

JAMES JOYCE IN CHINA

Wen Jieruo

1. LU XUN AND JAMES JOYCE

JAMES JOYCE of Ireland and Lu Xun of China, one from the West and the other from the East, were two distinguished writers of the 20th century, sharing similar personal and historical backgrounds. On February 2, 1882, James was born in Dublin, Ireland. His status in Irish literary history is pretty much the same as Lu Xun's in Chinese literary history. Lu Xun was born on September 25, 1881, into a declining-gentry family. He was the eldest of the children. In April, 1902, he went to Tokyo, Japan, and enrolled in Kōbun College. During that time he wrote the poem "On a Photograph of Myself" in which he swore dedication to his country and his people. In Tokyo he took part in the movement against the Manchurian rule, and published the militant essay "On China's Geology" which boasted its scientific value. In 1904, he left Tokyo for Sendai to attend medical school there, but later he came to realize that the practice of medicine was not so urgent a matter, because, for the ignorant and weak-spirited citizenry, the most important thing was to transform their spirits. He saw literature and art were the most effective and sharp weapons to that end. Therefore, he abandoned medicine and took up literature.

When Joyce was born, Ireland, the scenic island country, was a British colony with its people deprived of their livelihood by successive wars, famines and revolts. He had a flock of brothers and sisters, but his father favored James, his gifted eldest son. He gave James money to buy books imported from foreign countries even if the whole family had to suffer a shortage of food. In June, 1902, Joyce graduated from the Catholic University (now University College, Dublin), receiving his degree in modern languages. On October 2, he registered to study at the Medical School of the Royal University located in Cecilia Street. But he dropped out after only one month due to financial restraints. He visited France, in the vain hope of entering the Paris Medical School. Later he put his mind to creative writing.

The parallels between the two do not stop at their changes of life direction. Lu Xun's *zawen* (topical essays), as acclaimed by the Chinese writer Yu Dafu, were "javelins and daggers";

likewise, Joyce used terms like “knife-blades”, the “lancet of art”, and the “cold steel pen” to describe his works. In Lu Xun’s lifetime, someone told him that he was going to recommend his works to the Nobel Committee, but Lu Xun declined with grace. When Ireland was declared a free state on December 6, 1921, the minister in the new state government, Desmond Fitzgerald, paid Joyce a visit and said he was about to propose that Ireland nominate him for the Nobel Prize; Joyce was flattered but wrote to Stanislaus, “Such a move would not gain him the prize and would lose Fitzgerald his portfolio.”

Lu Xun died on October 19, 1936 at the age of 55. Less than nine months after his death, Japanese militarists launched the war of aggression against China. Joyce, however, was still alive when the Nazis invaded France. In December 1939, after Paris fell into the hands of German armies, Joyce and his family fled to the south of France. On December 17, 1940, Joyce and his wife, leaving his daughter Lucia (who was suffering from dementia praecox) behind in a French hospital, escaped as refugees to Zurich, in politically neutral Switzerland. On January 10, the next year, he was hospitalized with spasm of the belly. Joyce was diagnosed with a duodenal perforated ulcer, and died on the early morning of 13th at the age of 59.

Lu Xun’s works are a great addition to the treasure-house of world literature. “The True Story of Ah Q” has been translated into over 50 languages, enjoying a large readership across the world. “Ah Q” is a timeless portrayal, not only in the history of Chinese literature, but also in the history of world literature. “The True Story of Ah Q” and Joyce’s masterpiece *Ulysses* have both had an awakening and enlightening effect wherever they are read. Toward the end of 20th century, *Ulysses* had secured its important status within world literature. In 1998, the Editorial Committee of the Modern Series, Random House, selected the 100 best English novels of the 20th century; *Ulysses* was listed at the top as the best of the best. In 1999, when Waterstone House in Britain invited 47 celebrated literary critics and writers to select the most influential 10 masterpieces of the century, *Ulysses* again came out as one of the top few.

