuo Xiangzi	<i>Rickshaw</i>	1979	Jean M. James
Er Ma	<i>Ma and Son: A Novel by Lao She</i>	1980	Jean M. James
Luotuo Xiangzi	<i>Camel Xiangzi</i>	1981	Shi Xiaojing

Table 4 Major Translations of Lao She's novels in the USA

Literary studies usually go hand in hand with translation studies. Given the prosperity of Lao She's translations, it is unlikely that literary critics would ignore him. Indeed, publications on Lao She's life and works emerged at a rate second only to those of Lu Xun among modern Chinese writers. Lao She was considered an important figure in modern Chinese literature, and his reception and reputation was connected to the whole field of Chinese literary studies, which gradually grew into an independent discipline after World War II in the United States.

In a review summarizing the development of modern Chinese literature in the west by 1976, Michael Gotz, then a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Oriental Languages at the University of California at Berkeley, identified three major groups of sociological scholars. Each of these groups, one after another, was identified for a period of time from World War II to around 1976. The earliest of these groups was the anti-Communist group, represented by Albert Borowitz and T. A. Hsia (1976, 401-03). I have noticed that all of these groups have expressed their interests in Lao She's works, and their comments on Lao She bear the clear marks of their time. This group judged modern Chinese literature by western criteria about literature, according to which good works should be independent of ideology and partisan politics. This criterion was in direct conflict with that associated with modern Chinese literature, which was largely committed to actively promoting political causes and modernizing China. C.T. Hsia's *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction* was influenced by the climate of the Cold War and anti-Communist thinking. Even though C. T. Hsia implied in his preface to this book that he would not judge literature by an author's political orientation (1961, vi), the criteria of his evaluation were recognized as dominantly western, and his disappointment with Communist literature revealed his prejudice against Communist China.

C. T. Hsia did not have a high opinion of Lao She's works after *Luotuo Xiangzi*, for the reason that those works were devoted to the anti-Japanese cause and in turn showed Lao She's passion for the Chinese Communist Party. In Hsia's *History*, Lao She's *Luotuo Xiangzi* and earlier works were given a whole chapter, while he was treated together with Mao Dun, Ba Jin and Shen Congwen in another chapter which deals with all his works after *Luotuo Xiangzi*. Hsia was particularly critical of *Sishi Tongtang* (Four Generations under One Roof), Lao She's most ambitious project. "Lao She never recovered from the drug of patriotic propaganda," he commented (1961, 369).

The prestige of Hsia's *History* can never be exaggerated as a field-founding work of modern Chinese literary studies. Hsia's comments on Lao She's works not only shaped the appreciation of *Luotuo Xiangzi* in the Cold War era, but also extended its influence to the present. Hsia spoke highly of Lao She's dramatic and narrative skills, which made *Luotuo Xiangzi* the best piece of modern Chinese fiction. It is reasonable to believe that Hsia's comments had contributed to the popularity of *Luotuo Xiangzi*, particularly in western academia. Lao She also ranked highly in Hsia's *History* for his insights into the needs and faults of China (1961, 187).

With the help of previous translations and Hsia's book, studies of Lao She and his works continued to appear and gradually established Lao She as a creative and humorous writer who was patriotic, but not committed to Communism like Mao Dun. Immediately after Hsia, Cyril Birch presented a more elaborate account of Lao She's works in "Lao She: The Humorist in His Humor". Birch analyzed the criticism of China as presented in Lao She's novels and plays. He concluded that "he [Lao She] had neither the nostalgia of Shen Ts'ung-wen [Shen Congwen] for the old ways, the folk ways...nor any burning passions to overthrow the forces of reaction as identified by the left" (1961, 51). It

appears that Lao She attracted Birch for his unique interpretation of China's problems and his divergence from the leftist line. As for Lao She's works after 1949, Birch resembled C.T. Hsia in saying that Lao She showed his craftsmanship rather than originality as exhibited in his earlier works. Although the anti-Communist message here was less obvious than that in Hsia, Birch seemed to blame the PRC for destroying Lao She's creativity as a writer.

Two more translations that deserve special attention are James E. Dews' *City of Cats* (1964) and William A. Lyell's *Cat Country* (1970), both of which are translations of *Maocheng Ji* (Lao She 1933). *Maocheng Ji* is a controversial novel and Lao She called it a total failure for its pervasive pessimism (Hu 1980, 35). This novel starts with the narrator's flight which lands him on Mars. He finds there a country inhabited by people with cat-faces. This cat country has incurable diseases such as those caused by opium, dogmatism and political commotions, among many others, which in many ways resembles the problems found in China of Lao She's time. So this novel is noticeably a condemnation and exaggeration of China's diseases, and reveals Lao She's pessimism and understanding of China's national peril in 1930s.

Although C.T. Hsia barely mentioned *Maocheng Ji* in *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, Cyril Birch discussed it and agreed with Hsia that Lao She's works during the Sino-Japanese War were mostly propaganda while those after the establishment of the PRC were even worse. In general, Birch thought *Maocheng Ji* was an uneven novel but had merits because of its outspoken messages on the problems of China. Very possibly encouraged by the comments of Birch on *Maocheng Ji*, the first translation appeared in 1964, translated by James E. Dew. This translation was published by the Center for Chinese Studies at the University of Michigan. Six years later, Lyell published the second

translation and received considerable praise for it. He also wrote an introduction of thirty-five pages to this translation, giving the reader comprehensive information about the author and the translated work.

Lyell did not view Lao She as a great writer commendable for his revelation of the complexities of human psychology. Instead, Lyell insisted that Lao She was devoted to improving the craft of writing and displaying the art of language (sounds familiar to Birch). On the very work he translated, Lyell commented: "Like most of Lao She's novels, it is uneven in quality. In addition to literary value, however, it possesses a great deal of worth as social documentation on China in the early thirties" (1970, xli). It is quite obvious that Lao She's novel was not regarded as an artistic object of much importance; rather, it was translated for the value of historical documentation as well as Lao She's perspective on the problems faced by China.

The popularity of *Maocheng Ji* in American academia would be explained in the context of the general situation in the USA. Before President Nixon's visit to China in 1972, Communist China was perceived as a threat and enemy to the USA. Particularly after the Korea War, American hostility towards the PRC seemed overwhelming and gave rise to McCarthyism. Apart from political controversies, Communist values were also in many ways contradictory to that of American society. Steven I. Levine described the conflicts as follows:

Of particular importance for Sino-American relations was the perception of revolution that prevailed within America's worldview. Sympathy for people fighting against political tyranny and absolutism was a residue of Jeffersonian democracy, but such sympathy evaporated in the face of social revolution. In addition to attacking property rights (including the property of Americans), social revolutions implicitly challenged a fundamental American myth, namely, that any problem could be solved by using existing institutions to harmonize contending but ultimately reconcilable interests. Rather than being the engine of historical change that Marxists perceived it to be, social revolution was seen as a monstrous perversity that overturned

the natural order, engendered anarchy or tyranny, led to the willful destruction or unlawful appropriation of private property, and fostered international subversion. Revolutionary leaders were viewed not as heroes but as best as cynical manipulators of the flotsam and jetsam of humanity, and at worst as the paid agents of foreign powers. Revolutionary governments were seen as the rabble enthroned (1989, 5).

Communist China advocated revolution, which Americans found hard to accept. But *Maosheng Ji*, to some extent condemned Communism as a mechanical application of an imported theory, which Lao She called “everybody-evskyism” in this particular novel. I take this as one possible reason for the popularity of *Maosheng Ji*, apart from its revelation of other social diseases in China.

The second group of scholars named by Gotz was the Prague school, which originated in the Czech Republic and which exerted a considerable influence on the American academia. Zbigniew Slupski was a prominent figure in this group specialized in Chinese literary studies. He discussed Lao She from a brand new perspective in his dissertation, *The Evolution of a Modern Chinese Writer: An Analysis of Lao She's Fiction with Biographical and Bibliographical Appendices* (1966). He focused on Lao She's literary techniques in several novels that marked his steady improvement in fictional composition, and reconsidered the claim that Lao She had modeled *The Philosophy of Lao Chang* after Dickens' *Nicholas Nickleby*. Slupski did not think that Lao She borrowed heavily from Dickens; instead, he argued that Lao She also drew heavily from Chinese traditional full-length novels, the *zhanghui xiangshuo* (1966, 27).

Slupski points out that *Luotuo Xiangzi* is a mature masterpiece. All the events in the novel center on Xiangzi, and the entire story is consistently narrated from the perspective of Xiangzi. This is a sign of remarkable progress since in Lao She's first novel there are five plot lines (1966, 56) and the focus shifts constantly from one character to another. Another aspect of *Luotuo Xiangzi* that had not been discussed until Slupski is the

masterful handling of Beijing as the setting. For Slupski, Beijing is not just there for a decorative purpose or for adding simply a realistic touch for Chinese readers, or an exotic touch for western readers. Rather, this city in Lao She's depiction has a rhythm of its own. Xiangzi's life blends with this rhythm and is also controlled by this rhythm, which is manifested in the city's rituals (notably, the birthday celebration of Liusi which advances the plot of Xiangzi's marriage to Huniu), the weather (the smothering sun and pouring rain which ruin Xiangzi's health) and the commotion (the soldiers who rob Xiangzi of his first rickshaw). According to Slupski, Lao She depicts an invisible but pervasive force that influences Xiangzi's decision at almost every critical moment. Xiangzi is dependent on Beijing but this city also destroys his body and soul (Slupski 1966, 64).

What distinguishes the Prague school from the first group is that it took a much more positive attitude toward the works studied. The Prague scholars were concerned with the evolution of writers and literary genres, which they believed was a way of understanding the development of modern China. Their limitation is that they only focused on the period between the Ming Dynasty and the 1930s. They rarely worked on contemporary Chinese literature, since China had left the Soviet Camp and the study of contemporary China became a sensitive topic (Gotz 1976, 406).

As the anti-Communist attitude had steadily subdued in the 1960s with the radical transformation of the American political consciousness, there appeared a third group of scholars, the liberal group, which was further subdivided into (a) the sociological school and (b) the school of literary criticism (Gotz 1976, 407-08). As their names suggest, the former focused on the social context in which writers worked while the latter discussed the aesthetic significance of individual works. The sociological school in particular bore an immediate relevance to the politics of the 1970s. After Nixon visited China in 1972,

the academia became excited about the prospect of researching on China and educating students from China, as it had done before 1949. Scholars of social sciences relied heavily on data to understand the contemporary China that Nixon had just visited.

Without the anti-Communist sentiments that shaped and even motivated the translation of *Maocheng Ji*, academic studies since the 1970s took a more sympathetic attitude toward the 1911 Revolution and also the Cultural Revolution. Some scholars would see the causes of and necessities for the 1911 revolution in China, during the first half of the twentieth century. This sort of pro-revolutionary stance was particularly shared by graduate students who were caught up in anti-war sentiments. These students, mostly in East Asian Studies, tended to even idealize the Cultural Revolution, which was regarded as a protest against authority and injustice (Madsen 1995, 52-53). These sentiments left an imprint on *Lao She and the Chinese Revolution* (1974), a representative work of the sociological school. The writer Ranbir Vohra was a Ph.D. student in Harvard at that time. He was concerned about the history of the Chinese revolution and used “the writing of modern Chinese writers, and their lives” as “an extremely important source for our comprehension of Chinese nationalism and revolution”, so “the study of Lao She, which focuses primarily on the content of his works and not on their literary quality, has been made within this context” (1974, 1-2). Even though not without sympathy to the Manchus who were the target of attack in the 1920s and earlier, Vohra appeared to approve the spirit of revolution, which endeavored to build a united republic out of China (1974, 8-9, 18).

