

Winners' Collection of
the First China
International Contest

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中国当代优秀作品
国际翻译大赛
| 获奖作品集 |



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首届中国当代优秀作品国际翻译大赛组委会 编

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The First China International Translation Contest (originally named China International Translation Contest 2013), which was held in September 2013, was aimed at encouraging the initiative of translators in China and abroad in presenting Chinese culture to the world, extending the international influence of Chinese culture, and promoting the cultural prosperity of the whole world.

The contest was sponsored by China's State Council Information Office, Chinese Writers Association and China International Publishing Group (CIPG), and co-organized by the Task Group for "China Book International," Translators Association of China, Research Department of the Chinese Writers Association and People's Literature Magazine. The event received support from Penguin Books, Le Groupe Hachette Livre, West Asia-Spain Popular Publishing Company, Oriental Literature Publishing Company of Russia, and Egypt-China Cultural Communication Association.

The First CITC organizing committee provided 30 contemporary Chinese short stories as source texts for translation, which had been selected by the Chinese Writers Association. Participants could choose one or more of the stories to translate into one of the following languages: English, French, Russian, Spanish or Arabic.

The contest drew 1,006 entries altogether from more than 30 countries and regions, with 22 percent of entries contributed by foreign contestants or by teams of Chinese and foreign translators working together. The translations submitted were of a high standard. Many of the contestants are sinologists or have been translating Chinese works into foreign languages for many years.

The jury, which was composed of 52 literature translation experts, sinologists,

college teachers and editors of publishing groups inside and outside China, named the prize winners after three rounds of reviews over the course of three months.

Thirty-seven translated works (by 58 translators) in English, French, Russian, Spanish and Arabic won first, second and third prizes, and another 35 works received honorable mentions. The full list of the prize-winning works was announced in early August 2014. Of them, 26 percent were contributed by Chinese translators and 49 percent by foreign translators, while a further 25 percent by teams of Chinese and foreign collaborators.

This collection presents the nine prize-winning English-language translation entries, which were selected from the 24 entries that had entered the final round of reviews, together with the original Chinese texts. No editorial changes were made to the authentic translations, except for necessary typological error corrections.

The First CITC received a warm response from translators in China and abroad who love Chinese culture and are dedicated to the translation of excellent contemporary Chinese works. Its success has also encouraged the organizing committee to organize more such events in the future. It is hoped that the CITC will gather more outstanding translators, and encourage them to study Chinese culture and disseminate Chinese literature to a wider audience around the world.

Organizing Committee of the First China International Translation Contest

October 2014

为激励广大境内外翻译工作者积极传播中华文化，扩大中华文化的国际影响力，促进世界文化的繁荣与发展，国务院新闻办公室、中国作家协会和中国外文局于2013年9月联合推出了中译外赛事——“中国当代优秀作品国际翻译大赛”。首届中国当代优秀作品国际翻译大赛（原称“2013中国当代优秀作品国际翻译大赛”，简称“翻译大赛”）由“中国图书对外推广计划”工作小组、中国翻译协会、中国作家协会创研部和《人民文学》杂志社联合承办，中国国际出版集团、企鹅图书、法国阿歇特出版集团、西亚西班牙大众出版社、俄罗斯东方文学出版社和埃中文化交流协会共同协办。

翻译大赛参赛原文为30篇中国当代优秀作品，分别选自30位中国当代知名作家，由中国作家协会组织的推荐委员会精选推荐。参赛者可自行选择其中一篇或多篇翻译成英语、法语、俄语、西班牙语或阿拉伯语其中任何一种语言。至截稿期，翻译大赛共收到来自30余个国家和地区的1006篇参赛译文。参赛译文呈现两大特点：一是外籍译者参与度高，所提交译文数量占投稿总数的22%。二是参赛者整体水平高，其中不乏长期从事中译外工作的审定稿专家和汉学家。

翻译大赛组委会依托中国外文局和中国译协的专家资源，组建了由国内外知名文学翻译家、汉学家、高校专家和合作出版社代表组成的5个语种、共计52人的专家评审团队。经过初审、复审和终审三个环节，最终投票选出5个语种共37篇获奖译作（涉及58名译者）和35篇提名译作，2014年8月初对外公布获奖名单。获奖者中，中国籍译者占26%，外籍译者占49%，中外合译占25%。