While Lu Xun and Joyce were alive, China and Ireland were both victims of oppression by their powerful neighbors. It was nine years after Lu Xun’s death that Japanese militarists surrendered and four years later (in 1949) that The People’s Republic of China was founded. And seven years after Joyce’s death (in 1948) Ireland finally freed itself from the British Commonwealth and became a republic.

The following is an incisive comment on Lu Xun's *zawen*: "Lu Xun's *zawen* occupies a specially important place in the history of Chinese literature. It is not only a record of ideological struggle in China since the May Fourth Movement, it also delineates the national spirit that had been trampled and eroded, through exposure of the social psychology and ideological and cultural character formulated over several thousand years of Chinese feudal society. It is, as it were, a heart-breaking history of the psychology and soul of the nation that no one else had been able to define. This voluminous record of a heart-breaking history makes people understand the cruel past and think about the prospects for the future."¹

In April, 1921, at the cocktail party celebrating the signing of the contract for the publication of *Ulysses*, Joyce met a young man of letters by the name of Arthur Power and said to him: "You are an Irishman and you must write in your own tradition. Borrowed styles are no good. You must write what is in your blood and not what is in your brain...They (referring to world literary masters) were national first and it was the intensity of their own nationalism which made them international in the end...For myself, I always write about Dublin, because if I can get to the heart of Dublin I can get to the heart of all the cities of the world. In the particular is contained the universal."

Joyce believed in nationalism throughout his life. When he was about thirty years old, he wrote to his wife Nora in a letter dated August 22, 1912: "I am one of the writers of this generation who are perhaps creating at last a conscience in the soul of this wretched race." While he was proofreading *Ulysses* for the English edition in 1936, he told Friis-Moller: "I have been fighting for this for twenty years." Joyce began to write *Ulysses* in 1914, and it was not until 1918 that the novel began to be serialized in the American magazine *Little Review*. The novel was first published in book form by Shakespeare and Company in 1922. And then the work was translated into German (1927), French (1929), and Japanese (the first 4 volumes came out in 1932, and the fifth in 1935). The American edition was published by Random House in 1934. But what counted most to Joyce was the publication of *Ulysses* in England. No wonder he said to the Danish poet and novelist Tom Kristensen: "Now the war between England and me is over, and I am the conqueror." The unstated reference was that England had to accept *Ulysses* and publish it without deleting a single word of it although it contained quite a few derogatory remarks about Queen

1 See *Dictionary for Appreciation of Chinese Zawen*, Shanxi People's Publishing House, 1991, P. 338-9

Victoria (who died in 1901) and the Prince of Wales, then (since 1904) on the throne as King Edward VII.

Lu Xun and Joyce, the two cultural stars, both born in 1880s, have now become cross-cultural figures, transcending time and space. On September 27, 2000, at the Foreign Languages Department of China's Academy of Social Science, I attended a forum at which the Japanese writer ō Kenzaburō was the key-speaker. He said that when he told his mother that he had been awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, she responded, without much excitement in her tone: "Among Asian writers, the Indian Poet Tagore had been awarded the prize, China's Lu Xun should have, but he was not. They are the writers people look up to with esteem and admiration, and as compared with them, you are way below their standard." Those of the Japanese people who are guided in their thinking by conscience feel sorry for the fact that in Japan there has never been a writer like Lu Xun.

In August, 2002, Writers' Press published a book I translated: *Understanding, Friendship and Peace--Selected Poems* by Ikeda Daisaku. It contains 73 poems by the prolific writer Ikeda Daisaku, Honorary President of Japan Soka Gakkai who has been working over a long period of time to promote friendship between China and Japan. In 1981, the World Academy of Arts and Culture conferred on him the title of Poet Laureate. The most touching poem in this book is the one in praise of Lu Xun. Lu Xun's personal integrity and the literary strength of his works have had a tremendous effect on him as a poet. The social evils Lu Xun had criticized in his works are still around now when mankind has already moved into the 21st century. When we read his works today we find them as thought-provoking as if they were directed at the existing problems today. Actually we have not done enough to publicize Lu Xun. We should read as much of Lu Xun as possible, because, in the first place, what we have to inherit from him belongs to the Chinese nation as a whole. The Irish people so respect and admire Joyce that they celebrate June 16th as "Bloom's Day", a national festival second only to the National Day (Saint Patrick, March 17th) , when lovers of *Ulysses* start from the Martello tower (which figures in a scene opening the novel), then parading in period costume through the streets of Dublin. In 1962, the Dublin authorities decided to preserve Martello tower as a Joyce Museum. On June 16th of that year, writers and Joyce experts were invited from across the world to observe the ceremony of the Museum's opening.