Another study of this period was the Ph.D. dissertation *Lao She: An Intellectual's Role and Dilemma in Modern China* (1976) which covers Lao She's life from childhood to his death, particularly his life in the PRC and his suicide. The author is Sui-ning

Prudence Chou, an ethnic Chinese who was educated in the USA. The two studies by Vohra and Chow show that there was an interest in Lao She, and particularly realities of Chinese society as represented in his work and life. Lao She's works were believed to be under great influence from the west, and not seriously "polluted" by Communist orientation, consequently scholars took Lao She's fiction as realistic and reliable.

There was an increasing tendency among intellectuals all over the world to share with each other their research findings in the second half of the twentieth century. This being the case, it was hard to define the significance of American studies without taking into account those in the other parts of the world. The Americans learned from Europe, Japan, and Hong Kong, at a time when Communist China was isolated from the West. The above examination of major studies of Lao She gives a general impression that the initial interest in Lao She's fluent language and use of humor was followed by studies of Lao She's cultural and historical background, both of which define his unique perception of China's reality.

In this context, we see that among all the works of Lao She in translation, *Luotuo Xiangzi* was the best known and extensively studied, and *Maocheng Ji* ranked second. Both works express serious criticism of Chinese society. The popularity of both translations exposed a general belief among the general readership as well as academia that "the texts and topics (of contemporary Chinese literature) are interesting primarily because of their political protest against Mao's China, and less so because of their artistic excellence" (Liu 1993, 24). *Maocheng Ji* is not an artistically successful work, but it is accepted for its political message. *Luotuo Xiangzi* is translated by James for its accurate documentation of Chinese society in the republican period. And James' translation is not an isolated attempt to know China in the late 1970s. There are many other works

(anthology, monograph or collection of conference papers) on Chinese literature published during the period of late 1970s to early 1980s¹⁴.

4.3 James's Translation and Studies of Lao She in the USA

Unlike King who played multiple roles in his life, James was a researcher by training and worked exclusively in academia after she received her Ph.D. degree in Art History from The University of Iowa. As mentioned above, she translated two of Lao She's novels, *Rickshaw* and *Ma and Son*. These two translations were her only publications in the area of Chinese literature. In 1983, her Ph.D. dissertation was completed; and it was about two funeral monuments. She continued to write on related topics afterwards.

Even though the two English translations available by the year 1979 appear to be very different, the original texts used by translators are the same. James used a recent Hong Kong print which was identical with a 1949 Shanghai edition (Lao She trans. James 1979, vi). The PRC was completely closed to the USA until 1972 and it is only by very slim chance that James could lay hands on the 1955 abridged edition of *Luotuo Xiangzi* published in the PRC. Even in the 1970s, there are only limited source of information through official channel. Hong Kong is an unofficial channel to obtain materials from the PRC. Apparently the 1955 edition was unknown to James, even if she used a Hong Kong edition, which seems to carry more authenticity due to its location.

Except for a brief note on James on the back cover of her translation *Rickshaw*, there

¹⁴ In a review written in 1985, Prof. Lee ou-fan gave an account of the freshly available English translations of Chinese literature. Most of these translations were produced in early 1980s and Indiana University Press was a leading publisher in issuing translations of modern Chinese literature. See "Contemporary Chinese Literature in Translation—A Review Article" in *Journal of Asian Studies*, No. 3 1985. In the first two volumes of *A Selective Guide to Chinese Literature 1900-1949*, the editor Milena Doleželová-Velingerová provides a bibliography of works on Chinese novels. This bibliography clearly shows that a great number of works come out during the period of 1975 to 1985. See *A Selective Guide to Chinese Literature 1900-1949* Vol. 1 XIII-XV, 1985.

are few reliable sources of information about her. However, James wrote a scholarly introduction about the significance of this particular translation, perhaps in imitation of what William A. Lyell did for his *Cat Country*. We will take a close look at this introduction below.

In the second edition of King's *Rickshaw Boy*, we see colorful sketches of Beijing and characters from the novel. However, in *Rickshaw* James provides two maps of Beijing for readers' reference, one of which is a map of Beijing city, and the other is a map showing the route taken by Xiangzi when he escapes from the army and return to Beijing. These pictures demonstrate James's concern about Xiangzi's living environment, which can illuminate facets of China in the 1930s.

Illustration 3 The route of Xiangzi (Hsiang Tzu)'s escape from a military camp

HSIANG TZU'S PEKING

1. THE LEGATION QUARTER	10. CH'ANG AN STREET	19. LAMA TEMPLE
2. THE IMPERIAL PALACE	11. HSI AN STREET	20. TUNG AN MARKET
3. DOUBLE EAST & WEST P'AI LOU	11a. HSI AN MEN	21. SUN YAT SEN PARK
4. SINGLE EAST & WEST P'AI LOU	12. PEI CH'ANG STREET	22. TEMPLE OF HEAVEN
5. HSIN HUA MEN	12a. NAN CH'ANG STREET	23. CHI SHUI T'AN
6. NORTH LAKE	13. COAL HILL	24. WHITE PAGODA
7. MIDDLE & SOUTH LAKES	14. HOU MEN	25. HSIN STREET
8. THE WHITE DAGOBA	15. DRUM TOWER	26. THE WHITE HOUSES
9. T'IENT'AN MEN	16. PA TA HU TUNG	27. KAO LIANG BRIDGE
	17. T'IENT'CH'IAO	28. ZOOLOGICAL & BOTANICAL GARDENS
	18. TEMPLE OF CONFUCIUS	29. ALTAR OF EARTH

Illustration 4 Xiangzi's Beijing

James is keenly aware of the influence of King's translation. Before the introduction to her translation, she reveals the unfaithfulness of King's translation to prove the worthiness of her own translation. In "A Note on the Text and the Translation", James says:

Those who have read Evan King's translation published in 1945 as *Rickshaw Boy* will wonder if *Rickshaw* is the same novel. It is. King cut, rearranged, rewrote, invented characters, and changed the ending. The girl student and One Pock Li are King's, not Lao She's. King also added considerable embellishment to the two seduction scenes (Lao She 1979 trans. James, iv).

By mentioning King's translation, James achieves two purposes at least. First, she capitalizes on the fame created by King's translation to attract readers to her own translation. Since King's translation has been an enormous success in the market, people would be interested to read the story again. It also helps to explain why James chooses a title that is so similar to Evan King's. Second, she wants to emphasize the difference between her translation and King's, particularly the superior quality of her own translation.

As a translator, James's primary task was to tackle the text. However, the content of James' introduction reveals her link to the sociological school who studied Chinese literature in their social contexts and viewed literature as a means for studying Chinese societies. Some of her interpretations of this novel in this introduction are reasonable; however, some others are far-stretched and go beyond what the novel could possibly suggest. Here are some major points in her introduction.

First, James compares Lao She to Charles Dickens and concludes that Lao She is a chronicler of Beijing in the way that Dickens is of London. To prove the validity of Lao She's description, James compares the poor depicted in this novel to the sociological studies conducted by Sidney Gamble in Beijing in the 1920s, which echo the description

of the poor in *Luotuo Xiangzi*. James does make it clear that the present Beijing and Tian'anmen Square are not the same as what they used to be. James states that this novel is about a period that no longer exists, which is roughly from 1934 to 1937. We have to note that the entire novel provides little more than general information about the historical period for the story. Lao She drew freely from memories of his childhood as well as fresh materials he collected in 1936. A combination of these two and perhaps other things makes a novel placed in Beijing about the Republican Period. However, being convinced that this was a realistic description of life in Beijing, James feels obliged to specify a time period not clearly indicated in the novel. It is quite noticeable that she treats this novel primarily as giving a kind of documentation. Her emphasis on extreme faithfulness on the one hand distinguishes her translation from King and, on the other, reveals her view that this novel is a realistic description of life in Beijing in the 1930s.

Second, James comments that Lao She's novels "concentrated on a single theme with many variations: what is wrong with China and the Chinese", and "it is the self-centeredness of the Chinese, which he [Lao She] calls Individualism, that is their crucial failing" (1979, viii). James maximizes social criticism in *Luotuo Xiangzi* while minimizes literary imagination. With reference to the words of the old rickshaw man in the novel, James comes to the conclusion that Lao She's only political message is that "the poor must unite, collective action can save them", which leads her to believe that *Rickshaw* is a proletarian novel of the most realistic sort (1979, xi). James considers that Individualism was the major flaw of the Chinese people—she highlights the term "Individualism" throughout her translation. It is all natural the she also accepts the political message of collective action, which in turn shows her affinity to the effort of Chinese revolutionaries, such as the Communists, who tried their best to unite the poor. This is likely to be the

reason why James states that *Rickshaw* is a proletarian novel that many alleged Communist writers failed to produce. James's pro-revolutionary position, as it appears, seems to be in accordance with the tendency acknowledged by Vohra, who disagrees with C. T. Hsia that that Lao She's criticism of individualism is surprisingly leftist (1974, 112). Vohra, as with James, accepts that Lao She's criticism is reasonable and Chinese need the sense of impending national crisis. To some extent, this generation of scholars is more open to the revolutionary ideas and even to communism than the previous generation, as represented by C.T. Hsia.

Third, James believes Xiangzi is "not mocked, not blamed, not praised, but analyzed and despaired of" (1979, viii). She regards Xiangzi as the personification of this great flaw—Individualism since Xiangzi has no sense of national solidarity and all he cares about was his own survival. This not only dooms his own future, but also makes China a hopeless nation. James takes Xiangzi as a representative of this self-centered Chinese society. Only with a broader vision and a sense of commitment to a larger cause could Xiangzi escape the fate of total destruction (1979, ix). Xiangzi has more than one chance to help himself, but he always makes incorrect choices, which protect him in the short run but ruin him in the long run. He never bothers with the trouble of his fellow countrymen. This is a flaw, not only of Xiangzi, but of many others and even of the whole society. James interprets the illness of society as being reflected in the individual Xiangzi. Xiangzi is part of the society and deserves all his suffering because he brings it all upon himself. This is the way James understands this story.

Contrary to James's understanding of the story, the standard interpretation in Communist China sees it against the background of Chinese society at that time. Xiangzi comes afresh from the countryside to this city of Beijing, and hopes to make an honest

living by working hard. He is diligent and strong but still fails to make an independent living by working hard. Some evil forces in society dash his hopes whenever he seems to be near his goal. From this perspective, Xiangzi is indeed a victim and deserves our sympathy. Xiangzi represents the fate of the poor, who are ill-treated by society. The Chinese in the PRC understood *Luotuo Xiangzi* in this way also because Maoist teaching neatly divided people into several social classes. The problems in society were understood in terms of class struggles. The proletarians were supposed to be the leaders of society and hope for the future. Since Xiangzi is without a doubt a proletarian, he should be a figure deserving our sympathy despite flaws in personality. James's interpretation and that prevailing in the PRC are different, which also testifies to the fact that literature is employed to fulfill tasks that are defined by the social environment at that time in each country.

Even though James is by no means sympathetic to Xiangzi, she sympathizes with poor women, young and old, who have no hope for improvement of life. James insists that "real victims were women like Xiao Fuzi" (1979, ix), who have no other choice but to be the playthings of numerous men. Xiao Fuzi is Xiangzi's lover and a minor character in this novel. She cannot bear her hopeless life as a prostitute and commits suicide. James's attitude reminds one of women studies in the USA, a discipline that gained strength in the 1970s. Chinese women, in the writings of missionaries, had been victims of food-binding and subordination. To the missionaries, the suffering of Chinese women proves the barbarism of Chinese society and demands their intervention (Teng 1996, 121). Their image of Chinese women circulated widely among western readers and gave them a sense of superiority over the Orient for being more civilized. We cannot say for sure whether James is also influenced by this stock image of Chinese women, but her

sensitivity to the fate of Xiao Fuzi and other women's reflects her insistence that women be treated as equals of men. This is one possible explanation for her unsympathetic attitude toward Xiangzi and her empathy for a minor character such as Xiao Fuzi.

