



# Overseas translation of modern Chinese fiction via *T'ien Hsia Monthly*

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## Abstract

*T'ien Hsia Monthly* (1935–1941) was the only journal that was sponsored independently by the Chinese, aimed at disseminating Chinese thoughts and culture to the West at that time. During its 7 years of existence, the journal translated and published a significant number of modern Chinese literary works in, which had a positive impact on the West. Nevertheless, domestic and foreign research on it has not always been sufficient due to political or other reasons. This article aims to elucidate the foundation of *T'ien Hsia Monthly*, its social impact at that time, and its stance on cultural communication between the East and the West. It also discusses the translation attitude and strategies the Journal adopted by taking the two most influential modern Chinese writers, Lu Xun and Congwen Shen, as examples. How do literature and cultures which are in a relatively disadvantaged position confirm their self-positioning, national identity, and development orientation, when faced with language and cultures having advantages in the process of translation? The translation of modern Chinese fiction in *T'ien Hsia Monthly* provides people with a new way to consider “the impartial exchange based on national characteristics.”

**Keywords** *T'ien Hsia Monthly* · Translation · Modern Chinese Literature · Lu Xun · Congwen Shen

*T'ien Hsia Monthly*, sponsored independently by the Chinese intellectuals, was the most critical English ideological and cultural journal in the first half of the 20th century. With the aim of “introducing China to the West,” many modern Chinese works of fiction were translated and published in the journal. This was an event of pioneering significance in terms of the overseas dissemination of modern Chinese fiction, in that these translation activities in *T'ien Hsia Monthly* were the earliest channel for modern Chinese fiction to be known and understood by the West, yet it has received

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limited scholarly attention hitherto. The present article thus addresses the following questions: What kind of periodical was *T'ien Hsia Monthly*? What were its stance and purpose? What impact did it have? Based on these three questions, this article analyses the strategies adopted in the translation of modern Chinese fictions in *T'ien Hsia Monthly*, taking the translation of some writings by Lu Xun and Congwen Shen, two of the most important novelists in modern Chinese literature, as examples.

## The establishment and mission of *T'ien Hsia Monthly*

The chief editor, John C. H. Wu, described the establishment of *T'ien Hsia Monthly* in his autobiography; “I met Yuanning Wen at a banquet of *China Review*... One day, we talked about founding a Chinese-English cultural and literary journal to introduce Chinese culture to the West.” Then, the idea won the support of Fo Sun, “We made a plan and presented to him [Fo Sun] who, as the head of the [Sun Yat-sen] institute [for the Advancement of Culture and Education] gave his consent instantly” (Wu 2002, p. 229). The description above clarifies the mission of the journal—some intellectuals who returned from abroad such as John C. H. Wu and Yuanning Wen founded it; the Sun Yat-sen Institute for the Advancement of Culture and Education<sup>1</sup> that “aimed at bridging the differences between cultures” supported it; and it served to disseminate Chinese culture to the West. The journal was all-English when it was published, even though Wu said it would be a “Chinese-English” one.

Since the late Qing dynasty, the self-confidence of the ancient Chinese civilisation has been exhausted by constant failure in wars. “The wholesale westernisation” put forward during the May 4th Movement<sup>2</sup> and the Chinese modern vernacular literature revolution<sup>3</sup> regarded the West as the symbol of “modernity,” realising the level of advancement of western culture and the backwardness of Chinese culture from the perspective of historical evolution theory. Against this backdrop, Chinese intellectuals translated a significant number of foreign literary works into Chinese, in order to fix the outdated Chinese culture. The representative personage of this May 4th Movement, for example, Lu Xun, Mao Dun, and Moruo Guo had done

<sup>1</sup> The president of this institute was Fo Sun, and its directors included famous intellectuals from many other fields, like Yuanpei Cai, Chuanxian Dai, Tiecheng Wu and others, and also some leading figures of Chinese government such as Jiang Jieshi, Xiangxi Kong, Ziwen Song. Though it was a semi-official institute, it advocated that “this institute is purely for academic research, trying to make some contributions to Chinese national culture,” “it is free from political forces or any other relationships” (1986, pp. 748–763). See Nanjing Archive Centre and Management of Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum. Selected Archives of Sun Yat-sen Historical Documents, Nanjing: Jiangsu Classics Publishing House.

<sup>2</sup> The May 4th Movement is a movement started by university students on 4th May 1919 against the unfair terms about China in the “Versailles Peace Treaty.” In order to make China a stable country, the movement advocated the learning from the West.

<sup>3</sup> The Chinese Modern Vernacular Literature Revolution was started early in the 20th Century. It advocated literature written in the vernacular—the speech of the modern “common people.” Before this, Chinese literature was mostly written in Wen Yan Language, which is too complicated to understand by common people.

many translations of foreign literary works from their vision of modernisation. Thus, *T'ien Hsia Monthly*, which was trying to translate Chinese literature and culture to the West, was unique and “against the grain.”

An English-language, Chinese sponsored journal, introducing Chinese culture, was quite demanding for the balance of exchange and the concreteness of communication between Chinese and Western culture.