June 16th, 2004 was the 100th anniversary of “Bloom’s Day”. Celebrations were organized in Dublin, the capital of Ireland, which lasted for five months, from April 1st through August 31st. The theme of the celebrations was “RETASTE JOYCE: DUBLIN 2004”. In Lu Xun Memorial Hall in Shanghai, China, an exhibition was held of “James Joyce and *Ulysses*” (June 16th-30th) and an international conference on “Joyce and His World” (June 16th-17th), co-sponsored by the Cultural Ministry of Ireland, the Shanghai Bureau for the Preservation of Cultural and Historical Relics, the Shanghai Literature and Arts Association, and the Shanghai Writers’ Association. As a co-translator of *Ulysses* and, on behalf of the other translator Xiao Qian, I attended the conference with all sorts of feelings welling up in my mind. How wonderful it would have been if I had been there together with my deceased husband. He had gone too early.

But I strongly believe that some day, our country will be commemorating the world-renowned writer Lu Xun in our own typical style.

2. XU ZHIMO AND JAMES JOYCE

OF THE CHINESE WRITERS, the one who first praised Joyce’s novel of stream of consciousness was Xu Zhimo who was, in 1922, working on his graduate studies at King’s College of Oxford University. He wrote about Molly’s stream of consciousness in chapter 18: “He (Joyce) has come up with another novel entitled *Ulysses* ... the last 100 pages (the book runs over seven hundred pages long) are written in genuine prose. It reads as smooth as cheese, it is as lustrous as the stone altar in church ... with large pieces of writing surging forward like clear and transparent torrents, like rolls of white silk unfurling downward in the manner of waterfalls, leaving no traces of mannerism whatsoever. A master’s work in the true sense of the term!”

But interestingly enough, the New Zealand woman writer Katherine Mansfield, showing unusual insight, realizing early the value of Joyce’s ground-breaking technique of stream of consciousness. After Joyce died on January 13th, 1941, the English writer Virginia Woolf recalled in her diary dated January 15th that on April 18th, 1918, when Harriet Weaver brought the type-written manuscript of *Ulysses* to her, she said that the book could not be printed because it “reeled with indecency”, and put it away in the drawer of her cabinet. Virginia considered the author as “underbred”, and the novel as “the book of a self-taught working man”, “a queasy

undergraduate scratching his pimples”. Virginia wrote:

Katherine Mansfield, who looked at the manuscript one day while paying them a visit, began by ridiculing it and then suddenly she said, “But there’s something in this: a scene that should figure I suppose in the history of literature.”²

Katherine Mansfield met with Joyce once. Following a review of *Ulysses* by Katherine’s husband, John Murry, a literary critic, in the *Nation*, Joyce paid a visit to the Murrays in March, 1922. After the visit Katherine Mansfield wrote to Violet Schiff: “Joyce was rather ... difficile. I had no idea until then of his view of *Ulysses* -- no idea how closely it was modeled on the Greek story, how absolutely necessary it was to know the one through and through to be able to discuss the other. I’ve read the *Odyssey* and am more or less familiar with it, but Murry and Joyce simply sailed away out of my depth. I felt almost stupefied. It’s absolutely impossible that other people should understand *Ulysses* as Joyce understands it. It’s almost revolting to hear him discuss its difficulties. It contained code words that must be picked up in each paragraph and so on. The Question and Answer part can be read astronomically or from the geologic standpoint or -- oh, I don’t know!”³