James mentions at the end of her introduction that Lao She's reputation is not built on the themes developed in his novels. Lao She was most famous for his story-telling techniques and for his language; he realized that he was not good at expressing provocative ideas in his works (Wang 1953, 232-33). Since he grew up in a poor family and was deeply influenced by folk culture, his stories are most successful in depicting ordinary citizens who love to put up an impressive front and the poor who are hopelessly trapped in all kinds of misfortune. *Luotuo Xiangzi* is a work belonging to the latter category. Lao She spent half a year collecting materials before writing the novel. When he started to write, he already had a plan and described everything accurately. He had been familiar since childhood with the life of poor rickshaw pullers, and he understood their suffering and thoughts. So he was able to describe Xiangzi with great psychological intensity. In other words, the reality presented by his colorful language is not inspired by some highbrow ideas. All the events in the novel seem so natural that only fate could explain what has happened. The novel is also composed by a mind that is deeply sympathetic to the poor. In a word, Lao She is committed to recording life realistically as he sees it.

However, Lao She's literary excellence is not sufficiently acknowledged in James's introduction or in her translation. James is drawn to the "realist representation" of China and renders the original with strict faithfulness. This badly affects the overall impact of the translation language (see Chapter 2, p31). James's insistence on "faithfulness" could also be accounted for in another way. In 1961, C.T. Hsia's *History* places *Luotuo Xiangzi*

in the literary canon of modern Chinese literature because Hsia regards it as the best of realistic novels produced by its time (1961, 187). James, as a student of Chinese literature, was unlikely to be unaware of *Luotuo Xiangzi*'s importance in Chinese literature when she decided to translate this novel. Being influenced by Hsia's appraisal, James paid her due respect to the novel by translating it with the greatest precision.

As a translation intended to serve academia, the translation also provides further information about Lao She and the historical background of the novel, which reveals the translator's personal understanding of the novel. While in the main text, which is rendered "faithfully", James was careful about not letting her own interpretations replacing that of Lao She's. Unlike King who enjoyed demonstrating his own creativity in his translation, James respected the original to such an extent that some even regretted that James should have tried less hard, at least in terms of her language (Vohra 1980, 589).

4.4 Conclusion

As a second translator of the same novel, James might have been forced to consider the differences between her translation and King's, even though the two translations are separated by some thirty-four years and intended for different readers. In introducing the Chinese "reality" to American audience, James's translation obviously does a better job than King's.

First, she presents a story faithful to the original, enabling readers to read the novel in its entirety, even though her language is less charming than that of Lao She's original. In contrast, King alters the ending and ignores Lao She's criticism of Chinese society. Second, James's serious attitude toward this translation leads her to further explore the social background of this novel as well as Lao She's background, but King creates a

popular and exotic fiction out of *Luotuo Xiangzi* and he never gives any background information concerning Lao She and the novel's Chinese origin, leaving things to the imagination of his readers. Finally James starts to contemplate the defects in Xiangzi's character, knowing Xiangzi is an individual living in China. Admittedly, James ignores the artistic and creative strength of the novel, but her interpretation is more tied to the original and she is better informed than King, who filters out content unacceptable to Americans and replaces it with that which is acceptable.

James's translation is done faithfully, due to two obvious factors: the trend in the academia set by sociological school and *Luotuo Xiangzi*'s canonized status. Because of the political climate and the expansion of higher education, this new translation was welcomed by those interested in China, which had just opened up to the USA, and mostly through students of Chinese literature. This translation did not sell millions of copies in a short time, but it is still easily available in bookstores now.

It is obvious that James's translation was under the influence of the political situation during the 1970s, particularly the abrupt revival of US-China relations. Since she was affiliated to academia and the translation was designed as a textbook, James's translations also bore noticeable characteristics of the academic environment, which perhaps would not allow her translation to be rendered in another way.

It can be said that the production of this translation is immune to the influence of China. Due to its isolation in the post-War world, China had very little influence on the research conducted in the USA by 1970s. Many may wonder what would have happened if China had exerted some sort of influence on these activities. In the next chapter, we will see how things actually evolve when a different translation produced in China enters the American market.

Chapter Five

Shi Xiaojing's translation: A Marketable Commodity

5.1 Introduction

Shi Xiaojing's translation—*Camel Xiangzi*—was produced with the sponsorship of the Chinese Central Government largely at the same time of Lao She's rehabilitation after the Cultural Revolution. When first published in the USA by Indiana University Press in 1981, the translation did not sell well at all (see footnote 6, page 11). Apparently being cautious with its investment, Indiana University Press did not altogether print many copies of the translation. And presently there are few used copies available in online bookstores, while new copies have been out of print for long. This is in stark contrast to the sales of James's *Rickshaw*; even now both used and new copies are easy to come by.

Nevertheless, the life of *Luotuo Xiangzi* in the USA did not stop in 1981. In 2005, a bilingual edition was published in Hong Kong, and was soon made available all over the world. Online bookstores such as amazon.com put *Camel Xiangzi* at the top of its list of available English translations for *Luotuo Xiangzi*. Now *Rickshaw* comes second, though it used to be the first in the list before 2005. The translation is part of the "Modern Chinese Literature/Translation" series, which started in 2000 and has seen the publication of nine titles before *Camel Xiangzi*.

Compared to the 1981 edition of *Camel Xiangzi*, the 2005 edition of *Camel Xiangzi* published by The Chinese University of Hong Kong has been substantially revised to accommodate new demands in the global book market of the twenty-first century. Even though the new bilingual edition adopts the older title *Camel Xiangzi*, and is the work of the same translator, the two editions are very different in design. The biggest difference is

that the 1981 edition has twenty-three chapters while the 2005 has twenty-four. Since the Chinese original text passed to Shi when she started to translate *Luotuo Xiangzi* in late 1970s was the 1955 edition, her 1981 translation does not have the last chapter either. In the following discussion I will examine closely each of the two editions. However, it is necessary to mention an edition that came out between the two editions of the *Camel Xiangzi*. This intermediate edition was published under the same name. It was revealed in 2001 by Foreign Languages Press and intended for domestic Chinese readers. Back in the summer of 2001, Shi translated the last chapter, which was published immediately with the part she had previously translated, making a new *Camel Xiangzi* (see Appendix 1). Below is a table giving essential data about the three *Camel Xiangzis*.

	Year	Publisher	Intended readers	Language
<i>Camel Xiangzi</i> (without the last chapter)	1981	Foreign Languages Press (Beijing) and Indiana University Press (USA)	American readers and other foreign readers	English text only
<i>Camel Xiangzi</i> (with the last chapter)	2001	Foreign Languages Press (Beijing)	Learners of the English language and translators in China	Bilingual
<i>Camel Xiangzi</i> (with the last chapter)	2005	Chinese University Press (Hong Kong)	Hong Kong and international readers	Bilingual

Table 5 Publishers and Intended Readers of the Three Editions of *Camel Xiangzi*

With an emphasis on the 1981 and 2005 *Camel Xiangzi*, this chapter will review the political and economic environment that gave rise to the two translations. Similar to the two earlier translations of *Luotuo Xiangzi*, Shi's *Camel Xiangzi*, in three different editions, are in many ways related to its social context.

5.2 *Camel Xiangzi* of 1981

When the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) finally wound down, the government began to rehabilitate people who had suffered imprisonment or even died during this period. Lao She was one of those figures who demanded recognition. Around 1976 the Chinese International Publishing Group (CIPG)¹⁵ decided to translate *Luotuo Xiangzi* into English. Shi Xiaojing, who just began working in CIPG, was invited by Yang Xianyi to translate this novel in 1976 (see Appendix 1). This translation was published in 1981 by Indiana University Press in association with the Foreign Languages Press.

Shi's translation is a pioneer work of translated modern Chinese literature, even published before the "Panda Books", which is a series of books in foreign languages (mainly English) that covers various aspects of Chinese society and culture. The Panda Books were undertaken with the hope to introduce the PRC to the outside world after two decades of isolation from the west. When domestic environment, both economically and politically, had changed for the better in the middle 1970s, the PRC wanted to gain more recognition in the international community. Internationally, China replaced Taiwan as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and established foreign relationships shortly after with Japan and the USA. After Nixon's visit to China, the PRC saw it as a good time to introduce herself to the American public.

Yang Xianyi is a critical figure in advocating the publication of translations of Chinese literature overseas. Together with his wife Gladys Yang and some colleagues, he translated Chinese literature into English even before the Cultural Revolution. Yang's most prolific years is in the late 1970s, after the Cultural Revolution. In 1988, there was

¹⁵ CIPG is an organization that is responsible for introducing China to foreign countries by publishing books about China in foreign languages. It is under the direct administration of the Communist Party and the Central Government. The Foreign Language Press (FLP) is a branch of this organization.

also another series called “Phoenix Books”, which was of a similar nature, and which included a reprint of Shi’s *Camel Xiangzi* and a new translation of Lao She’s *Mr. Ma & Son: a Sojourn in London*. Together with the journal *Chinese Literature*, Yang and his associates made a wide range of modern Chinese literature available and affordable by the early 1980s.

In the 1955 edition of *Luotuo Xiangzi*, Lao She deleted some of the obscene language and most importantly, the last chapter—in order to tone down the pessimism that pervades the end of the novel. Lao She’s bowdlerization was a result of what happened to him in the PRC after his return from the USA in 1949. In the newly founded PRC, Lao She felt the enthusiasm of people who had just survived numerous wars and now lived in a relatively stable society. The new government liberated the poor and the oppressed, who were promised a new life ahead. Grown up in a poor family of Beijing, Lao She believed that he had been too pessimistic in the past about the future of the poor; he became convinced after his return that the new PRC truly stood for the interest of the lower class. Accordingly, he decided to bowdlerize *Luotuo Xiangzi* because in the original work he had failed to foresee the future of Xiangzi with the triumph of the Chinese Communist Party. He deleted the last chapter in which Xiangzi becomes completely corrupted. With this chapter gone, the altered *Luotuo Xiangzi* leaves Xiangzi defeated and frustrated, but not without hope, since Lao She wanted to imply that the Communist Party stood for the hope. Lao She had many reasons to think so with his experience in the PRC. His family was well fed and warmly clothed when he finally returned home by way of Hong Kong in 1950. In the first ten years after his return, Lao She had a rather successful career. He was awarded the honorary title “People’s Artist” in 1951 and wrote famous plays such as *Dragon Beard Ditch* (龙须沟 1951) and *Teahouse*

(茶馆 1958).

Even though *Camel Xiangzi* was published by Indiana University Press in association with the Foreign Languages Press of Beijing, its format and content suggest that this book is a product of PRC proletarian ideology. With a preface from Mrs. Lao She and two essays by Lao She, the reader could easily perceive Chinese ideology in the early 1980s and before.

As pointed out earlier, this translation is incomplete since the Chinese original handed to the translator Shi Xiaojing was one without the last chapter. In the afterword Lao She explains his reasons for the deletion, which are worth quoting:

I wrote this story nineteen years ago. In it I expressed my sympathy for the labouring people and my admiration of their sterling qualities, but I gave them no future, no way out. They lived miserably and died wronged. This was because, at the time, I could only see the misery of society and not the hope of revolutionary truths. The poor should revolt. Shortly after the book came out I heard people comment, "Judging by this book we are really too wretched and hopeless!" I feel deeply ashamed about this.