本译文集是首届翻译大赛英语组从24篇终审入围作品中选拔出的一、二、三等奖获奖译文的中外对照版本。为原汁原味地反映获奖译作的真实水平，本书编辑除对明显的拼写、标点等笔误进行刊正外，未做其他编辑加工。

首届翻译大赛的适时举办和热烈响应，激发了国内外文学爱好者和传播者的积极性，也坚定了我们翻译大赛继续举办下去的信心。我们诚挚地希望通过翻译大赛凝聚更多优秀的中外翻译人才关注中国文学，研修中国文化，以高质量的译作向世界更好地说明中国。

首届中国当代优秀作品国际翻译大赛组委会

2014年10月

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一等奖

Backflow River
倒流河

Nicky Harman 译
贾平凹 著

译者介绍

Nicky Harman, 女, 英国国籍, 中国语言文学学士(荣誉), 毕业于英国利兹大学, 自由职业者。主要翻译作品: 安妮宝贝《告别薇安》, 陈冠中《裸生》, 韩东《扎根》, 《韩东诗集》, 虹影《K》, 谢晓虹《好黑》, 严歌苓《金陵十三钗》, 张翎《金山》等。

Backflow River

Jia Pingwa

Backflow River had two small towns on its north side and three on the south side. If you wanted to cross the river, there was no bridge, only Dumbo's boat. So, when people got to the river crossing, they yelled: 'Bring the boat over, Dumbo!' And Dumbo put down his water pipe and poled across as hard as he could. He was not as strong as he had been, but there was a hawser strung across the river which the boat was roped to, so it was unlikely to be swept downstream.

The passengers stepped on-board. Dumbo knew Shun Shun from a nearby village. Today she had a new clip in her hair, so shiny and green it looked as if a dragonfly had just alighted on her head.

Everyone started making fun of Dumbo's teeth. The front ones were missing, which made the eyeteeth on either side look very long. There were wisecracks like: 'Are you growing tusks?' and 'Most people smoke their pipe relaxing on the kang. You take yours on board. It must be because you've

been a boatman so long. You're such a poser! You old show-off!' Dumbo laughed: 'You people walk perfectly well on two legs south of the river, why are you off north to crawl around underground on all fours?' Dumbo certainly had a sharp tongue in his head. His passengers jumped on him to shut him up, and the boat rocked violently and spun round on the water.

Above them, the sky was covered with pimply clouds. When they got to the other side, Dumbo took another suck from his pipe. As he puffed gently, teasing the strands of tobacco alight and listening to the glug-glug in the pipe bowl, he watched his passengers scrambling up the slope. The slope was covered in what looked like tufts of white flowers, though actually it was floss that had burst from the wormwood seed heads and dried out over the winter. South of the river, the cherry trees were in bloom, while here, on the north side, this 'cotton wormwood' floss still fluttered in the wind.

North of the river was a coal-producing region and was dotted with small pits. If you saw a shooting star at night and went looking for a meteorite where the star fell to earth, you might spot a hole slanting down into a hillock or ridge, which you could squeeze into. These holes were usually four or five li from a village, along a dark road. During the long hours of daylight, mules padded silently from them, laden with baskets of coal. The deep, hard ruts scored in the road by the occasional passing lorries or tractors made the mules slip and stumble, and the muleteers yell obscenities at them.

Their curses could be heard right up on the hillocks and ridges and if a traveller up there was a muleteer too, he always tried to shout back. But the words scrambled and buzzed in the air, so the muleteers had to content with waving greetings instead.

This particular hole in a gully bottom was different from the others. A shack had been erected next to the entrance and someone had planted a patch of pumpkins. After the plentiful rains, the leaves of the pumpkin vine were as big as heads and had grown up and over the roof of the

shack. Under them sat a group of women with the lunch tins they had brought for their menfolk. It was a long wait, and they spent the time counting which of the brilliant yellow pumpkin flowers had set fruit, with tiny buds visible under the flowers petals, and which had not and were just 'fibber' flowers. Shun Shun stopped counting and went off to sit on her own. She unwrapped the food tin from its cloth, then wrapped it up again. Then she tried to take the cloth off again, but this time the knot was too tight and she struggled with it, pulling a face. The other women exchanged glances, and quickly changed the subject: 'The food tins go cold before you even leave the house,' they said.