Since the *Conton Register* (founded in 1827) and *Conton Miscellany* (founded in 1831), journals that introduced China in English had been emerging for a long time. Only in Shanghai, were there over 60 English journals published around 1930, however, most of them were founded by foreigners to whom the main intention was to provide global information for foreigners living in China, and real-time information about China for their governments; they even served colonists and commercial explorers. Accordingly, they had a preference for publishing Chinese politics, economy, and military affairs, instead of culture, literature, and art; yet the main approaches for the exchange of thoughts, cultures, and literature between the East and the West were taken over by some periodicals controlled by a batch of western sinologists. Periodicals such as *Journal of the North-China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1858–1948) aiming at “investigating and studying China in terms of politics, law, Sino-foreign relation, geography, history, philosophy and literature” (Bridgman 1858, p. 2), and *China Journal of Science and Arts* (1923–1941)<sup>4</sup> which “served as an impetus for the dissemination of knowledge concerning China, including knowledge of science, art, literature and expedition” (Inception and aims of the China Journal of Science and Arts 1923, p. 1). These journals, on one hand, were bridges for Sino-Western cultural communication and built up international academic communication fields as well as academic communities; on the other hand they inevitably sifted information and observed the world through the lens of the West. When the China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society was founded, the British Asiatic Society wrote to the Hong Kong Branch stating that “We barely have valuable knowledge regarding the Chinese government, people, art, and resources”<sup>5</sup> (Address 1894, p. 4), and listing entries that were worthy of investigation at length. With westerners filtering “valuable knowledge” from their perspective, the knowledge and the image of China could only be presented and built up by western scholars from a western viewpoint, as Chinese intellectuals lacked the initiative and the discourse power.

Some Chinese intellectuals had realised the importance of introducing China to the West by Chinese, and they actively put this into practice. At the end of the 19th century, Hongming Gu, who was discontented with the depiction of China as a benighted and foggyish oriental empire by western sinologists and missionaries, translated many Confucian classics like *the Analects of Confucius* and *the Doctrine of the Mean*, hoping to help westerners get to know the “real” Chinese civilisation and “get rid of preconceptions about China” (Ku 1898, p. 2). In the 1930s, Chinese

<sup>4</sup> This journal was founded in The China Society of Science and Arts in 1922, and the English name of which had been changed into “The China Journal” in 1936.

<sup>5</sup> Address, Transactions of the China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Hongkong.

intellectuals became more conscious of the demands of disseminating Chinese culture overseas. Relevant statements could be found in letters written by Lu Xun to Hsinnong Yao, an editorial staff in *T'ien Hsia Monthly*, “things concerning China should be told and explained by Chinese, so that the truth comes to light” (Lu 2005, vol. 12, p. 495).<sup>6</sup> “As for Chinese culture and art, sir, I think it would be best if you could publish regularly. Foreigners know little about them. Those, what they call, ‘masters’ and ‘scholars’ are unreliable, and most young people are not good at foreign languages, making a mess out of it” (Lu 2005, vol. 13, p. 39).<sup>7</sup> Apart from encouraging young people, Lu Xun also devoted himself to the translation of Chinese literature into foreign languages. For example, he helped to translate and edit a collection of modern Chinese short stories, *Living China* by Edgar Snow, with enthusiasm. In 1934, invited by the American journalist Harold Issacs, Lu Xun co-edited a collection of modern Chinese short stories, *Straw Scandals* (Lu and Mao 1981, p. 4),<sup>8</sup> with Mao Dun, and intended to have it published in America. Both of them were enthusiastic about it (*ibid.*). Lu Xun wrote in the preface of *Straw Scandals* that “Organs in our body can testify the diagnosis of the doctor if they can talk, and the doctor’s face would be livid” (Lu and Mao 1981, pp. 1–2). This means that, as long as one can testify the fact, others cannot speak irresponsibly, implying that it is essential for Chinese people to obtain the discourse power.

What Lu Xun and other Chinese intellectuals were worried about was, as mentioned frequently by post-colonists, the screening and filtering of the third world’s outwards translation work by the first world. Nevertheless, *T'ien Hsia Monthly* gathered a group of returnees from western elite schools, or intellectuals who graduated from domestic missionary schools with proficiency in English,<sup>9</sup> who bore the responsibility of editing and speaking to the world directly, which, to some extent, bypassed the prejudice from the first world.

Thanks to the worldwide publishing network of Kelly & Walsh. Ltd, *T'ien Hsia Monthly* was published and had a positive impact on Britain, America, Germany, France, Japan, and other countries, providing an effective channel for elite Chinese intellectuals to introduce China to foreign countries. Many western journals wrote reviews for the journal. *The Adelphi*, a British famous literary journal, read “[T’ien Hsia] achieves something which seems quite beyond the power of our neurotic Western intellectuals—it combines simplicity with culture, humility with intelligence, and sanity with sophistication.” Authoritative international relations journal *International Affairs* said: “A high level of thought, style and scholarship is maintained, and there is hardly an article which does not impress the reader with a feeling

<sup>6</sup> The original text was Chinese, and this is the author’s translation.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Straw Scandals* failed to be published for some reason, and was finally published in the United States in 1974.