Today, nineteen years later, the working people have become masters of their own destiny. Even I now understand something about revolution and am very grateful to the Communist Party and Chairman Mao. The present reprint of my book should surely have only one aim and that is to remind people of the frightful darkness of the old society and how we must treasure today's happiness and light. Never must the reactionaries be allowed to make a comeback. We must safeguard with all our might the victories of the revolution. (1981, 230)

The date given for the writing of this afterword is September, 1954, shortly before Lao She's bowdlerized *Luotuo Xiangzi* came out in the PRC, and three years after Lao She received the honorable title "People's Artist" from the Beijing Municipal Government. In the same year, Lao She wrote another article reviewing his past five years in the new government, published in the *Beijing Daily*. In this article, he passionately praises the new government for its efforts to improve people's lives and expresses his regret for not working hard enough (In fact, Lao She is one of the few writers who continued to produce

substantially in the PRC. And considering his physical illness, he really was very prolific in the first five years of the PRC). All these pieces, produced in the middle 1950s, repeatedly clarify his wish to improve his novel in the context of Chairman Mao's revolutionary ideas and then current literary theory—that is, literature should serve workers, farmers and soldiers (Lao She 1989, 328-32).

Similar to Lao She's apologetic tone for not giving Xiangzi a bright future, Lao She's widow, Hu Jieqing, even ventured to say in the preface that Lao She had *actually* planned to write a happy ending about "Xiangzi's rebirth, his revolt, his happiness" (Lao She 1981 trans. Shi, 5). It is likely that Lao She might have thought of doing so, considering his enthusiasm for the PRC in the early 1950s. However, Mrs. Lao She's preface is dated February 2nd, 1979, thirteen years after Lao She's suicide. It would make people wonder whether Mrs. Lao She was truthful in her comments and how she could remain committed to Maoist teachings after her husband's suicide. Since there is not a word about Lao She's suicide, not to say its cause, an informed reader cannot help but suspect that the publication of the translation was a deliberate attempt to cover up an infamous period in the history of the PRC. Yet the attempt only makes it more obvious.

Mrs. Lao She's preface keeps emphasizing that "Lao She came from a very poor family", which is the first sentence of the preface and also constitutes the core meaning of the preface. She associates Lao She with the poor, who are supposed to be a respected class in the PRC but regarded quite differently in the USA. Another feature of Shi's translation is that it includes several illustrations from Ding Cong (丁聰), a renowned painter in the PRC who drew most of the important characters, including Xiangzi, Huniu, Lao Ma (Old Ma) and his grandson, Xiao Ma (Little Ma), and finally Xiao Fuzi. Although they are not kept in the Indiana University Press edition, these illustrations quite

obviously display the significance of each character in the PRC. Lao Ma in *Luotuo Xiangzi* is a benevolent rickshaw puller who has degenerated and become destitute in his old age. His grandson dies in his own arms because of poverty and disease. Lao Ma and Xiao Ma are inserted into the novel quite purposefully since Lao She intends to show through these characters that rickshaw pulling as a career is at a dead end. Such a functional character as Lao Ma had been habitually ignored until his significance surfaced after the founding of the PRC. The minor characters in the novel, together with Xiangzi, had been poor people who suffered seriously in the old society. In the new society of the PRC, the poor were the leaders and the future of society. To be among the poor was glorious and being the poor had many positive implications. So Lao Ma and Xiao Ma should be pictured to provoke people's hatred against the old society (see Appendix 5 for these pictures). Further more, the protagonist Xiangzi was even lifted to the status of a hero, as is obvious in the following drawing in *Camel Xiangz* (see Illustration 5). This illustration appears on the front cover of the Indiana University Press edition.

Illustration 5 An Illustration of Xiangzi in *Camel Xiangzi* (1981)

There are few available documents that record the responses of those who happened to read this translation in 1981. However, the ideological biases in Mrs. Lao She's preface and in Lao She's afterword would remind people of the painful history caused by such biases, and this is bound to be detrimental to the sales of these books in the USA, since anti-Communist sentiments have always been much stronger than pro-Communist sentiments among the general readership in the USA. The content of this edition, particularly the preface and afterword, is likely to turn away potential readers in their efforts to distract the readers from an ignominious period in the history of the PRC. The introduction appearing on the cover of the 1981 edition printed in Beijing is reluctant to

make any reference to the suffering and death of Lao She during the political movements. The insincere attitude surely affects readers' confidence in the rendition of the whole novel. Besides this problem, there are at least three other reasons that could have prevented *Camel Xiangzi* from attracting a wider audience.

First, there was another translation of the same book that had just been published two years before—James's *Rickshaw*. This other translation had received several reviews in academic journals. The University of Hawaii Press, its publisher, had also put up an advertisement in *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* (see *CLEAR* 1.2, 261). In 1980, James published a second translation of Lao She's novel *Ma and Son: A Novel by Lao She*, which was also reviewed in academic journals. Compared with James's better exposed *Rickshaw*, Shi's *Camel Xiangzi* was less well-publicized, with no advertisement or academic reviews to be found anywhere. If a book published by a university press receives no attention in the academia, it means few people know about it and even fewer will buy it. Since the Chinese original used by Shi was cut short and made incomplete, *Camel Xiangzi* was further disadvantaged with the last chapter missing. In one of those few essays where this translation was mentioned in passing, the author expressed his regret that this translation was incomplete (Hegel 1982, 298).

Second, the social environment around the year 1980 favored James's translation more than Shi's. After the WWII, China became a leading country in the Third World. Despite the fact that McCarthyism had negatively affected China studies in the early 1950s, from the end of the 1950s to the 1970s, China studies gradually developed into an independent discipline that mainly served to help the American government understand Chinese issues. In other words, studies about China in the USA habitually catered to practical purposes, rather than emphasize the disinterested research on Chinese history or

culture, as European sinology did (Liu 2004, 44). Among the circles of Chinese literary researchers, the most prominent group in the 1970s was the sociological school, which looked at Chinese literature from a sociological and historical perspective (Gotz 1976, 406-08). James's attitude towards *Rickshaw*, as I have argued in Chapter 4, was very similar to the perspective of this school; she treated this novel as a piece of social documentation, so it needed to be translated as faithfully as possible. The approach of this group considered literature as the product of history and society, and also a source of historical and social information. For readers who thirsted for facts or knowledge about China, Shi's *Camel Xiangzi*, which had value only in terms of its literary qualities, would have appeared less satisfactory than *Rickshaw*, which at least claimed to be a faithful and complete rendition.

Third, although the cultural differences easily arouse interest, such differences alone may not induce appreciation. A country needs to project a more positive image, or prove that it can offer something uniquely useful to others before its artistic works can find a market elsewhere. For an easy analogy, we would not refuse to exchange a few words with strangers to gain some knowledge about their background, but we would not attempt to analyze their character unless they are famous or of special interest to us. China in the 1970s was far from being a powerful nation. It had just been recognized by the USA. Even though it attracted curiosity from Americans, its current state was not agreeable. John K. Fairbank, perhaps the most important sinologist at the time, contributed reviews frequently to *New York Review of Books*, *New York Times Book Review* and other newspapers where he published short articles on the history of the PRC. His articles exposed the continuous political movements encouraged by Mao and the damage caused by these political movements. The most notorious of these was the Cultural Revolution, in

which there were attacks on traditional culture and intellectuals. These events were most unacceptable to westerners (Fairbank 1987, 180). Anarchy, chaos, violence, extremism and fear built up a disturbing image about Chinese people, who struggled in poverty under the despotic governance of the Communist Party. For those outside of academia, this image generated little affection that may nurture some interest in Chinese literary works or Chinese art in general.

In conclusion, the failure of *Camel Xiangzi* to reach a wider audience in the early 1980s was caused by a number of reasons. The design and compilation of this translation exposed the existing proletarian ideology commonly found in Communist propaganda, which might have appeared offensive to American readers. Coupled with the low international status of the PRC, a literary translation of a Chinese novel, even though published in association with a renowned American press, had difficulty in finding readers.

5.3 Translations of *Luotuo Xiangzi* in the New Millennium

The economic boom in the PRC since the 1990s surprised the whole world, with an annual GDP growth of over 10%. At the turn of the millennium, many wondered if the PRC would continue to grow at such a rate. Not all were pessimistic about the future of the PRC and more were worried about the future of the world if China kept growing. Some extreme opinions had it that a powerful China would be a threat to world peace, especially with its accelerated investment in the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Others, chiefly the Chinese Government itself, claimed that China would put its primary emphasis on the economy, and world peace was essential to its own development as it was to others. Even though western countries tended to distrust the Communist Party and the Chinese

government, particularly after the 1989 Tian'anmen Incident, the Chinese economic miracle was nevertheless admired. It attracted interest not only in its potential economic growth, but also in its culture and heritage. Admittedly, these interests were to some extent triggered, directly or indirectly, by financial interests.

***Camel Xiangzi* of 2001**

Before we discuss the edition of *Camel Xiangzi* published by The Chinese University Press in Hong Kong, we have to take a look at the 2001 edition of *Camel Xiangzi* published in Beijing by the Foreign Languages Press. The copyright for the 2005 edition was bought from the Foreign Languages Press and then published with minor alterations in the translated text. The Chinese University Press, however, changed the format considerably. These two editions were intended for different readers. The Beijing edition was designed for “domestic English learners and translators” (Lao She 2001 trans. Shi, iv), while the Hong Kong edition was for readers who were interested in modern Chinese literature or who wanted to improve their Chinese. Let us first take a brief look at the former to gain some ideas about China's domestic market for *Camel Xiangzi*.

After the economic reform started in China in the late 1970s, the lack of people who could speak foreign languages (especially English) made the capability to speak English an enviable asset. As China's economy was further connected to the world community in the 1990s, proficiency in English meant a much better opportunity for finding a good job. Since college graduates were no longer guaranteed a job after graduation, the expansion of higher education made the job market as competitive as the college entrance examinations, if not more so. There were also a considerable number of college graduates who dreamed of pursuing their higher education in the United States. All these young people devoted their spare time to studying English and created a huge market for English

learning materials and training courses.

The Foreign Languages Press is one of many publishers which have benefited enormously from English-learning frenzy among college students starting from the 1990s. *Camel Xiangzi* was one book issued to attract “domestic English learners and translators”, as mentioned in the Publisher’s Note. Considering the level of English proficiency required to read Shi’s translation, these “domestic English learners and translators” could only be college or postgraduate students. As requested from Lao She’s family¹⁶, Shi translated the last chapter of the original text, as was published before the Communists took over and added it to the 1981 edition. Since it was designed to be “useful material for domestic English learners and translators” (Lao She 2001, iv), the introduction to Lao She, together with the preface and the afterword which appeared in 1981 edition of *Camel Xiangzi*, were removed, leaving only the translation itself. The arrangement reflected a change in Chinese society and also probably complied with a consideration of prospective readers. In a society that gave priority to economic development, ideology and politics gradually became secondary concerns. For college students, they had been familiarized with Lao She through high school textbooks, which included one chapter from *Camel Xiangzi* and one scene from Lao She’s famous play *Chaguang* (茶馆 1958). And since their focus was to learn the English language, they hardly cared how this masterpiece *Luotuo Xiangzi* was conceived.

Camel Xiangzi is one of several titles in the series named “Echo of Classics”, which contains works sanctioned by the PRC government, such as those works by Guo Moruo(郭沫若), Ai Qing(艾青), Lu Xun(鲁迅) and Mao Dun(茅盾). In about two years, 5,000 copies of *Camel Xiangzi* had been sold and another 3000 copies were printed in

¹⁶ Shi Xiaojing told me this when I interviewed her on July 13, 2006.

2004.

***Camel Xiangzi* of 2005, with a Comparison to Zhang Yimou's Films**

In 2000, The Chinese University Press in Hong Kong began to publish a series entitled “Modern Chinese Literature/Translation”, in response to “the recent phenomenon that authors of Chinese origin have been attracting more international attention in the literary world, perhaps as a result of China’s increasing cultural interactions with the outside world in the past two decades” (Lao She 2005 trans. Shi, v), according to the publisher. *Camel Xiangzi* is the 10th book in the series and the second work by Lao She, *Teahouse* being the first. The Advisory Committee to this series includes big names in the circle of international Chinese literary studies, such as William Tay (Chairman), Howard Goldblatt, Jeffrey C. Kinkley and Kwok-kan Tam, the last of whom wrote a comprehensive introduction to Lao She and *Luotuo Xiangzi*.