While Murry and Joyce were talking about the novel, Katherine would put in a word or two, and every remark she made was to the point and that was satisfying to Joyce. Ellmann wrote: “However, Katherine Mansfield underestimated herself. Joyce told the Schiffs on April 3 that ‘Mrs. Murry understood the book better than her husband.’”⁴

Two months after Katherine and her husband met with Joyce, Xu Zhimo, the Chinese poet of the “New Moon School”, went to see her, discussing with her the literature of the Soviet Union and the recent development of arts and literature in China. This meeting and discussion with her left a very deep impression on Xu. Katherine had not the least idea that this young man from China, who was eight years younger than she, appreciated reading *Ulysses* just as she did. Katherine was then troubled by illnesses, so they talked for only twenty minutes. If Xu had stayed longer and talked more about *Ulysses*, this woman writer of whom Xu was a great admirer could

² Ellmann, Richard, *James Joyce* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959) p. 443

³ Ellmann, , p. 532

⁴ Ellmann, , p. 532

have encouraged him to translate the novel and very possibly we could have had a Chinese translation of *Ulysses* which would have been the very first ever, as early as the 1920s.

The Chinese poet Bian Zhilin believes that Xu Zhimo's short story, "The Wheel", "might be the first short story that introduced the technique of stream of consciousness into China." He also said, "At the age of 13, he was able to write beautiful prose in the Chinese classical style." In September, 1918, Xu enrolled in the History Department of Clark University of the United States, and in 1919, he graduated with the first class honorary prize for excellence in his studies. His thesis "On the Status of Chinese Women" was passed in September, 1920, for which he earned his Master's Degree. In early October the same year, he entered at the School of Politics and Economics, London University, and the next year, on Dickinson's recommendation he entered at King's College, Oxford University, as a special M. A. candidate (with freedom to elect and audit courses). In the first half of 1922, he became a regular M. A. candidate. In only three and a half years he was able to complete the required courses that would have taken others twice the time. He was an extremely intelligent scholar and, with his deep grounding in both Chinese and English, he could have produced an excellent translation of *Ulysses*. Bian Zhilin recalled, "When writing poems, Xu Zhimo feels like an 'unharnessed horse'. And isn't it appropriate to compare his life to "a heavenly steed soaring across the skies"? But, tragically, he lost his life in an air crash in 1931 when, in those days, traveling by air was only affordable to a privileged few.

3. QIAN ZHONGSHU AND JAMES JOYCE

IN 1987, JIN DI'S abridged translation of *Ulysses* (chap. 2, 6, 10 and passages of chap. 15 and 18) was published by Tianjin Baihua Publishing House. Mr. Li Jingduan, then head and editor-in-chief of Yilin Publishing House in Nanjing, learned that Jin Di would not be able to complete translating *Ulysses* before the 20th century was out, because he was living abroad and had to divide his time between working for a living and translating the book.. Li had approached English Language experts such as Wang Zuoliang, Zhou Jueliang, Yang Qishen, Shi Xianrong, Zhao Luorui and Lu Gusun for the business of translating *Ulysses*, but they all declined. He also went to see Qian Zhongshu, trying to talk him into translating the book, observing wittily that the well-known translator Mr. Ye Junjian once has said that, of all the scholars in China, Qian

Zhongshu was the only one capable of translating *Ulysses*, because, in his opinion, the vocabulary of the Chinese language was not large enough to cover that of the novel and Qian could make it up by coining new words if necessary. To which Qian wrote in reply to Li:

Thank you for your kind letter. The humble Qians are sorry that we have not got much to reciprocate your kindness with, being pestered with the predicaments of aging and illness. I feel ill at ease with Ye Junjian's compliment. Ulysses cannot be translated by translating in the usual sense. If I were in my thirties or forties, I could have, overestimating myself (not possibly so) made an attempt at it. Should I ever look for trouble again, being an old man declining into my eighties, that would amount to suicide of a different style.