<sup>9</sup> Editorial board members in *T'ien Hsia Monthly* include: John C. H. Wu (doctor of laws of Michigan University in the US), Yuanning Wen (legume magister of University of Cambridge in the UK), Yutang Lin (doctor of linguistics of the University of Leipzig in Germany), Zenggu Quan (master of philosophy of Harvard University in the US), Hsinnong Yao (master in English Literature of Soochow University in China), Qiuyuan Ye (master of political science of Indiana University in the US).

of respect [...] should rank with the better class of reviews the world over.” *Asia*, an American journal that paid attention to Asian affairs wrote “[T’ien Hsia] has every chance of taking preferred place on the reading lists of all who are interested in the intellectual give and take between East and West [...] T’ien Hsia should find itself in the enviable position of a magazine for which there is no substitute” (Extract from Reviews 1937, p. 4). Articles published in *T’ien Hsia Monthly* also exerted a huge influence on domestic intellectuals who understood English, and foreign readers who gave attention to China. Ziqing Zhu wrote in his diary that “Published in *T’ien Hsia Monthly* in February 1938, the Poetry of Sanli Chen, written by H. H. Hu, was so adorable,”<sup>10</sup> and he also extracted several lines from the poetry (Zhu 1988, p. 524). Having been translated into English by Yutang Lin and published on *T’ien Hsia Monthly*, *The Six Chapters of A Floating Life* by Fu Shen was a hit, and was subsequently made into a film and a Chinese-English offprint as a textbook for English learning. “Even westerners indulged themselves in the life of an ordinary Chinese couple living in the 18th century.”<sup>11</sup> *Confucius on Poetry* published in *T’ien Hsia Monthly* by Xunmei Shao also obtained a good reputation in India (Shao 2005, p. 208).<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, a Sino-Western cultural exchange space centring on *T’ien Hsia Monthly* had been formed during its publication. Many western scholars like John Calvin Ferguson, Henri Bernard, C. R. Boxer, Owen Lattimore, Harry Paxton Howard wrote general or academic articles for it. Ferguson, a famous Canadian sinologist, wrote up to 37 articles alone. Some western writers, like Harold Acton, Emily Hann, and Julian Bell translated Chinese literary works and wrote book reviews in it; many Chinese scholars such as Xiansu Hu, Shouyi Chen, Binjia Guo, Gongquan Xiao, Yuelin Jin, also did some translation work or wrote for the journal.

In general, *T’ien Hsia Monthly* was unparalleled and irreplaceable in the cultural exchange between the East and the West in the 1930s. The significance of the journal becomes even more evident when it came to talking about modern Chinese literature going global.

As a part of disadvantaged modern China, modern Chinese literature received little attention from abroad in the early 20th century. Before *T’ien Hsia Monthly*, only sinologists, journalists who gave attention to China and some Chinese students studying abroad did a little translation work. Edgar Snow wrote down the circumstances of the translation of modern Chinese literature before the 1930s in the preface of his *Living China*, “No important modern Chinese novels had been translated, and only a few short stories had appeared obscurely in short-lived or little-read sectarian

<sup>10</sup> The original text was Chinese, and this is the author’s translation.

<sup>11</sup> Shao Zhou wrote, “His (Yutang Lin) article on *T’ien Hsia Monthly* is a translation of the Six Chapters of A Floating Life by Sanbai Shen (Fu Shen) which had been published by Pingbo Yu of ‘Pu She’ (a book store founded by some Chinese intellectuals including Pingbo Yu and others). This article had a hit after the translation has been published... Now it had been also made into a film, and a Chinese-English offprint as a textbook for English learning. Even westerners indulged themselves in the life of an ordinary Chinese couple living in the 18th century.” See Zhou (1993), p. 100. Translated by the author.

<sup>12</sup> Xiaohong Shao, daughter of Xunmei Shao, wrote in her memoir about her father, “When the *Confucius on Poetry* had a hit in India, and newspapers of India also spoke very highly of it.” Translated by the author.

papers. That was in 1931... Most of the foreigners, even those who knew the language, thought it was because there was nothing of much value” (Snow 1936, p. 13).

There were only two relatively important translation activities. The first one was the French work carried out by Chinese students Yinyu Jing and Deyao Wang who studied in France. Jing published a French translation of the *True Story of Ah Q (excerpts)* on *Europa* in May and June 1925, and that of *Selected Works of Chinese Contemporary Short Stories* in 1929 which included nine pieces of work of Lu Xun and other writers. Wang set up a special column for translating modern Chinese literature on *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, *La Journal de Shanghai* and other journals, and published the *Chinese Poetry Selection* in 1933. The second one was the publication of *China in Brief* edited by Qian Xiao and sponsored by a young American man, William Alan. Focusing on “introducing the circumstances of modern Chinese culture and art, the change of the public’s focus and the background of it,” this journal published translations of modern literary works successively: *Wild Grass* by Lu Xun, *Fallen Leaves* by Moruo Guo, *From Guling to Tokyo* by Mao Dun, the *Laundry Song* by Yiduo Wen, and this proved to be a big translation project. Unfortunately, since this privately funded journal only existed for one and a half months, so did Qian Xiao’s translation project (Wen 2002, p. 26).

These translation activities were funded privately and irregularly, failing to be sustainable or influential. In contrast, sponsored and supported by the semi-official institute—Sun Yat-sen Institute for Advancement of Culture and Education, *T’ien Hsia Monthly* enjoyed a stable funding source for its operation. It translated a number of the latest and the most influential modern Chinese literary works in different columns including Chronicle, Translation, Article, and others to the West persistently over 7 years. It translated 22 works of fiction, including *A Hermit at Large* by Lu Xun, *Green Jade and Green Jade* by Congwen Shen, *Star* by Ba Jin, *Portrait of a Traitor* by Lao She, *What’s the Point of It* by Shuhua Ling; one of two operas translated were *Thunder and rain* by Cao Yu; three of thirteen modern poems translated were *The Dead Water* by Yiduo Wen, *Serpent* by Xunmei Shao, *My Memory* by Wangshu Dai; ten chronicles of modern literature, and two Theses Great modern Chinese literary works of famous Chinese writers, such as Lu Xun, Ba Jin, Lao She, Cao Yu, Congwen Shen, Bing Xin, Yiduo Wen and others, made their debut together in the English world on the grand stage of *T’ien Hsia Monthly*.