In a world motivated by economic benefits, the publisher would not refuse any opportunities to gain profit, yet they would be reluctant to admit overtly their real financial goals. The Chinese University Press claimed that their translations responded to a cultural phenomenon: Chinese literature had been gaining more attention all over the world in the past twenty years. However, their compilation and choice of literary works betray their financial orientation.

The 2001 *Camel Xiangzi* is a bilingual edition intended for English learners, so the translation is on the right of the Chinese original, which is printed on the reverse side. The format of the 2005 Hong Kong edition is just the opposite, with Chinese on the right and English on the left. The latter is obviously intended for intermediate and advanced Chinese learners. When Hong Kong reunited with China in 1997, Putonghua became much more important as one of the three official languages in Hong Kong, since Hong

Kong's economy became ever more closely connected to that of Mainland China. Hong Kong People's motivation to improve their Putonghua created a market for literary works written in good Mandarin Chinese. The works selected in the "Modern Chinese Literature/Translation" series are invariably written in standard Chinese. If this series had been only intended for Hong Kong readers, then the translation provided on the left would have been unnecessary. This is because the translation was unlikely to help Hong Kong readers to appreciate the Chinese original, which was easier to understand than English for the majority. Therefore, it is fair to say that this series, though published in Hong Kong, was prepared with an eye for international readers whose Chinese was not good enough to enable them to understand the Chinese original fully. Just as there was a frenzy in the west to learn Japanese when Japan's economic power was at its climax, when China's economy started to boom at the end of last century, there was an increased interest in studying Chinese. So it is no surprise that *Camel Xiangzi* was simultaneously released in Hong Kong and made available to readers through major online bookstores all over the world.

The books already published in the "Modern Chinese Literature/Translation" series exhibit a wide range of literary styles: *Taipei People* (2000) by Bai Xiangyong (白先勇); *The True Story of Ah Q* (2002), *The New-Year Sacrifice and Other Stories* (2002), and *Wild Grass* (2003) by Lu Xun; *Memories of Peking: South Side Stories* (2002) by Lin Hai-yin(林海英); *Cold Night* (2002) by Ba Jin(巴金), *Selected Stories of Shen Congwen* (2004) by Shen Congwen(沈从文); *The Shop of the Lin Family & Spring Silkworms* (2004) by Mao Dun; and finally *Teahouse* (2004) and *Camel Xiangzi* (2005) by Lao She.

With the exception of *Taipei People*, all the other works provide different

representations of Chinese society before 1949. The choice of these works by the Chinese University of Hong Kong reflects a “cruel reality” in the reception of Chinese literature: Chinese literatures will be appreciated in the west only if they present a rather different aspect of human experience—that is, an experience in a pre-modern society and with some local color which is distinctively different from that in the modernized and industrialized societies of the West. A touch of primitiveness and backwardness remains a major element of the China image.

The publisher mentions the fact that Chinese literature has gained more attention in the past two decades; however, nothing is said about what literature specifically attracts attention overseas. It occurs to me that such works of literature would probably include those by Gao Xingjian(高行健), or Mo Yan(莫言), Su Tong(苏童), and perhaps Yu Hua(余华), among many other contemporary Chinese writers. This series excludes any works produced in the past two decades, and the majority of the works included are canonized works written in the 1930s. Internationally, Chinese literature produced in the last two decades has a much lower status than that of the 1930s. As a result, the books included in the series appear to have been carefully selected to avoid failure in sales. In this sense, the published books already in this series appear to be carefully selected works tailored also for international readers.

Different from the previous two translations of *Luotuo Xiangzi* rendered by American translators, *Camel Xiangzi*, rendered by a Chinese translator, represents an initiative among Chinese people to represent themselves before others. However, what sells well in the market is determined by the receiving culture/society, not China. In the following, I would like to examine some products that are successful in the western market, which will tell us that *Luotuo Xiangzi* is similar to those works, particularly

viewed from the perspectives of western audiences. The most successful products from China in the global market, other than tacky souvenirs and cheap clothing, are likely to be Chinese movies. In the past two decades, Zhang Yimou has acquired international recognition for his films, such as *Red Sorghum*, *Ju Dou* and *Raise the Red Lantern*. In the following part I will demonstrate that Zhang's movies, just as Lao She's *Luotuo Xiangzi*, present a similar representation of China and its people.

Zhang's directorial debut is *Red Sorghum* which won him the Golden Bear for Best Picture in the 1988 Berlin Film Festival. His later works *Ju Dou* and *Raise the Red Lantern* were nominated for Oscar's Best Foreign Language Films in 1989 and 1991, respectively. These films set their stories before 1949 and offer easily digestible entertainment to westerners. In *Primitive Passion*, Rey Chow describes one characteristic of prevailing representations about China, which could also be applied to Chinese films that are well received in the west:

In a culture caught between the forces of "first world" imperialism and "third world" nationalism, such as that of twentieth-century China, the primitive is the precise paradox, the amalgamation of two modes of signification known as "culture" and "nature". ... A strong sense of primordial, rural rootedness thus goes hand in hand with an equally compelling conviction of China's primariness, of China's potential primacy as a modern nation with a glorious civilization. This paradox of a primitivism that sees China as simultaneously victim and empire is what leads modern Chinese intellectuals to their so-called obsession with China (Chow 1995, 23).

Before moving on to specific discussions of "culture" and "nature", it is necessary to indicate the connotations of these two terms, which are too general to have a definition within our limited space here. Briefly, "culture" refers to the part of Chinese life that would not be explained by any biological needs, originating from a mysterious past and established in the course of history. And "nature" is the primitive aspect of Chinese life, or related to the biological needs of human life, which is despised by the bourgeoisie.

Understandably, the two definitions might overlap, but they will serve to highlight the features of the China image discussed below.

The significance of culture in Chinese life is most noticeable in rituals. *Red Sorghum* opens with the wedding of Jiuer, the heroine. As local customs allow people to make fun of the bride and force her to talk, the sedan-chair bearers start to sing provocative songs, and shake the sedan-chair on which the bride is seated. This hubbub, accompanied by the high-pitched sounds from traditional Chinese musical instruments, creates a picture of tumultuous Chinese social life. The biggest ceremony in the film *Ju Dou*¹⁷ is the funeral of Yang Jinsan, Ju Dou's husband. During Yang's funeral, Ju Dou and her lover, who is also Yang's adopted son, are required to cry their hearts out and stop the funeral procession for forty-nine times. For forty-nine times, the two kneel down and let the coffin pass over them. When the ceremony is finally over, the two figures, exhausted and dirty all over, start to weep in silence. While in Yang's life time he has tortured Ju Dou and her lover, after his death, he is still a source of trouble and pain. The ritual depicted in *Raise the Red Lantern* is less boisterous, but it is equally spectacular. It happens every night—in the yard of the chosen concubine where the red lanterns are lighted, apart from a foot message for the concubine. The major rituals in *Luotuo Xiangzi*, such as Liusi's birthday party and his daughter Huniu's wedding, are also important occasions for social

¹⁷ The film *Ju Dou* tells the story of Ju Dou, who is married to an old man Yang Jinsan. Yang Jinsan wishes to have a son but he does not know that he is sterile. Every night, he tortures Ju Dou, who tries to protect herself but in vain. Leading an inhuman life, Ju Dou falls in love with Yang's adopted son, Yang Tianqin and soon Ju Dou is pregnant with Yang Tianqin's child. Later Yang Jinsan has an accident on his way to the market and is paralyzed when Yang Tianqin finds him on the roadside. Later Yang Jinsan discovers the secret between Ju Dou and Yang Tianqin. Being madly jealous, he attempts to kill the baby just born and burn the whole house down when Ju Dou and Yang Tianqin are asleep. Fortunately, he is unsuccessful. However, unable to bear the accusation of infidelity, Yang Tianqin is reluctant to declare his love for Ju Dou publicly, not to mention killing Yang. Being a coward, Yang Tianqin does not even dare to leave the village and start a new life elsewhere with Ju Dou and their son. Later, Yang Tianqin later dies in an accident and their son also grows up, but their son could never accept Yang Tianqin. Provoked by the rumor circulating in the village about her mother and Yang Tianqin, their son kills his biological father, which drives Ju Dou mad. In the last scene of the film, Ju Dou burns down the courtyard that has trapped and destroyed her.

gatherings that trigger or signify major changes in Xiangzi's life.

These rituals, invented or realistic, exhibit the exotic side of China and give the viewers or readers a quick taste of Chinese culture and even allow them to formulate some judgment of their own. Another integral part of cultural China is characterized by oppressed women. In the films mentioned above, Zhang Yimou habitually tells stories about women who are trapped in traditional and feudal China. Even though the protagonist of *Luotuo Xiangzi* is a man, the many women appearing in Xiangzi's life still comprise an oppressed group that demands our sympathy. If we analyze the predicament of women in Zhang's films and *Luotuo Xiangzi*, it is easy to see that these women suffer in a similar way—they are regarded by traditional culture as inferior compared with their male counterparts, and their marriages are a kind of “trade” for their parents who seem to care only about the money they can get by marrying/selling their daughter to another man as wife or concubine. These oppressed women testify to the backwardness of Chinese culture.

Let us start with the women in *Luotuo Xiangzi*. Huniu is the most important woman in Xiangzi's life, despite the fact that Xiangzi has never been truly in love with her. Huniu appears to be better off than most women in *Luotuo Xiangzi* and Zhang Yimou's films, since her father is rich and she has sufficient clothing and food. In addition, she is more capable than other women and has some ideas of her own. However, her life is still a tragedy because, like all women, she belongs to the oppressed class. Her appearance and particularly her ability both prove to be disadvantageous to her. Since she is not good-looking, Huniu is destined to die unloved. Even a poor rickshaw puller like Xiangzi would never willingly accept her, and Lao She is also most of the time critical of this woman. Her capability only accelerates her decline. Since she can manage the

rickshaw agency well, her father is unwilling to marry her off. Also because she is more capable than most women at that time, she naturally has the desires to pursue the life she prefers, and this is quite rare among women in her time. When she declares her marriage to Xiangzi, her father considers her a humiliation to the family and refuses to have any contact with her from then on. At the end she dies in poverty, as well as in her father's apathy. If she is less capable and more obedient, we have reason to believe that her father is unlikely to drive her out.

Huniu is a victim of the general perception that women are inferior in Chinese society. Since she is a woman, according to custom she has no legitimate claim to her father's property after her marriage, even though she is an only child. Consequently, Huniu dies in childbirth since Xiangzi has no money for a doctor and her father has left Beijing with all the money with him. The other women in *Luotuo Xiangzi* are even more pathetic than Huniu. They never have any control over their lives and live at the mercy of their husbands and families.

Lao She rather realistically portrays the life of women in worse terms than that for men in the 1930s and earlier. The society defines an inferior position for women, and makes them subjects to men's desire and bullying; besides, they are laborers and victims of poverty. Unlike Huniu, most women never think about changing their lives but accept whatever life offers to them. Xiao Fuzi is typical of those women who accept their fate. She has the courage to kill herself, but she does not have the courage to disobey her father who sells her for two hundred dollars to an officer and later forces her to be a prostitute.

In many of Zhang Yimou's films, the heroine is typically a talented and pretty woman who is forced by her family to marry a rich old man and starts a life of oppression and tragedy. The tragedy of Ju Dou begins with her marriage to Yang Jinsan, a marriage that is

forced on her by her family, and ends with Yang Tianqin's inability to reject filial piety. Ju Dou is unable to change her life because as a woman, she is not allowed to remarry, while Yang Tianqin, her only hope, is too cowardly to resist any social pressure.