The German translation of *Ulysses* is considered the best rendition. Ten years ago, a friend from West Germany gave me a copy of the German version. Leafing through it, as I am not well versed in the German language, I found there are many instances showing that it has been translated for linguistic equivalence, to the neglect of rendering individual words in the original for their witty effect. I simply could not appreciate it, so I gave it away. Comrade Jin Di, having translated a few chapters and passages of the book, offered me a copy of his translation, saying that he was the first one ever to have translated *Ulysses* in China. Momentarily overcome by vanity, I could not help telling him that in my book *Personal Views* (p. 395), I had long ago made use of a passage from *Ulysses*, "making foreign things serve China" as they say, to explain a phrase from *A Historian's Record* by Sima Qian – thus evoking a laugh from both of us.

Qian Zhongshu was well read, or extensively read, to be exact and, furthermore, he had a photographic memory. Although he did not translate *Ulysses*, he had read the novel over and over again and was so familiar with it that he could refer to it with ease. Attached to our translation of *Ulysses* is a chronicle of events of which one particular item is about Qian Zhongshu and his masterpiece *Personal Views*. Qian, in the first volume of his book published in 1979 (p.394), quoted a phrase (nes yo) from chapter 15 of *Ulysses* to explain a phrase in *A Historian's Record*. In our translated text of chapter 15, we put in a footnote for the translation "bulumu mei. e. ": The original is "nes. yo". Qian Zhongshu, in his notes for "Preface to *The Historian's Record*", used this phrase to explain the meaning of the Chinese expression "wei wei fou fou" (yea yea nay nay): "The English language often uses 'yes and no' (yi wei yi fou, in Chinese) as a syncretic answer. In the contemporary masterpiece (Joyce's *Ulysses*), it comes down to one word "nes.yo", a combination of the positive and negative"

In the course of our translating work, we found Chapter 14 very tough to deal with, as our

classical scholarship did not prove equal to it. In 1997, while I was tending Xiao Qian in Beijing Hospital, we received from Professor Maruyama Noboru of Tokyo University, a senior Japanese sinologist and one of the co-translators of Xiao Qian's autobiography *A Traveler without A Map*, a copy of the Japanese translation of *Ulysses* (in three volumes), jointly translated by Maruya Saiichi, Nagakawa Reiji and Takamatsu Yûichi. All three translators had graduated from the English Department of Tokyo University. Maruya Saiichi, being the most senior translator, undertook the most challenging four chapters, Chapters 11, 12, 14 and 18. He said he translated the archaic English in Chapter 14 in the style of Kojiki (Ancient Chronicles). The author of *Ulysses* modeled his prose on the styles of the English masters Daniel Defoe, Thomas Babington Macaulay, Charles Dickens and Water Horatio Pater. The translator adopted the styles of Ibara Saikaku, Natsume Sôseki, Kikuchi Kan and Tanizaki Jun'ichirô respectively to match those of the four English writers, integrating the strengths of the former with those of the latter. And then I thought of Qian Zhongshu as a writer who had written the novel *Fortress Besieged* in his younger days. That he did not translate *Ulysses* has left a gap in China's translation that will be looked upon by the translation community in China as an irretrievable loss.

4. XIAO QIAN AND JAMES JOYCE

IN THE FALL of 1929, Xiao Qian entered Yanjing University to study Chinese in a preparatory training class, auditing courses of modern literature offered by Yang Zhensheng, a visiting professor from Qinghua University, from which Xiao Qian learned for the first time about James Joyce as a rebellious writer of literature in English. He found Prof. Yang's lectures very attractive. He also attended a course on modern English novels offered by Grace M. Boynton from America. She talked about James Joyce and his trail-blazing novel of stream of consciousness *Ulysses*, captivating her audience with her vivid lecturing style. At that time Xiao Qian did not know Joyce was Irish.