### The cultural stance of *T’ien Hsia Monthly*

As a publication aimed at promoting cultural exchanges between China and the West, *T’ien Hsia Monthly* had a clear cultural stance from its inception. In its first issue, Yuanning Wen pointed out that “Perhaps the best we can do to define our attitude is ‘world literature’—in the sense Goethe uses the word” (Wen 1935, p. 7). Meanwhile, in the editorial commentary, Fo Sun wrote that “Physical contiguity has not brought about international amity, neighbourhood does not mean neighbourliness. Instead, we find the hostility among nations only the more intensified. Frequent contacts have produced irritations” (Sun 1935, p. 3); “no real political and economic understanding can exist unless it is based upon a cultural understanding. Culture is

a spirit” (Sun 1935, p. 3); “We should strive to bring about a friendly atmosphere, in which physical contiguity will not result in irritations, but in a genuine respect for each other’s point of view” (Sun 1935, p. 1). This was imbued with the same spirit as Goethe’s statements about the power and influence of Weltliteratur (Schulz and Rhein 1973, pp. 1–13).

There were two dimensions in Goethe’s “Weltliteratur” (World Literature). First, he believed that World Literature was inevitable, saying that people understand and absorb foreign cultures unconsciously in wartime or economic intercourse, which generates the desire for spiritual communication. He advocated that writers, critics, publications, and institutes should facilitate international communication and academic communication via discussion, commentary, translation, and communication, to increase the tolerance among countries and to decrease the latitude and malice of wars by cultural communication. Meanwhile, the national stance of “Deutschland” always existed in Goethe’s description of world literature, assuming a complicated relationship with World Literature, for example, “...there is being formed a universal world literature, in which an honourable role is reserved for us Germans” (Schulz and Rhein 1973, p. 5); “The wide world, extensive as it is, is only an expanded fatherland, and will, if looked at aright, be able to give us no more than what our home soil can endow us with also.” Analogous descriptions appeared repeatedly. The issue of the construction of German national identity was always an essential position in his pronouncements regarding the sur-national topic of world literature. In other words, Goethe’s “Weltliteratur” had always been based on strong national awareness (Schulz and Rhein 1973, p. 10).

Intellectuals in *T'ien Hsia Monthly* adopted Goethe’s concept of World Literature from a similar historical context. During the Middle Ages, when Goethe put forward his concept of world literature, one of the points was to help German culture absorb the essence and nutrition from other countries and enrich its own national culture, to further achieve better communication with its powerful neighbours, such as France and England. Similarly, China was in a peripheral position in the world in the 1930s when the journal was first published, with the aim of achieving equal cultural communication with western countries. Through communication, China could learn from the West as well as introduce itself to the West. Finally, they hoped to eliminate the benighted and foggy image of China and obtain recognition from the West. Therefore, it was a cosmopolitanism based on strong national awareness that perfectly matched the cultural need for intellectuals in *T'ien Hsia Monthly*. In January 1937, The journal published its own “Aim” and “Special Features.” There were four “Special Features”: 1. Articles on different aspects of Chinese Life and Culture. 2. Articles on Western Life and Letters, which educated Chinese would be interested in. 3. Full translations into English of important Chinese writings, both ancient and modern: poems, essays, stories, sketches, etc. 4. Reviews of current Chinese and foreign books. It was apparent that the journal not only emphasised the aim of this journal—“To bring about a better cultural understanding between China and the West” (Inside front cover 1937), but kept a full native consciousness and national awareness, putting China first and foremost. This kind of native consciousness had been activated and transformed into a strong sense of national responsibility when the nation was struggling to survive. After the outset of the Sino-Japanese

War, though its contents still focused on thoughts and cultures (Wen 1937, p. 6), it was apparent that the journal was inclined to publish content concerning the Anti-Japanese War, publicise more about the nation's spirit of resistance, introduce the activities of fighting the Japanese into the circle of literature and art, and translate literary works about the war to arouse sympathy and call for help from other countries. It also introduced anti-fascist works from other countries in some columns like "Book Reviews" and others.

Based on Goethe's concept, the cultural stance of *T'ien Hsia Monthly* had its own way of development, which was perhaps due to the complicated and ambiguous cultural identities of its editors. As mentioned earlier, the editors of the journal were mainly returnees from western elite schools. They received traditional Chinese Confucian education in their early years and later studied in western countries. They often called themselves "cosmopolitan" because of their multiple cultural identities—their spiritual foundation came from Chinese culture represented by Confucianism, and the critical components of their knowledge, structure, and cultural identity came from Western culture represented by the English language. Their multiple identities could be seen from their daily life such as their use of language and their way of dressing: the chief editor John C. H. Wu was a Christian, "think in English with Chinese thinking structure [...] Sometimes I sing in French and make jokes in German" (Wu 2002, p. 158). Yet, he "grudged in wearing suits, and spoke English with a Ning Bo (his hometown—author's note) accent deliberately" (Wang 2005, p. 137); the daughter of Yutang Lin recalled that "when he [Yutang Lin] came back to China, he was wearing a suit, but later he preferred wearing a robe (traditional Chinese costume—author's note) but with a pair of western-style leather shoes." Wu also mentioned that the old Chinese hat was more comfortable than the western top hat (Lin 1994, p. 124).