Raise the Red Lantern towers above all the other works mentioned in this chapter as far as the issue of women's oppression is concerned. This film gives maximum attention to women characters, featuring Songlian, a college girl who is forced by her stepmother to be the fourth wife in a rich household. All throughout the film, the master of the household never shows his face to the audience. His voice is heard, his presence is felt and his influence dominates the life of all the women in the household. He appears only as a symbol of male supremacy, and as a character that has no personality. The focus of audience is diverted to a campaign between four wives competing for the favor of the master, who controls their bodies and spirits. Of course, this story can only end in tragedy since the inequality between man and woman in the household has prevented the existence of love, or any sort of humane affection, so what is left is enmity, malice, apathy and lunacy. A pretty and sentimental girl in the beginning, Songlian is driven mad after a series of severe competitions. The third wife, a talented opera singer, is killed by the master after her love affair with a doctor is uncovered. The first wife, secured in her position, finds solace in Buddha, as she has always done. The spiteful second wife, who survives on her tricks and malevolence, sees the coming of a new competitor, the fifth wife who has just been married to the master.

Women's oppression has turned into "a commodified image in the global market" and "the symbol of China's otherness", says Lu Tonglin (2002, 168). The stories of Ju Dou and Songlian also indirectly support the rationality of western concepts such as liberty and equality. However, there is another side to the western values which supports liberty

and equality, as has been rendered obvious in the general attitude to Huniu among western audience. It could be found that King noticeably dislikes Huniu since he exaggerates Huniu's sexuality and turns her into an immoral woman who is at the same time her father's mistress. It is sort of surprising that James never mentions Huniu in her introduction despite her importance in Xiangzi's life, even though James is quite conscious of women's oppression and expresses unreserved sympathy for Xiao Fuzi. James' apathy toward Huniu is also fairly noticeable. As discussed above, Huniu is a victim of women's oppression, and what distinguishes her from other Chinese women is her courage and ability to resist her destiny. It seems that as a Chinese woman, her aggressiveness is not appreciated by western audience and reminds one of the life and career of Anna May Wong (See page 53-4).

As a Third World nation to western audience, the primitive aspect in Chinese society is another equally attractive ingredient in China's cultural products. This primitive state could be positively presented, as in the film *Red Sorghum*, when a group of muscular men work in high spirits together to make wine from sorghum; it may also be negative presented, as in the last chapter of *Luotuo Xiangzi*, where people rush to watch the execution of a political prisoner, driven by the natural instinct of curiosity and cruelty. In Zhang's movies and Lao She's novel Chinese life appears in an underdeveloped and even vulgar state. The first indication of "nature" in Chinese life is the passion for food, perhaps due to the popularity of Chinese restaurants overseas.

In *Ju Dou*, eating not just gives great pleasure, but also is connected to a sense of intimacy: when the main characters eat without the presence of Ju Dou's husband they cross the line of proper behavior for the first time. Another detail from *Raise the Red Lantern* also supports the importance of food. For the chosen concubine of the previous

night, it is her privilege to order her favorite food, while the others have to eat what she chooses. The gratification to be obtained from eating and drinking is magnified in both *Red Sorghum* and *Luotuo Xiangzi* through the gulping up of wine and food. In *Red Sorghum*, even the nine-year-old son could finish a large bowl of wine in one breath, not to mention the grown-ups. *Luotuo Xiangzi* frequently describes everyday food that Beijingers eat with great precision. The above details suggest to the audience that keeping one's stomach satisfied amounts to an integral part of a meaningful Chinese life.

An overwhelming sense of primitivism in both *Red Sorghum* and *Luotuo Xiangzi* is also expressed through the admiration of physical strength, as well as the elevation and recognition of tough characters who defy morality. The exaltation of physical strength in *Red Sorghum* is realized primarily through the bulging and naked chest which is the brand of the hero Yu Zhanao as well as his friends. Such praise for human body and physical strength is also seen in *Luotuo Xiangzi*. When Xiangzi comes to Beijing from the country, he chooses to be a rickshaw puller because he believes that his body can make him a first-class rickshaw puller. In the beginning of the novel, Lao She describes Xiangzi's body as follows:

Though hardly twenty, he was tall and robust. Time had not yet moulded his body into any set form but he already looked like a full-grown man—a man with an ingenuous face and a hint of mischief about him. Watching those high-class pullers, he planned how to tighten his belt to show off his sturdy chest and straight back to better advantage. He craned his neck to look at his shoulders: How impressively broad they were! His slender waist, baggy white trousers and ankles bound with thin black bands would set off his “outsize” feet. Yes, he was surely going to be the most outstanding rickshaw puller in town. In his simplicity, he chuckled to himself (Lao She 2005 trans. Shi, 12).

Xiangzi's love for his own body is visible almost in every line of the paragraph. All through this novel, Xiangzi's outlook is closely related to his confidence in his health. He will not yell to the habits of other rickshaw pullers, such as smoking, drinking and

whoring, since he knows these habits can do harm to his health as well as wealth. He hates his wife Huniu partly for the reason that he believes his health deteriorates as a result of her insatiable sexual desires. In both Yu Zhanao and Xiangzi, the well-built body is the source of pride, even though Yu wins the heart of his woman with much better luck while Xiangzi barely keeps himself alive.

Toughness is most recognizable in Yu Zhanao of *Red Sorghum* and Liusi (Fourth Master Liu) of *Luotuo Xiangzi*. In fact Xiangzi admires Liusi for this very reason. Toughness is normally associated with a sense of immorality. Yu's toughness is evident in his manner of showing his desire for Jiuer. He takes newly-wed Jiuer by violence to the depth of sorghum field and takes Jiuer into her room before the eyes of everybody. In order to marry Jiuer, Yu also kills Jiuer's husband. Liusi is Huniu's father, who earns a reputation for his toughness. Liusi runs his rickshaw agency with great toughness and he is a hero to Xiangzi. Lao She described the history of Liusi as follows:

Before the fall of Qing Dynasty he [Liusi] had taken part in mob fighting, abducted women of good families and undergone torture. When tortured, he had neither batted an eyelid nor begged for mercy and had earned the reputation of standing firm at his trial (Lao She 2005 trans. Shi, 84).

Here is Xiangzi expressing his unrestrained regard for Liusi:

In Xiangzi's eyes, Fourth Master Liu could be compared to Huang the Tyrant. He knew of only two great historical figures, one was Huang the Tyrant, the other was the Sage—Confucius (Lao She 2005 trans. Shi, 154).

Even if Xiangzi may appear naïve to regard Liusi as equal to Huang the Tyrant, his admiration of Liusi is not meant to be satirical. This short description of Liusi's history represents him as a courageous and even legendary character.

Morality is a by-product of human society and serves to maintain the order required for a peaceful society. By appealing to the empathy and sympathy that is said to be uniquely human, morality is respected and elevated to be the trademark of a civilized

society. With no respect for morality, tough people could be a menace to a society, but they have the charisma which demands esteem from many of us who feel bound up by moral considerations of our society. Immoral persons resist social pressure and thus obtain a primitive and uncivilized aura, which westerners find disturbing if these people live in their society but delightful to watch in films set up in an Oriental society.

The last trait of the primitiveness of Chinese life is explicit in the unrestrained exploitation of the poor and weak. Admittedly, *Red Sorghum* and *Luotuo Xiangzi* have exhibited diversified aspects of pre-modern China: *Red Sorghum* is about rural North and *Luotuo Xiangzi* is about urban Beijing. The two works also take different approaches: Zhang's film is poetic, with extravagant use of colors, while Lao She's novel is realistic, giving a compassionate description of the city poor. What is more, Yu in *Red Sorghum* illustrates the fate of a winner in such a society, while Xiangzi embodies the doom of a loser. Both, however, live in a society that is operated according to an evolutionary logic: the strong oppress the poor, who in turn bully the poorer.

The social order in *Luotuo Xiangzi* displays the worst aspects of a society that lacks in proper governance and legislation. As a social underdog, Xiangzi is invariably the sufferer: his first rickshaw is robbed by soldiers, his money is taken away by an evil detective, and his life is controlled by Huiou. From the beginning to the end, Xiangzi grows worse and ever more dispirited, living in a society that loves to be regarded as civilized but is actually not. He supports his life with a bright future since his body is strong, but the society does not recognize his physical strength. With no money and no relationship, he actually belongs to the weak group in society and constantly exploited by those better off. Lao She condemns the merciless society in Chapter twelve as follows:

That was life, everyone had a way out, could find a loophole somewhere except for Xiangzi—he could not escape, because he was a rickshaw puller. A

rickshaw puller swallows husks but spits out his life's blood, he strains himself to the utmost for the lowest pittance. He stands on the lowest rung of society, the butt of all men, all laws, all adversaries (Lao She 2005 trans. Shi, 286).

The underdog Xiangzi is unable to change his fate since he is at the bottom of the society. Xiangzi is destined to be the one bullied and oppressed. However, the darkest side of the society is to be seen in the last chapter, in which Beijing people throng to watch the execution of a political prisoner. While every one cares only about himself, their ignorance and apathy for others is appalling, and Lao She thus comments on the enthusiasm of the mob:

Such people have no sense of right or wrong, they know nothing about good or evil, they have no principles, they cling stubbornly to a number of ethics and expect others to consider them civilized. Actually, what they really enjoy is watching a fellow human die a slow, lingering death, such cruelty giving them as much glee as a child gets from killing a puppy (Lao She 2005 trans. Shi, 570).

Lao She's accusation against Beijing people concerns the darkest side of their human nature, since they enjoy the suffering of others and never bother to think about morality or distinguish good from bad. When hypocrisy is added, this society appears even more hopeless. If morality marks the difference between animal and human beings, then the Chinese people in Lao She's description are perhaps even worse than animals, and Chinese society is even more dangerous than a group of ferocious animals since the strong cannot survive, but the malicious can. (When Xiangzi tries to make an independent living with his strength, he fails; however, after giving up his morally upright life, he can get money easily by means of lying and betrayal.)

Darwin's evolutionary theory was once employed by imperialists as the excuse to exploit the sources of the Third World in the 19th century. Regarding their colonies as backward societies, imperialists justified their exploitation of colonies as the process of civilizing them. Even though such an argument could be seriously challenged nowadays

since it assumes western social order as more advanced and desirable one, it does stop the westerner from viewing the Orient as immoral and chaotic. By portraying Chinese society as lacking in social order and justice, Zhang Yimou's films are at the same paying their respect to western concepts of democracy and liberty.

It is also noticeable that the standard employed to analyze Chinese society in the above works discussed above is dominantly western. The primitive and natural dimension of Chinese society becomes problematic only when judged by the western values. It is a fact of life in China that many women depend on their men for their livelihood, and this economical dependence naturally crushes the equality between the sexes, making women subject to men's will. Confucius promotes this kind of subjugation and considers it basic to the stability of the whole society. However, with western idea of equality, the subjugation of women to men becomes a social disease, and obviously both Lao She and Zhang accept the western concept of equality. Following the same line of argument, morality becomes a problem in China when the author/director applies western ideas of democracy and universal love.

With the help of the most popular media—films—Zhang Yimou invented “Chineseness” in the latter half of the 1980s and the early 1990s. By contextualizing China in the past, *Luotuo Xiangzi* constructs a China that is exotic and backward. It is no coincidence that the Chinese University Press of Hong Kong recently included in their “Modern Chinese Literature/Translation” series literary works that attack traditional China and its pre-modern society from the perspective of western ideas and values. It could be inferred that *Camel Xiangzi* was welcomed and thus included for similar reasons.