The food tins were all the same but the contents varied. Some held red beans and rice with fried potato shreds or stewed radish. Some had laomian noodles flavoured with oil. One held four gangtou buns, split open and filled with chilli paste and green onions and topped with garlic. ('My man's got a big appetite,' she said.) Liben had suffered from a stomach complaint a while ago, and Shun Shun had made him pancakes because they were soft and digestible, and had shredded zucchini into the mixture. Her pancakes came apart when she fried them and she was embarrassed to let anyone see them. She clutched the food tin to her chest, enjoying the warmth.

A safety helmet was flung out of the hole and landed on the ground with a thud. A man crawled out, followed by five or six more. Each man looked around and smiled at his wife, but it took the wife a minute or two to recognize her man — they all looked the same with their blackened clothes and faces. Shun Shun was the first to move, running over to Liben with the food tin. (The whites of Liben's eyes were very white, much more so than the other men's, and now they looked even whiter.) Liben reached for a pancake, leaving black fingerprints on it. 'Don't be in such a hurry!' Shun Shun scolded him, and gave him a torn-off pumpkin leaf to wipe his hands on.

After the men had eaten, the women all left and the men sprawled on the ground in the sun, smoking and talking about their wives. 'The mo-

ment I get home in the evening, mine is ladling my noodles into the bowl,' said one. 'I get straight onto the kang and she wipes her hands and comes running, however busy she is,' said another. Liben gave a few snorts. What baloney, he thought to himself. When I get in, Shun Shun brings me my dinner in one hand, her other hand holding up her trousers and asks me which I'd like first... He shut his eyes and dozed. 'What's that "huh!" supposed to mean, Liben?' asked the man next to him. 'Liben? Liben!' But Liben was fast asleep. Shouting at him made no difference so someone quietly slipped a coin into his hand, which immediately closed in a tight grip. Liben got so annoyed that they all shouted with laughter. 'Just look at him, the old bastard!'

But there were often tears at the pithead too. You never knew when a man would come out, hauling on a rope attached to a galvanised iron tub which held, not lumps of coal, but a mangled body. Then the pithead would echo to loud weeping and wailing.

When the vine tendrils of the pumpkin plants next to the shack withered, they revealed heap after heap of ash from spirit money. Unburnt scraps of paper fluttered in the wind and stuck to people's clothes. One landed on Liben's trouser leg, and he spat and said: 'You and I never fell out, and I don't owe you money, leave me alone!'

There was a small store on the edge of the village four li away, where the coal miners bought liquor. The villagers called the miners 'blackies'. Most blackies bought their liquor on tick — the shopkeeper chalked up each man's name and how much he owed, on the wall. Some of the accounts were still up there but the man had long gone from this world. In that case, his debt was treated as spirit money and written off, and a cross was made against his name on the wall. There were rumours that one windy, moonless night not long ago, three blackies knocked at the store and asked for cigarettes, liquor and instant noodles. 'On tick?' the shopkeeper asked. 'We'll pay cash!' the men said. When the shopkeeper came to count the money in the morning, he discovered it was all spirit money.

After that, the miners' wives all pasted pictures of Guanyin on the walls of the homes they rented in the village, and burned incense to her every day. Shun Shun pushed a longevity knot or a bit of cinnabar wrapped in paper, into Liben's breast pocket whenever he went to the pit. Liben was a bit of a show-off and, once, he unwrapped the packet to show his mates. Inside was not cinnabar but a bloody scrap of cloth. His mates took the mickey out of Liben — they knew just what kind of blood that was. He had a go at Shun Shun when he got home but she just said that a yin-yang master had come to the village and told her that menstrual blood was the best thing to ward off evil. Liben calmed down at that, but he already had a bowl in his hand ready to hurl to the ground so he picked a broken one to smash instead.

In this particular pit, there were some blackies from the east or west of the county, but most were from north or south of the river. Of the eight from south of the river, five were dead within six years, one had a broken leg and another lay on the kang, a vegetable, unable to speak. But Liben was very much alive. He boasted to his mates that it was the lucky mole he had down there that kept him safe, but they reckoned it was down to having Shun Shun. Liben thought Shun Shun was good for him too, and he went home and took her in his arms and kissed her. Then he kissed her belly.