Meanwhile, they had experienced an advanced and developed life in western countries personally, but what they had to confront after coming back to China was the backwardness of the country and the reality of the national crisis. Influenced by traditional Chinese thoughts such as "loyalty," "righteousness," and "home and country as a whole," they still ardently loved their motherland and their compatriots that were in dire peril, believing that they should shoulder the responsibilities of saving them, even though the West was "modernity" for them. "As a Chinese, I have to save my motherland, enlighten my people, develop Chinese ethos, and modernise Chinese civilisation" (Wu 2002, p. 81). This line by Wu could be seen as a manifesto for intellectuals in *T'ien Hsia Monthly*.

Based on this philosophy, *T'ien Hsia Monthly* introduced modern China to the West consistently, which was the way they dealt with the inner tension between nationality and modernity, and also the expectation and design for the modernisation of Chinese culture. The introduction of ancient Chinese culture also took up a great deal of space in the journal, including ancient philosophy, literature, and art, which were considered precious resources of Chinese culture. Nevertheless, translation of modern Chinese culture was always the primary focus in it, which hoped to present modern Chinese literature and culture to the West, to further break the stereotype held by the West—China was obsolescent and pre-modern. Thus, modern culture was their constant focus—though they did reproach some modern Chinese



works for imitation rather than creation (Wen 1938, p. 5),<sup>13</sup> they spared no effort to introduce and recommend great examples to defend the value of modern Chinese culture. They thus took the combination of “modernity,” “national characteristics” and “world view” as an essential attribute when they chose modern Chinese literary works to translate. For example, although the editorial department was located in Shanghai, works of Shanghai Modernism were “unexpectedly absent” from *T'ien Hsia Monthly*, while the “Beijing School” had the greatest role in the translated modern works of fiction. They translated *Green Jade and Green Jade*, *Hsiao–Hsiao*, and *Old Mrs. Wang's Chicken* by Congwen Shen, *What's the Point of it* and *A Poet Goes Mad* by Shuhua Ling, *Revenge* by Zhensheng Yang, and many other Beijing School works. The reason was that the journal was quite opposed to literature and art which rigidly imitated the skills of the West and lacked Chinese characteristics. The writing skills practised by Shanghai Modernism were derived from Western Modernism or the Japanese New Sensation School, which was not quite “Chinese.” In contrast, the “Beijing School” integrated features of western literature into their creations, but were still characteristic and Chinese enough, so that they not only had a view of the world but also Chinese national features, which perfectly fitted the philosophy held by *T'ien Hsia Monthly*.

In addition to Congwen Shen, the representative writer of “Beijing School,” left-wing writer Lu Xun, was valued by *T'ien Hsia Monthly* due to his concerns over China and Chinese people, his strong expectation for the modernisation of China, and his leading status in modern Chinese literature. The journal translated and published three short stories by Lu Xun, one of two writers (the other was Congwen Shen) whose works were most in terms of numbers. The next section analyses the translation practice of modern Chinese literature, taking the translation of *Green Jade and Green Jade*—Congwen Shen's best-known novella, and the introduction and translation by Lu Xun as examples.

### **Translation of Congwen Shen's *Green Jade and Green Jade* in *T'ien Hsia Monthly***

*T'ien Hsia Monthly* published the English version of *Green Jade and Green Jade*—translated by Xunmei Shao (under the pseudonym Shing Mo-lei) and Emily Hann—in four consecutive issues from January 1936 to April 1936, which was the first translation of this novella. It was no accident, as the translation and publishing of the work closely aligned with the aim and philosophy of *T'ien Hsia Monthly*. The journal translated three of Congwen Shen's works of fiction, among which *Green Jade and Green Jade* was the longest and the most famous one. It was evident that Congwen Shen was one of the modern Chinese writers valued by *T'ien Hsia*

<sup>13</sup> As Yuaning Wen wrote in the comment for “National art exhibition of China” in January 1938, “Our modern art failed to succeed the art achievement of our ancient predecessors... Modern Chinese art seems to only have a ‘borrowed life’: lack reality and fear creation. Complete imitation of transitory trend of the West can be very disappointing.” See Wen (1938), 5.

*Monthly*- most and introduced to the West with a huge amount of effort. That special attention was due to three reasons in particular:

First of all, Shen's attitude towards dealing with Chinese and Western cultural resources matched the mission of cultural communication that the journal advocated. The equilibrium of communication and "understanding" between the East and the West that *T'ien Hsia Monthly*- emphasised was to set up a vision of world literature based on national characteristics instead of blindly praising the western culture. Though Shen always called himself "a person of little knowledge and experience," he had a deep understanding of western philosophy and literature.

His early works had been significantly influenced by Freud, and this could be dated back to 1924 or 1925 (Shen 2002, vol. 27, p. 377).<sup>14</sup> *Things Recorded in Words Beginning with A* published in 1925 contained many subconscious descriptions. *A Painting with Eight Steeds* was very much a representative work of "subconscious descriptions." In this novel, Shen satirised the hypocrisy and affectation of some intellectuals by describing the intense conflicts between eight professors' consciousness and subconsciousness. Later, during teaching in the National Southwest Associated University, he was also affected by Nietzsche In *My Learning* published in 1951, he stated that "what my mind took in, was not those precise and new designs for the human society by Marx, but pieces of Gide and Nietzsche's individualism" (Shen 1951, p. 6).<sup>15</sup> In terms of writing skills, he admitted that what gave him a practical impact was Chekhov's writing attitude of "no personal comments, but show sympathy to the suppressed people" and Turgenev's style of "intertwining the men with the scenery" (Shen 2002, vol. 16, p. 526).<sup>16</sup>