5.4 Conclusion

The two versions of *Camel Xiangzi* witness the growing influence of Chinese culture, which is commoditized to appeal to a larger audience in the world cultural market. Clearly, *Luotuo Xiangzi* contains the elements that could make it a market success. This success of *Camel Xiangzi*, however, is not the same as the success of *Rickshaw Boy*, the first translation. *Camel Xiangzi* is purposely chosen by the Chinese and it offers perhaps the worst of Chinese society and people for the satisfaction of western curiosity and vanity, while *Rickshaw Boy*, much more closer to Chinese reality 1945 than it is now, appealed to the west, partly because the frustration felt by Xiangzi was universal, shared by Chinese as much as by Americans.

The growing importance of China in the world community renders any idealization of the western world and any mystification of China unsustainable. However, while the Chinese have successfully sold their cheap products to the West, they also know how to market their cultural products. Zhang Yimou's films are successful examples. Marketability also partly explains the enduring interest in *Luotuo Xiangzi* among western readers. Both Zhang and Lao She viewed Chinese tradition with western values, such as equality and liberty. Especially in films such as *Ju Dou*, *Raise the Red Lantern* and *Luotuo Xiangzi*, the image of China viewed from western idea of universal love is tragically spectacular. But at the same time China remains a remote country that westerners can safely watch and enjoy from a distance.

Considering the generally low standing held by modern Chinese literature overseas, it is necessary for us to examine those translations that have successfully draw a large audience. As a translator or an entrepreneur, Andrew F. Jones has talked about the difficulty of marketing Chinese literature in the USA and Europe. Wishing to construct a map of "World Literature", western critics constantly evaluate Chinese literature

according to their own standards. They expect to find what is missing in the west but exists in China. As a result, only those meet their expectations are appreciated while many works of modern Chinese literature are merely regarded as inferior imitations of western literary forms (Jones 1994, 176-77). This is a kind of Western cultural hegemony which is taken largely for granted in the west. As a result, the majority of modern Chinese literary works that are deeply rooted in the contexts of contemporary Chinese reality are dismissed as artistically or linguistically unsatisfactory, while a small number of literary works, including translations, are greeted in the West for their exotic flavor or sharp criticism of Chinese society, as Shi's translation has demonstrated.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

If the text comes even close to the status of ..., a “central text” embodying the fundamental beliefs of a culture (the Bible, the Koran), chances are the cultural will demand the most literal translation possible. (Bassnett & Lefevere 1995, 7)

The above translation runs contrary to the situation or position the translations of *Luotuo Xiangzi* found themselves in. Having closely examined the three translations of *Luotuo Xiangzi*—by King, James, and Shi—we may see that none of the translations were presented as a “central text” in the receiving culture. Still in the periphery of western values, these translations have been largely subjected to the request of their time, instead of following the requirement of “faithfulness”, a term that is understood differently by different translators. The conclusion to the present study of three translations rests very much on the relationship between (a) translation and history, and (b) translation and cultural exchange.

While each chapter in this thesis can be read independently, together they reveal one commonality among all three translations. That is, each of these translations appeared within a specific context, bearing marks of the historical period in question. It is the particular combination of social, political and economic factors in the context that mandate the production of the translation, choose the translator and also determine the shape and form of the final product. A general trend that we may note by observing the three translations in one light is that China has become more and more important in influencing the sales of her cultural products, although her prestige may not make itself better understood. The following table shows the major events which set the background for the three translations of *Luotuo Xiangzi* in the USA.

Year	Chinese History	American History	American Literary History
1931		The Great Depression	Pearl S. Buck published <i>The Good Earth</i> .
1937	Outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War		<i>The Good Earth</i> was made into a film of the same title and Edgar Snow's <i>Red Star Over China</i> was published.
1941		After the raid on Pearl Harbor, the USA declared War on Japan. China and the USA became allies.	
1943		Mayling Soong Chiang visited America, calling for help.	
1945	End of the Sino-Japanese War	End of WWII	Publication of <i>Rickshaw Boy</i>
1961		Rapid expansion of higher education from the 1950s to the 1960s	Publication of Hsia's <i>A History of Modern Chinese Fiction</i>
1966	Beginning of the Cultural Revolution and death of Lao She	The protests among university students in support of more opportunities for women's higher education from the 1960s to the 1970s	
1970			Publication of <i>Cat Country</i>
1972	China replaced Taiwan as a permanent member of the Security Council in the United Nations. China no longer closed its door to the West.	Nixon's visit to China	
1975		End of the Vietnam War	
1976	End of the Cultural Revolution. China started to rebuild the economy		
1979		Normalization of Sino-US relationships	Publication of <i>Rickshaw</i> , a second translation of <i>Luotuo Xiangzi</i>
1981			Publication of <i>Camel Xiangzi</i> , a third translation of <i>Luotuo Xiangzi</i> by Indiana University Press in association with the Foreign Languages Press

1989	Tian'anmen Incident took place. Zhang Yimou's film <i>Ju Dou</i> was nominated as Oscar's Best Foreign Language Film.		
1990 - Present	China's economy boomed	China's exports of commodities to the USA increased dramatically.	
1997	Hong Kong became part of the PRC.		
2001	Publication of <i>Camel Xiangzi</i> targeted at domestic English learners.		
2005	Publication of <i>Camel Xiangzi</i> in Hong Kong for Hong Kong and international readers		

Table 6: Major historical events related to the three translations

The table above easily reveals the relationship between the three translations and their social background. The first translation *Rickshaw Boy* (1945) was published by a commercial press and intended for a general readership that imagined China largely in terms of stereotypes. In addition, the American interest in China and the publication of a translation in this nation coincided with a historical period in which China was viewed as a friend. The deliberate appeal to stereotypes, such as the lustful Chinese women, the evil China men, is a very successful move to attract the readers; the alteration made to the end of the story also invites the readers to sympathize with the protagonist Xiangzi. King's translation is produced with minimal interference or whatever from China. The second translation (*Rickshaw* 1979) was produced and circulated mainly in academia, which contained the largest group of experts on Chinese matters. The expansion of higher education facilitated this translation while Nixon's visit to China could be viewed as an impetus that provoked an interest in China both among translators and students of East Asian studies. With potential consumers of this translation available, the translator and the

publisher did not hesitate to prepare a new translation of a novel that had been a bestseller. This translation is produced to satisfy the curiosity and also reduce the unfamiliarity about China. The failure of the 1981 translation to reach a wide readership, however, reflects an ideological disparity that existed between American readers and Chinese publishers, which originated from a long period of isolation and resentment during the Cold War. When this translation reappeared in America around 2005, this new edition marks a new phase of growing interest in the Chinese economy among Americans, which is doubtlessly associated with the fact that China is developing at an unexpected rate.

Generally speaking, the present historical study of three translations also reflects the status and influence of Chinese literature and culture over a history of some sixty years in the USA, with an open end that extends into the future. Evan King's translation shows the least respect for the author Lao She and for China as a nation that was backward but friendly in American eyes at that time; while James's translation shows an awareness of the need to deal faithfully with China and its realities. The situation with Shi's translation is more complex and much subtler. Its lukewarm reception in 1981 reveals the fact that the interest in Chinese literature and culture was relatively low at that time, while its reprint in 2005 could be read as a message that signals increased interest in China and its culture overseas, when China has grown into a politically and economically important nation.

Appendices

Appendix 1 The Dilemma of Translators

----An Interview with Shi Xiaojing

作為譯者的尷尬

----《駱駝祥子》譯者之一施曉菁教授訪談錄

香港中文大學出版社從 2000 年開始陸續推出了中國現代文學中英對照系列。老舍先生的《駱駝祥子》便是其中之一。而我現正在做的研究生論文課題便是《駱駝祥子》英譯本，所以自然就對這本書極為關注。《駱駝祥子》迄今已有三個譯本，每一本都在不同的背景下完成，單就譯本本身而言，我最喜歡的是施曉菁教授的譯本，也就是中文大學選擇的譯本。

已有的三個譯本除施的譯本之外，其他兩個分別是 Evan King 和 Jean M. James 的譯本。后兩位都是美國人，雖然他們的譯本在美國都有不少讀者，King 的譯本甚至還成為 1945 年美國的年度暢銷書，但如今已很難找到兩人的消息，也無從聯絡。倒是偶然在網上搜索到了施的聯繫方式，還有一些零散的關於她的介紹。我抱著試試看的心理給施寫了一封信，竟然很快地就收到了她的回信，而且她表示願意回答關於當時如何譯《駱駝祥子》的問題，儘管那也是快 30 年前的事了。就這樣我便有了這次採訪施的機會。

施一年大部分時間待在美國加州蒙特利爾學院教翻譯，只有寒暑假才回北京探親。正好我六月份有機會去北京參加一個會議，便約定了六月初在北京見面。一切都很順利，讓我頗為驚訝的是施說話的聲音，儘管是通過電話線傳來，也依然相當有力，估計她上課時是絕不需要麥克風的。平日在學校裏習慣了輕聲軟語的我，簡直不敢相信電話那頭是一位年過五十的女士。及至見面，我更加驚訝，因為我實際上已見過她，在一年前的國際譯聯第四屆亞洲翻譯家論壇的一個分會場，只後是那時我還不知道她會成為我研究生論文的研究對象。

談話一開始，施就詳細地介紹了自己的背景。她生於南京，50 年代初隨父母遷到瑞士日內瓦居住，直到她高中畢業。66 年回到中國，在母親的指導下學習漢字，因為離開中國的時候太小並不識字，所以長大後依然只會一些簡單的日常用語。73 年開始在北京大學學習，76 年開始到外文局工作。然後又在聯合國工作過一小段時間，接下來回到外文局，之後就在蒙特利爾學院教書至今。

施翻譯《駱駝祥子》是剛剛到外文局參加工作後不久的事。說來也有些湊巧，施某日在走廊裏碰到當時在外文局工作的大翻譯家楊憲益先生，楊先生便問施有沒有興趣翻譯《駱駝祥子》，而施當時只是一個初出茅廬的新人，抱著“why not?”的心理便應承了下來，而實際上施那時並不知道老舍是何人。不久，楊先生便拿給施一本《駱駝祥子》教她譯一段給他過目，看看她是否能勝任。而施一拿到老舍的原著便被其流暢的語言所吸引，自然譯得很出色。到 1979 年便將全書順利譯出，1981 年就外文出版社就將這個譯本出版了。後來外文出版社打算重新將這本書印成中英對照本的時候，應老舍家屬的要求，外文局決定將最後一章補上，於是施又花了一個暑假的時間將這最後一章也譯出來了，這便是 2001 年在北京出版的《駱駝祥子》了。至於此譯本在香港出版的事，施本人並不知曉。同時對此書的出版施一直有些不滿。原因之一在於這本書譯完之後首次出版時，施的名字被排在書中插

畫的畫家之後，還拼錯了（被拼成了 Shi Xiaoqing）。直到 2003 年再版時才在施自己的要求下將她的名字放在了老舍的名字之後。至於 2005 年此譯本在香港出版一事，更是無人通知她。她所獲得的報酬也就是基於她所做的文字翻譯功夫，至於銷量如何和她沒有關係，她對譯本也沒有任何版權可言。