In 1930, Xiao Qian passed the entrance exams and enrolled in Fujen, a Catholic University. Its professors for the most part were American Benedictine priests of Irish origin and Father Redman, Chairman of the Western Languages Department, was one of them. During the two years he had spent with Redman, Xiao Qian got to know something about Irish literature and that Joyce

was Irish. Father Redman was not very impressed with Joyce, saying that Joyce had tarnished the image of Ireland and vilified Catholicism.

As Xiao Qian had always held a good opinion of rebellious figures, he believed that Joyce must have been a courageous writer and one with vision. He then started rummaging through the Beijing national library as well as through the libraries of Yenching and Fujian Universities in search of Joyce's works but without success.

In 1939, Xiao Qian was invited to lecture at the College of Oriental Studies, London University. The university, to take shelter from the bombings by the Nazis, was evacuated from London to Oxford. His annual income was only 250 pounds and, after income tax, there was not much left. Nevertheless, he was thrifty and thus managed to buy 800 books during his stay in England, including works by E. M. Forster, D. H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf. He also bought some of Joyce's early books, like *Dubliners*, a collection of short stories, and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. At that time the ban on *Ulysses* had just been lifted and it had been published in England for only four years. The copy he purchased was a two-volume edition by Odyssey Publishing House, published in August, 1935.

On June 3, 1940, Xiao Qian wrote to Dr. Hu Shi, who was then China's Ambassador to the United States. The following is a passage from the letter:

There is not much work to do and I am not in the mood to write either. Recently I've begun reading James Joyce's *Ulysses* together with an Irish young man. If anyone undertakes the task of translating the novel, it is sure to do a lot of good to the techniques of creative writing in China. But it is not an easy job.

But never had it occurred to Xiao Qian that the gigantic task of translating *Ulysses* should have eventually found its way to himself as an old man in his eighties and to his wife. In September, 1984, Xiao Qian and I visited England and, on the 13th, went to King's College to pay a visit to Professor George Rylands, his supervisor when he was studying there. He received us with the hospitality of a host. But two years later, in 1986, when it had been arranged by Miss Peng Wenlan, the well-known CCTV host, to shoot a TV program with George Rylands in England, he had already left for France on holiday. Peng Wenlan was disappointed, as he had promised to wait for us for the interview.

On July 28th, 1993, Xiao Qian received a letter of four pages long from Rylands in which he

said:

... I am amazed and speechless with admiration that you are translating *Ulysses*. What a challenge. Every good wish for a triumphant success ...With students more than half my age Joyce is an all-important genius ...

After receiving a copy of our translation of the novel Rylands wrote again on January 16th, 1995:

Dear wonderful Chien,

Your *Ulysses* must be the most remarkable fact of translation in this century. What an achievement! I am eager to hear how the students and the critics respond? Let me know, please ...

The enthusiastic response of the readership to the translation was beyond any stretch of imagination on the part of the publisher as well as the translators. At an autographing ceremony for the sale of the book in April, 1995, in Shanghai, 1000 copies were sold in two days, which established a record high for sales.

Xiao Qian died on February 11th, 1999, at the age of 90. In July, I received a book as a gift entitled *A Study of Master Translators*, compiled by Professor Guo Zhuzhang and edited by Ms. Tang Jin, the head of Hubei Education Publishing House. In the preface to the book, Professor Guo says: "This is an intensive study of 16 contemporary Chinese translators. By 'master translators', as indicated in the title, we refer to those celebrated translators who have made significant contribution to the development of translation in China. They are Lu Xun, Zhou Zuoren, Hu Shi, Guo Moruo, Lin Yutang, Xu Zhimo, Mao Dun, Liang Shiqiu, Qian Gechuan, Zhang Guroo, Ba Jin, Fu Lei, Xiao Qian, Ge Baoquan, Wang Zuoliang and Xu Yuanchong. We would not say they are the most prominent figures in translation, but they are the ones the reading public has acclaimed as the most influential both in China and overseas. They are listed in the book in order of their dates of birth and the seniority of their translation career; it does not suggest any preference to the degree of their popularity."