It is clear then that Western literary thoughts profoundly influenced Congwen Shen both in thoughts and methods. However, he complained that "new poems were copied translation which was too shoddy," believing that "Poems written in our own tradition, are plentiful and can show the power and happiness of its nation" (Shen 2002, vol. 17, p. 33).<sup>17</sup> He advocated "speaking out our desire in our language" and pointed out acutely that "Shanghai School" writers who lived in Shanghai and imitated the Western Modernism and the Japanese New Sensation School were unable to notice it (Shen 2002, vol. 17, p. 35).<sup>18</sup> In contrast, he pointed out the way he absorbed and learned resources of western thoughts:

If you read enough and the field of your reading is wide enough, it is unlikely to be affected, or it could be said affected by the sum. After understanding a certain degree of writing, one can get a general impression from the works of the predecessors. To fulfil the completion of a story, it is possible to start from multiple parties and achieve certain success. Knowing this, you will not be affected by any authority and can make your ideas without any trouble (ibid.).

<sup>14</sup> Congwen Shen mentioned in *Reply to Sweden Friends* that he got to know Freud for the first time by Yan Yun who worked as an assistant teacher in Yenching University around 1924 or 1925.

<sup>15</sup> The original text was Chinese, and this is the author's translation.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

The “authority” he referred to includes “Buddhist Nihilism, Illusory Emotions,” as well as “Selected Theories of Chinese Ancient Philosophers,” and “Freud, Joyce, etc.” (Shen 1951, p. 6). In an article written for the inaugural issue of *Ta Kung Pao Art Weekly*, he criticised the so-called “modern artists” who do western paintings only by imitation, or “Drawing the archway (simply follow suit—author’s note)”, “For the long course of this nation’s history. Those artists infused their life into those various artistic works that they produced, with a colour, a bunch of strings, a stone or a heap of earth, bronze or jade, sculptures of bamboo, of wood, of ivory and rhinoceros horn, but was the culture noticeable (in their works)? How unnoticeable the culture—in all of their works—was! They did not know how to express the culture” (Shen 1934, p. 1)!<sup>19</sup> Shen’s criticism of “Shanghai Modernism” and “Modern Artists” has similarities with the criticism, as mentioned earlier, of modern Chinese art by *T'ien Hsia Monthly*.

In a nutshell, Shen believed that absorption and learning of thought resources of either the West or ancient China should neither be plain imitation nor plagiarism of the “authority,” but the incorporation of the thought resources into one’s creations after learning them. What is more, when learning from the West, Chinese writers must not forget their national traditions and national characteristics. For example, the erotic dream of Ts’ui Ts’ui (the heroine) in the *Green Jade and Green Jade* is a Freudian metaphor, but it is unobtrusive in the customs of Xiangxi, the geographical setting in the story.<sup>20</sup> The whole work is still very Chinese, an excellent combination of “nation” and “world.” Jeffrey C. Kinkley, a famous American sinologist who specialised in studying Congwen Shen, once wrote an article to analyse the characteristics of modernism in Shen’s works—Kan Hong Lu, Shui Yun, Fengzi, and others. He named this branch of modernism headed by Shen “Academic Modernism,” as one of the three types of modernism in Chinese literature in the mid-20th century which existed alongside “Foreign Modernism” and “Shanghai Modernism.” One of the key features of “Academic Modernism,” he believed, was that it had both “localism” and “modernism” (Kinkley 2005, pp. 1–15), which was an excellent demonstration of the world vision based on the national identity emphasized by the journal, and also of the way that the *T'ien Hsia Monthly* intellectuals admired the philosophical and cultural resources of other countries.

Secondly, Shen’s image of China in his “pastoral style” works, represented by *Green Jade and Green Jade*, was in line with the Chinese image that *T'ien Hsia Monthly* wished to shape and publicise. In the cultural exchanges between different countries, the foreign image created by foreign literature is an important way of communication and imagination, yet misunderstandings and prejudiced one-sided observations are usual, or even inevitable, due to geographical and cultural differences. Before the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, the image of China in the Western vision represented by Europe and the United States had three main aspects: one was the ancient oriental empire—glorious and mysterious but stubborn and conservative; the second was the unbearable, weak, and backward

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Xiangxi is in the west of Hunan province, China.

Sick Man of East Asia; the third was the anti-humanitarian, deceitful, and insidious evil forces. *T'ien Hsia Monthly* sought to break these three negative images of China and to reshape them into a modern, healthy, and positive China image rather than a pre-modern one. *Green Jade and Green Jade* formed an “elegant, beautiful, healthy and humanitarian” (Shen 2002, vol. 9, p. 5) image of China with the picturesque natural environment of Xiangxi, the warm folk customs, honest and warm-hearted people, and powerful and robust characters. For a late-coming and passively modernised country such an image, neither self-underestimated nor pitiful and arrogant, but credible and attractive, was a striking rebuttal of the trend, led by “Dr. Fu Man-zhu”<sup>21</sup> who portrayed China as deceitful and evil, a perception prevalent in the West at that time. As the commentators said, “*Green Jade and Green Jade* fully demonstrated the poetry of motherland and tradition, and in the most appropriate and general way, condensed the image of China in the 1930s—a great country with a long history, cultural advantage, and also sufferings—into a sensible artistic form” (Liu 2002, p. 72).