Shun Shun knew what that meant and, that night, she stretched out as innocent as a pussy-cat and let him have his way with her. When they had finished, she was about to get up and pour him some warm water to wash when he said: 'Don't you dare let it run out!' He propped her bottom on a pillow and Shun Shun hung her head over the edge of the bed.

Shun Shun had already chosen a name, Anran, meaning 'safe and sound', for her future child. But another year went by and she was still not pregnant.

Then prices for coal slumped and the coal from their pit had a lot of gangue in it, which made it even harder to sell. The pit owner encouraged

them to go out selling door-to-door, and offered them half of whatever they earned on each ton. Shun Shun said to Liben: 'You're over your stomach trouble now. I'll go out selling for us. Two can earn more than one, and once we earn enough, we can build a new house. We should be able to go back home next year.' 'Then who's going to make my dinners?' asked Liben. 'Old Wei's wife.' This woman was taking Wei's food anyway, so Wei agreed and she agreed, and Shun Shun paid her a bit of money to take food for Liben too.

Shun Shun started by going back to their home south of the river. In other people's fields, the paddy rice was in flower, but hers had been attacked by pests and the leaves had rusty-coloured spots all over them. It took her three days working non-stop to pick the grubs from the plants. Each time she worked from one end of the field to the other, she collected nearly half a basket full of the grubs. These she tipped out on the bank and smashed them to a pulp with a piece of wood. Her legs were covered in leeches, which fastened onto her flesh so she couldn't pull them out. Blood streamed down her legs. 'Hit them!' a passer-by advised her. 'Hit them and they'll let go.' Three slaps and the leeches dropped off. 'And you think you're going to get a crop out of that mess?' the other said, looking at her field. Liben hadn't made any money at the pit, the rice crop had failed, and now Shun Shun was being laughed at. She vowed to make a success of selling the coal.

Every state-owned organization in the county town had a coal-fired boiler, and people's homes were all heated by coal, so Shun Shun went knocking door-to-door, putting on her most persuasive manner. For the first couple of months, she cycled there on her own, but it made a very long day. Then she got an old uncle of Liben's to go with her. He was a fat man and, with him sitting behind her on the bike, Shun Shun poured with sweat. She rode into someone three times, landing the old man on the ground. He broke one of his teeth in the fall and Shun Shun promised she'd get him fitted with a gold one. They always started from the town's

east gate and the old man would cover the north part of town and Shun Shun the southern part. Before she set off, she went behind a willow tree and changed her old jacket for a loose red flowery one. She liked that jacket so much she always had to have a good look at her reflection in the river.

Shun Shun found it hard when, just as she was about to strike a deal with the boiler men, they demanded their cut. This was sometimes 500 yuan, sometimes as much as 1,000. At first, Shun Shun forked out the cash from her own pocket. Then she got wise and wrote out an invoice instead. If she sold a load of ten tons, she invoiced for 13 tons, and the boiler man got his cut that way. But when the coal was unloaded and he asked her to take him out to dinner, she said no to that. Instead, she gave him the money for a meal, threw in a packet of cigarettes and helped him with the unloading. As they worked, he eyed her up and asked: 'Is it true that if you work in the mines for a year, you piss black pee for three years?' 'You spit black spit too,' said Shun Shun. They laughed. 'It's the pot calling the kettle black! What we're doing's just as dirty!'

Shun Shun's sales were good. Every week or so she would go back to the mine to receive her share of the takings. She stayed the night, wanting to be a good wife to Liben, but he always went off drinking at the end of his shift and staggered home blind drunk. Then he would throw a wad of notes down in front of Shun Shun: 'Here, dammit!' Shun Shun just smiled and pulled out her own wad of cash from her jacket pocket. Her wad was much thicker than Liben's.

That autumn, Dumbo the ferryman started complaining that he had backache. His passengers swatted him with the soles of their shoes. The doctor said he was suffering from the damp and prescribed daily guasha scrapes at the town clinic. His son rode him there on the bicycle once, but then he said: 'It's only scraping your body with an ox bone. Give the money to me and I'll do it for you every night.' Dumbo snorted and hastily pressed his hat down on his head. He had a hundred yuan in notes stuffed inside its lining.