由此我便深深感受到譯者的權力在中國大陸真是毫無保障，有不少人認為香港也好不到哪兒去，而翻譯難做又是眾所周知的。施給我舉了一個簡單的例子：罵人的話該如何譯。在《駱駝祥子》中不時會出現一些髒話痞話，因而這確確實實是施翻譯時面臨的一個問題。困擾施的問題是該用 30 年代的罵法呢，還是 80 年代的罵法，除此之外，還有應該選擇英式罵法、美式罵法抑或是加拿大罵法的問題。在文化層面上，不同的做法也反映出各種問題。在施著手翻譯《駱駝祥子》之前，她曾大概地看過 King 的譯本，並對他的人名譯法頗有微詞。King 將祥子譯為 Happy Boy，準確與否先不說，這其中的 Boy 就有貶低人物主人公的意思。就像外國人使喚一個小跟班或路邊的商販，脫口而出的便是“Come here, Boy”，或者是“Do this, Boy！”。虎妞，一個三十多歲的婦女，被譯為 Tiger Girl，更是沒有道理了。同時 Boy 加 Girl，讀起來就像童話一般輕鬆了，根本就找不到老舍當年創作這篇小說時對社會現實的控訴。老舍在這篇小說中使用了許多北京方言，並描寫了不少北京特色的人文自然景觀。施是中國人，已有好多不明白之處，仔細請教了不少老北京人，才將裏頭的含義弄個明白。對於外國人，可以想像這種滲透著文化特色的語言是一個多大的障礙，出現理解錯誤也不足為奇了。

施認為翻譯之難還不僅如此，翻譯不是個人創作，因而只有充分體現了原著風采才能算成功的翻譯。而當時施被老舍流暢通俗的文字吸引，因而她譯時也大都選用來自生活中的語言，儘量避免將字典中生僻的辭彙搬出來。也正因為如此，她的譯文讀來正如原著一般通俗、流暢，成為中文大學出版社的首選譯文。

採訪到最後，施問起我對學業的計畫，得知我打算繼續學習語言和翻譯，施很高興。但同時也告誡我要多加努力，緊靠研究別人的翻譯是不夠的，還得靠自己多實踐才能多有進益。我也認為這次採訪給了我一個深入瞭解翻譯的機會，且不說在譯文中呈現原文的風格有多難，就算是瞭解不同地區不同年代的罵法已屬不易。

Appendix 2

Descriptions of Natural Setting

Chinese Original

街上的柳树，像病了似的，叶子挂着层灰土在枝上打着卷；枝条一动也懒得动的，无精打采的低垂着。马路上一个水点也没有，干巴巴的发着些白光。便道上尘土飞起多高，与天上的灰气连接起来，结成一片恶毒的灰沙阵，烫着行人的脸。处处干燥，处处烫手，处处憋闷，整个的老城像烧透的砖窑，使人喘不出气(Lao She 2005 trans Shi, 431)。

King's translation

The willow trees on the street were as if they were sick; their leaves, covered by a layer of dust, were curling back on the stems; their branches could not find the energy to make even the slightest movement, and only hung listlessly down toward the earth. There was not a drop of water anywhere on the avenue; it was so dry it gave off a shimmer of white light, like heat become visible. In the by-ways the dust rose up very high, joining with the gray air of the heavens to form a floating carpet of the cruelest dust and sand, to scald the faces of people who walked the paths beneath it. Everywhere it was parched; everything you touched burned your hand; everywhere it was stifling; the whole city was like a burned-out brick kiln. People could not draw their breath (Lao She 1945 trans. King, 278).

James' translation

The willows along the street looked sick. Their leaves were all curled up and covered with dust; their branches, barely moving, drooped in utter dejection. There was not a spot of dampness anywhere in the main street. It was so dry it shimmered whitely. Then the dust from the dirt streets flew up and joined the dust in the sky to make a poisonous layer of gray dust that burned people's faces. It was dry everywhere, hand-scorching everywhere, depressing everywhere. The whole city was like a fired-up brick kiln which made breathing difficult (Lao She 1979 trans. James, 176).

Shi's translation

The willows lining the streets seemed sick, their dusty leaves curling, their branches hanging limp and motionless. The street was bone dry and glaring white. Dust rose from the foot-paths to meet the grey miasma, forming a vicious veil of sand that scorched the faces of the passers-by. Everywhere was parched and stifling as if the whole ancient city were one lighted brick-kiln. (Lao She 2005 trans. Shi, 430)

Appendix 3 Dialogues

Chinese Original

“别嚷行不行？”祥子躲开她一步。

“怕嚷啊，当初别贪便宜呀！你是了味啦，叫我一个人背黑锅，你也不挣开死××皮看看我是谁！”

“你慢慢说，我听！”祥子本来觉得很冷，被这一顿骂骂得突然发了热，热气要顶开冻僵巴的皮肤，浑身有些发痒痒，头皮上特别的刺闹得慌。

“这不结啦！甭找不自在！”她撇开嘴，露出两个虎牙来。“不屈心，我真疼你，你也别不知好歹！跟我犯牛脖子，没你的好儿，告诉你！” (Lao She 2005 trans. Shi, 207)

King's translation

“Could you do without shouting?” Happy Boy stepped away from her.

“If you were afraid of my making a noise, you shouldn't have come around trying to get something for nothing in the first place. You've got tired of the flavor, and you want me to carry the black pot all alone. Why don't you pull back the skin on your dead jeebah and take a look at me out of your one eye, take a look at who you're dealing with.”

“Take your time, and say what you want to say. I'll listen.” In the beginning, Happy Boy had felt very cold, but with Tiger Girl's imprecations he had suddenly become hot all over. The heat opened the pores on his skin that had been benumbed with cold, and his whole body began to itch. On his head, particularly, these stabbing little prickles that cried to be scratched were almost unbearable.

“This thing isn't going to end here, and there's no use making it any more uncomfortable for yourself than you have to.” She parted her lips in what was meant to be a smile, showing the tiger fangs. “You mustn't be so darkly suspicious. I'm truly very fond of you. And don't forget what's good for you, either! You won't get any good out of making your neck stiff like a bull's, I am telling you.” (Lao She 1945, 124)

James' translation

“Don't yell, all right?” Hsiang Tzu took a step away from her.

“If you are afraid of a fight you shouldn't have come panting after a free ride in the first place. You had a taste and now you make me take the blame all by myself. Why don't you pull back the skin on your dead prick and take a look at who I am!”

“Talk slower. I am listening.” Hsiang Tzu was very cold but all this abuse suddenly made him feel hot; the heat wanted to break out of this frozen-stiff skin of his. His whole body began to itch all over and his scalp was burning unbearably.

“This doesn't settle anything. I'm not looking for ways to upset you.” She curled her lips revealing two tiger teeth. “I'm not trying to hurt you, I really love you and you don't know what's good for you! Getting bullheaded with me won't do you any good, I am telling you.” (Lao She 1979, 80)

Shi's translation

“Can’t you stop screaming?” Xiangzi edged away.

“If you are afraid of my making a noise you shouldn’t have put one over on me in the first place! You got what you wanted and now you expect me to take the consequences all on my own! Who the balls do you think I am anyway?”

“Slow down, take your time, I am listening!” Xiangzi had been icy cold but now these curses made him hot all over, the heat breaking through his frozen pores so that his whole body itched. His scalp especially tingled.

“Now, that’s better. Don’t make things hard for yourself!” Her lips parted to show her canine teeth. “No fooling, I’ve really got a thing for you, so count yourself in luck! Believe me, it’ll do you no good to get mulish (stubborn) with me!”(Lao She 2005 trans. Shi, 206)

Appendix 4

Culture-related Items

Chinese Original

第二天早上，棚匠来找补活。彩屏悬上，画的是“三国”里的战景，三战吕布，长坂坡，火烧连营等等，大花脸二花脸都骑马持着刀枪。刘老头子仰着头看了一遍，觉得很满意。紧跟着家伙铺来卸家伙：棚里放八个座儿，围裙椅垫凳套全是大红绣花的。一份寿堂，放在堂屋，香炉蜡扦都是景泰蓝的，桌前放了四块红毡子。刘老头子马上教祥子去请一堂苹果，虎妞背地里掖给他两块钱，教他去叫寿桃寿面，寿桃上要一份儿八仙人，作为是祥子送的。苹果买到，马上摆好；待了不大会儿，寿桃寿面也来到，放在苹果后面，大寿桃点着红嘴，插着八仙人，非常大气。(Lao She 2005 trans. Shi, 313, 315)

King's Translation

Early the next morning the matshed builder arrived to supply the deficiencies in his labors. He hung the brightly painted cloths—there were pictures of war scenes from “The Three Kingdoms”: the three battles in which Liu Pei fought Lü Pu; the fighting in the hillside where Chao Yun saved the defeated Liu Pei’s son; the debacle in which Liu Pei’s encampments were destroyed by fire, and from which the hero himself escaped only by the grace of a miracle; and other stories happening—the big painted faces and the small ones were all astride their horses, flourishing spears and swords. Old Man Liu stretched his neck to look them all over carefully and felt well satisfied.

Close on the heels of the matshed builder came the furniture store men. They set up eight tables inside the matshed; the table aprons, the chair cushions, and the stool covers were all of silk with great red flowers embroidered on them. An altar to the God of Longevity was set up on the ceremonial room; the censers and the candelabra were of cloisonné enamelware in a beautiful blue, and before the table were four red rugs. The sight of them reminded Old Man Liu that they hadn’t any apples to set around, and he sent Happy Boy off in a hurry to order some. Behind the old fellow’s back Tiger Girl slipped two dollars into Happy Boy’s hand, telling him to get peaches and cakes of longevity and to have baked on each of the peaches one of the Eight Immortals; these were to be as if they had been a present from Happy Boy himself.

When he had bought the apples, they went to work to set them out, and after what was not a very long while the peaches and cakes of longevity that he had ordered arrived too, and they put them in back of the apples. The peaches were so large that the lips of the cleft near the top looked like a mouth, and the figures of the Immortal as if he were issuing from it; it was marvelously genteel and large-spirited(Lao She 1945, 190-1).

James' Translation

The mat shed men came to finish up early the next morning and the painted screens were erected. The paintings showed famous battles from the period of the Three Kingdoms with all the warriors, great and small, riding their horses and brandishing their swords. Old Liu peered at them closely and felt content.

The furniture men came to unload the rented furnishings. There were eight tables inside the mat shed. The cushions on the chairs and stools all had large red flowers embroidered on them. An altar was set up in the central section. The incense burners and candleholders were all cloisonné enamelware. Four felt rugs were laid in front of the altar. Old Liu promptly sent Hsiang Tzu off to buy apples. Hu Niu gave Hsiang Tzu two more dollars behind Liu's back to pay for an order of noodles and the "Longevity" peaches made of dough which have pictures of the Eight Taoist Immortals on them and symbolize long life.

Hsiang Tzu bought the apples and they were set out nicely. After a short wait the noodles and peaches arrived and were placed behind the apples on the altar. Painted on the peaches were open red months with a picture of an immortal stuck inside. They were very grand (Lao She 1979, 123-24).

Shi's Translation

The next morning, the builders arrived to finish the job. The painted screens were hung up. They depicted the three battles against Lü Bu, the Changban Slope, the burning of the united forces' camp and other scenes from the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. The figures were made up as if on the stage and were all on horseback and wielding swords and lances. Old Man Liu craned his neck to look them over, and was very satisfied. Shortly after, the furnishers arrived and installed eight tables and sets of chairs and stools in the marquee. The chair covers and the cushions for the stools were embroidered with bright red flowers. An altar to the God of Longevity was set up in the hall with cloisonné incense-burners and candle-sticks. Four red rugs were placed before it. Then Old Man Liu sent Xiangzi off to get apples, and Tigress slipped him two dollars to buy longevity peaches made of dough as well as longevity noodles. She told him that each peach must have one of the Eight Immortals on it. These were to be his own gift. Xiangzi bought the apples and set them out on the altar. Presently, the longevity peaches and noodles arrived and he placed them behind the apples. The peaches, painted red, each had one of the Eight Immortals stuck on top and really looked most distinguished. (Lao She 2005 trans. Shi, 312, 314)

Appendix 5
Illustrations from *Camel Xiangzi* (1981)

Huniu and Xiangzi

Laoma and Xiaoma

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**CONTEXT, TRANSLATOR AND HISTORY: A STUDY OF THREE
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