Thirdly, as a literary style, “Pastoralism” is part of the western literary tradition. It originated from ancient Greece, reached its climax during the Renaissance, and had a significant impact on Romanticism. Thus, the pastoral style of *Green Jade and Green Jade*, which was beautiful and soothing, as well as having an eagerness to return to true nature, the praise of pure human nature, was familiar to western readers and more accessible and convenient for them to accept. From the perspective of both communicators and receivers, the image of China created by the novella was conducive to the construction of a healthier and more modernised Chinese national image.

### Translation of Lu Xun in *T'ien Hsia Monthly*

From 1938 to 1940, *T'ien Hsia Monthly* published three English translations of Lu Xun's works, which was one of its most important achievements in introducing modern Chinese literature to the West. Among them, *Looking Back to the Past* translated by Yusheng Feng (2<sup>nd</sup> issue, 1938) was worthiest of attention, before which the translation of Lu Xun's works only focused on the modern vernacular ones.

*Looking Back to the Past*, written in 1911, was not only the first short story by Lu Xun but also his only work written in ancient Chinese. The work reflected the writing characteristics of his short stories in terms of both philosophical content or artistic style, and could be said to be foundation work of Lu Xun, showing the development of the author's thoughts and art, and predicting the coming of the new era of Chinese literature. Beginning with this work, the radical enthusiasm of the revolutionary period was replaced by calm realistic writing.

<sup>21</sup> Dr. Fu Manzhu is a Chinese villain image created by British popular novelist Sax Romer. He first appeared in his fictions in 1913 and achieved great success. Then a large number of fictions and films with Fu Manzhu as the leading character appeared. In the 1920 s and 1930 s, he became very popular in Europe and the United States.

The characteristics in his later works, such as his critical eye towards the numb reaction of the country to the revolution, or his modernist writing technique in describing Chinese society, could already been seen clearly in this early work.

In 1940, the journal published *A Hermit at Large* and *Remorse*, translated by Jizhen Wang, in the 5th issue of volume 10 and the 1st issue of volume 11. As the most important translator of Lu Xun's work in the 1930s, Wang wrote with the aim of translating Lu Xun's works in the "introduction" of his work, *The Collection of Lu Xun's Novels—Ah Q and the Others*, "the best way to truly understand a country, is, undoubtedly, through her literature, through the richest, the most enlightening, the most unforgettable literature in her national legacy." "In these works of Lu Xun, readers can have a glance at China from the keen and thorough perspective of the greatest modern Chinese writer" (Wang 1985, p. 138).

*A Hermit at Large*, written on October 17th, 1925 and included in *Wandering* (a collection of Lu Xun's short stories), is a critical work for the author, yet it is somewhat difficult to understand. Lu Xun was under enormous pressure when he was writing it. His inner world was full of sorrow and loneliness and he was eager to throw off those shackles to seek hope, thus falling into the loneliness of confusion, bewilderment, and emptiness. He observed and pondered society and life, soberly. He could not but act "just like a long faint cry by a wounded wolf, howling in the wild late at night with indignation and sorrow mixed in its anguish" (Wang 1985, p. 139) to resist the oppression of society and revolt against desperation by means of howling. The reason why Wang chose *A Hermit at Large* was that it highlighted the congruity on a spiritual level between "the righteous indignation and rebellious spirit" (ibid.) of Lu Xun and the West. It was the congruity, Wang believed, that made the works of Lu Xun a window for western readers to understand the tradition and modernity of China.

He learned from novels of western realism and psychological analysis that novels could be a tool for social critique and social reform. The key point is that he was able to discover the weakness in Chinese people's characters, and made necessary critiques upon that by comparing the mind of Chinese people and Westerners. The modern spirit first matured in some Chinese people like him, and became the basic spirit of the Chinese nation through him and his peers alike. This kind of spirit in Lu Xun was reflected in the rebellion and condemnation of the 'human cannibalism' system; for all Chinese people, it is included in nationalism (ibid.).

The understanding and translation of Lu Xun's works by Jizhen Wang freed itself from the mainstream critical discourse at that time, integrating the modernity and nationality in Lu Xun's works with the West. The publication of Wang's translation was of much significance. In the 1930s, Chinese scholars began to enter the western sinological field, but mainly focused their attention on classical literature. Wang's translation of modern Chinese literature was the trigger for modern Chinese scholars such as Zhiqing Xia, in the 1950s, to carry out more extensive research into modern Chinese literature and further develop it into an independent discipline in East Asia research.

Apart from translation, the journal also published a lengthy article introducing Lu Xun—*Lu Hsun: His Life and Works*<sup>22</sup> written by Hsinnong Yao. This article was to extend Lu Xun's influence of in the West through *T'ien Hsia Monthly*, a cultural platform for western readers sponsored by the Chinese, on the occasion of the author's death. Yao spoke highly of the achievement of Lu Xun in the field of literature and ideology in concise writing, highlighting his status in the field of modern literature and the circle of thinkers.