In August, 1949, Xiao Qian rejected the invitation of King's College of Oxford University which offered him the status of an Emeritus position and travel expenses for three persons, and returned to his motherland via Hong Kong. But he was left out in the cold for eight years (1949 to 1957) and then he was labeled as "rightist". With that label attached to him, he was humiliated for the following 22 years. By the time his case was officially rehabilitated in 1979, he was nearly 70

years old. When Mr. Li Jingduan, the head and editor-in-chief of Yilin Publishing House, whom Xiao Qian honored as an insightful publisher, came to see us about the possibility of us translating *Ulysses*, Xiao Qian was already “an old man declining into his eighties”, as Qian Zhongshu had put it about himself. What was not so discouraging, however, was that I was only 63 years old. Xiao Qian once said, “Wen Jieruo is the engine, dragging me to run along.” For four years he worked as the driving force and I served as his assistant. We worked like crazy, getting the whole novel translated ahead of Jin Di in the end. If we were not sure we could finish it earlier than Jin Di, we would not have accepted the job. During those four years, I worked 15 or 16 hours a day, sometimes shutting myself up in my study for several months running. When our maid (we employed three of them altogether, who came to learn as well as to help, and we treated them as our granddaughters) assisted Grandpa on his walk, our neighbors would ask: “Is Granny out of town on business? We haven’t seen her for such a long time.” Our granddaughter was lovely in her reply: “Granny is busy translating *Ulysses*”. When they left, each of them was given a translated copy of *Ulysses* with our autographs. Xiao Qian has been dead for eight years now and I have come to realize what great significance the undertaking of the project means to his lifetime career! *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling* was actually a re-translation on his own, although he listed Li Congbi’s name as a co-translator. He had labored on a farm for three and a half years when he was recalled to the People’s Literature Publishing House to translate the book. The House had already decided to call off the plan to publish Li’s translation, but Xiao Qian thought, given the dilemma that Li was a university professor while he was a “rightist”, it was safer to publish the book as co-translated. He had spent five years (1961-1966) working on the book, one year longer than the time he spent on *Ulysses*. Xiao Qian later translated the play *Peer Gynt* (originally written in Norwegian) and *The Good Soldier Schweik* (originally in Czech), working in both cases from their English translations. *Tales from Shakespeare* was a book adapted for children. If he had not translated *Ulysses*, let us suppose, the literary tour de force, he would not have been included on the list of the 16 master translators.

When the “cultural revolution” began, I was really caught completely unprepared during its early days. I failed to preserve Xiao Qian’s large number of notes, commentaries and letters, especially the valuable letters, over one hundred of them, from the English writer E. M. Forster. When the situation entered into a new phase, all he had been able to accomplish was but a couple

of memoirs and some short essays.

In the course of translating *Ulysses*, my responsibility was, apart from collecting data and writing footnotes, to work out the first draft, making sure the translation was “truthful”, and Xiao Qian was to polish up, taking the responsibility of making the translation expressive and elegant with his seasoned writing techniques. This gigantic undertaking is the fruit born of our 45 years of life as husband and wife, embracing each other through happiness and adversities.

WEN JIERUO, senior editor, translator and member of the Chinese Writers’ Association, was born in Beijing (her native place is in Guizhou Province) in 1927. In 1950 she graduated from Foreign Languages Department, Qinghua University; in September, she was employed by the Management Department of Sanlian Publishing House; and in March, 1951, she transferred to People’s Literature Press.

She has written *Wonders in the Dream Valley*, and *Life Full of Vitality*. Her translations include *The Tokyo People* by Kawadata Yasunada, *The Koya Priest and Other Stories* by Izumi Kyōka, *Maurice* by E. M. Forster. *Ulysses*, co-translated with her husband, won the First Prize of 2nd Excellent Foreign Literary Works Award, and a Nomination for the National Excellent Book Award. In 2000 she won the “Japanese Foreign Minister’s Certificate of Commendation” and, in 2002, the Japanese government conferred on her “The Order of the Sacred Treasure, Gold Rays with Rosette”.

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