In the field of literature, Yao claimed that Lu Xun was “the greatest and most important writer in modern China,” and vital for the field of fiction because of “his unparalleled impact on modern Chinese fiction.” Yao summarised Lu Xun's contribution to modern Chinese literature from three perspectives—modern vernacular literature, tradition, and foreign influence and works' affinity to the people:

Lu Hsun has made three invaluable contributions to the new literature of China. First, he sets a variety of models for short-story writing in the Modern Vernacular, creating new form, style, and technique for the benefit of the groping young writers of that time. As remarked by Mao Tun, one of the foremost Chinese authors of today, every one of the twenty-six stories is a surprise, a revelation, an inspiration. Secondly, Lu Hsun has given excellent proof of the greater elasticity and possibility of the new Modern Vernacular as a literary medium. His stories betray both the Chinese heritage and foreign influence, yet the two go in perfect harmony and merge through his masterly handling into something new, vital and original. Thirdly, he is the Christopher Columbus that has discovered a New Hemisphere for the new literature. He is the first people's writer in modern China. The chief characters of his stories are mainly peasants and common people, who were erstwhile regarded as uninteresting and unfit for art and literature. It is largely due to his True Story of Ah Q, K'ung I-ch'i, Home, etc., that later authors have been induced to draw themes for their stories from the lives of farmers, workers, and commoners in general (Yao 1936, p. 52).

In the first and second perspectives, Hsinnong Yao highlighted the status and influence of Lu Xun's stories in modern Chinese vernacular fictions, which was extremely important when disseminating the author to the West. Traditional Western Sinology studies on Chinese literature had always focused on ancient literature, and little attention was paid to modern Chinese literature. Although the late-coming American Sinology paid attention to contemporary Chinese issues, it focused on Chinese history and social history rather than literature, leaving western readers' ignorance about Chinese new and old literature undisturbed.

*Living China*, written by Snow in 1931, pointed out that “But of writing of the Modern Vernacular literature, only a few scattered fragments had appeared in English,” thus western intellectuals who came to China attached great importance to the language revolution in the New Culture Movement when they introduced and did research in modern Chinese literature. Snow regarded the modern vernacular

<sup>22</sup> “Lu Xun” was always spelled as “Lu Hsun” or “Lu Hsin” in the 1930–1950.

movement as “the beginning of the living Chinese philosophical criticism” in the article *Critical Biography of Lu Hsun*. Harold Acton pointed out in his article *The Creative Spirit in Modern Chinese Literature* that the creation of modern vernacular literature had been proven since the modern vernacular movement, and had achieved considerable success since the New Culture Movement; However, the focus of western sinologists was still on the study of ancient classics, and there was also a prejudice against modern Chinese literature, which made the western public unable to understand the thoughts of contemporary Chinese writers (Acton 1935, pp. 51–52). “Modern Chinese literary movement” published in *Life and Letters To-day* by Nym Wales (Snow’s wife) discussed the importance of the Modern Vernacular Movement in the Chinese “Renaissance.” Hsinnong Yao thus highlighted the ground-breaking role of Lu Xun’s works on “Modern Vernacular Literature,” which not only illustrated his status in modern Chinese literature, but also succeeded in helping western scholars realise the importance of new literature.

In Yao’s dissemination, he not only outlined Lu Xun’s status and contribution in the history of modern Chinese literature, but also emphasised his leading role “as a thinker and a fighter” of modern knowledge in China. Starting from the social reality of China after the Revolution of 1911, Yao discussed the process of Lu Xun becoming the head of left-wing writers, and finally “the most powerful leader in contemporary Chinese intellectual community,” with his thought of individualism and evolutionism that he held before the May Fourth Movement gradually turning into a proletarian ideology.

It is clear now that from Darwinism to Marxism, and from the progressive individualism for emancipation to the revolutionary collectivism for world reorganization, Lu Hsun had passed through many stages and fought numerous battles. The weapon he used was his short commentaries. Through long years of fighting, he had perfected their technique and form: Like a dagger of the best steel, they are short, terse, and yet formidably sharp and effective. With that dagger, he fought his way through and led his supporters and followers to the attack. Those volumes of his short commentaries, therefore, are at once a record of his numerous battles and changes in thought as well as a sword for fighting and leadership. Their importance cannot be exaggerated. For Lu Hsun is the most influential intellectual leader in contemporary China (Yao 1936, p. 56).

Hsinnong Yao’s review article interprets Lu Xun from the perspective of sociology and shapes him into an immortal rebel, fighter and leader, a banner of the community. Yao did not write too much about the profundity, complexity, and artistry of Lu Xun’s works, for his target readers of this commemorative article were westerners who knew little about Chinese literature. With this comprehensive and mainstream commentary, western readers who knew nothing about the occurrence and development of new Chinese literature could gain a basic understanding of the most influential writer in the history of modern Chinese literature directly and simply. From the perspective of history, Yao completely sketched out the ideological journey of a Chinese intellectual under a series of different national situations—from the end of the Qing dynasty to the establishment of a new government, then to the

oppression of left-wing writers in the 1930s. Lu Xun was a starting point for Yao to introduce modern Chinese literature to the world, and western readers could conveniently and correctly understand the occurrence and development of modern Chinese literature by knowing Lu Xun.

In the 1930s, *T'ien Hsia Monthly* broke the silence in the English translation of Chinese modern literature so that Westerners began to know the most representative Chinese literature works such as *Green Jade and Green Jade*, *A Hermit at large*, and the most excellent Chinese writers, such as Lu Xun and Congwen Shen. More importantly, they started to understand the real, not the imagined modern Chinese society by reading these works. Due to this distinctive approach, this journal holds a significant position in the China-West literature communication history. How does the literature and culture in a relatively disadvantaged position, when confronted with the advantaged language and culture in the process of translation to the world, recognise its self-positioning, national identity, and development direction? The translation of modern Chinese fiction in *T'ien Hsia Monthly* provides an approach for us now to rethink fair exchange on national identity.

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