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THE TRANSLATION AND DISSEMINATION OF *SIX RECORDS OF A FLOATING LIFE*:  
FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF READERS' RECEPTION

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ABSTRACT

The paper analyzes the reasons why the English translation of Chinese classic *Fushengliuji*, especially the Penguin version *Six Records of a Floating Life*, has gained great popularity among English readers, with the aim of exploring English readers' expectations of Chinese literature, and the translation and dissemination strategies that affect the reception. The paper points out that English readers have two distinct expectations when reading that classic, that is, enjoying the couple's touching story and learning more about Chinese culture. The Penguin version has lived up to those two expectations by providing an easy-read translation with proper cross-cultural interpretation to aid English readers with crossing the cultural barriers so that they can achieve a correct understanding of the book and at the same time experience the joy of reading. Furthermore, part of that version is included in *Longman Anthology of World Literature* (D) and its first chapter, the most fascinating part, is published under the title of *Old Man of the Moon* as one of the Penguin Little Black Classics, both of which have disseminated the book among more general English readers. The case study proves that under the current situation where few Chinese literary works have gained popularity among English readers, the target readers' expectations should be taken seriously into consideration during the whole translation and publication process. It is suggested that the easy-read translation with appropriate cross-cultural interpretation and the publication of the abridged version will make the Chinese literature more accessible to general English readers, as most of them have little command of Chinese culture and no much interest in Chinese literature at present.

**Key words:** English translation; dissemination; *Six Records of a Floating Life*; Readers' reception

Introduction

Over the past 70 years since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the state has attached great importance to the English translation of Chinese literature, investing a lot of money in the translation and publication of a large number of literary works such as Panda Books and Library of Chinese Classics. However, "the actual reception of most books is far from expectation". (Xie Tianzhen 2) At present, the biggest challenge for Chinese literary translation is how to make the translation work reach more general western readers and be accepted by them.

Literary translation, as a cross-cultural communication activity, has always been an active choice of target readers. Therefore, from the perspective of readers' reception, what kind of Chinese literary works do English readers like? What is their purpose of reading Chinese literature? What type of translation works can be accepted and loved by readers in the English world? At the same time, what kind of dissemination strategy can bring more Chinese literature translations into the English world? This paper will take *Fushengliuji*, a Chinese classic autobiography as an example to explore the above issues, in order to provide insights for more Chinese literature to be accepted by general readers in the English world.

Since the new millennium, *Fushengliuji*, the autobiography of Shen Fu, a scholar in the Qing dynasty, has attracted wide attention in Chinese academic circle. The studies of its English translation mainly focus on Lin Yutang's version, which are carried out from the perspectives of culture, literature and linguistics, to explore the translated work itself, the translator and his translation strategies (Ge Xiaoqin, Ji Zhengming; Sun Huijun; Chen Huimin; Cai Xinle; Zhao Yongxiang, Zhang Dongmei; Wen Jun; Liang Linxin) At present, the most influential studies are Guan Xingzhong's comparative study of Lin Yutang's translation and Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui's translation from the perspective of domestication and foreignization (Guan Xingzhong). Lu Fang and Liang Linxin, Mingwu Xu (2018) explore the translation and reception of the book in the English world. Liang points out that among the four English versions, the translation of Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui is the most widely circulated in the English world. He attributes it mainly to the cooperative translation mode of both native Chinese and native English translators and the good reputation of the Penguin Classics among western readers. It is undeniable that the above factors do play an important role. However, there are other essential factors that should not be ignored, including the book's meeting of English reader's expectations, the translators' cross-cultural interpretative translating strategies, as well as the publishing and dissemination mode of the translation work. The in-depth exploration and analysis of the above factors is of great significance for promoting the English translation and dissemination of Chinese literature and culture today.

### 1. Reading Chinese Stories and Learning Chinese Culture: the Expectations of English Readers

Up to now, there are altogether four English versions of *Fushengliuji*. The first translation was done by Lin Yutang, a famous Chinese scholar, which was firstly published in Shanghai in 1939. In 1942, the full translation was included in *the wisdom of China and India*, which was published by Random House in the United States and reprinted in 1943. Later Lin's version was published in Hong Kong in 1962 and in Taiwan in 1964. In 1999, that translation was published in Beijing in the Chinese-English version. Therefore, Lin's translation mainly spreads in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. The second translation, done by Shirley Black, a British sinologist and translator, was firstly published by Oxford Press in 1960, and published again later by Silk Pagoda, Martino Fine Books and Olympia Press (Kindle version) in 2008, 2012 and 2016 respectively. In 1983, the third translation jointly completed by Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui was published by Viking Press and Penguin Classics in New York in the same year. In 2006, their translation was included in the Library of Chinese Classics and got published by Yilin Press (Chinese-English edition) in China. Then in 2011, Graham Sanders produced the fourth translation, which was published by Hackett Publishing Company Inc. in the U.S. as a classic work, with the purpose of providing a reference book for classroom use. In short, with a nearly 80 years of translation and dissemination history in the English world, *Fushengliuji* has been accepted not only as a world literature classic but also has circulated among general readers, which proves it a great success.

As Lawrence Venuti said, "The foreign text, then, is not so much communicated as inscribed with domestic intelligibilities and interests. The inscription begins with the very choice of a text for translation, always a very selective, densely motivated choice, and continues in the development of discursive strategies to translate it, always a choice of certain domestic discourses over others." (Venuti 468) so, why do English readers choose Shen Fu's autobiography? What is their purpose of reading his book?

First, readers in the English world present much interest in Chinese society and culture. Some readers read the English translation of Shen Fu's autobiography just to learn more about Chinese history and culture,

which is especially true among academic readers. For example, many universities and even some senior high schools in English speaking countries select *Six Records of a Floating Life* as the teaching material for the courses such as Chinese history, world history, world literature, gender research, family research, creative writing and other courses, which include the family history course offered by Harvard University in 2016, the East Asian humanities course offered by Columbia University in 2004, and the Chinese culture and social history course offered by Colorado University in 2005. The purpose of that selection is to learn about Chinese society and culture in the early 19th century, such as family history (Harvard University), folk narrative history of Chinese scholars (Columbia University), arranged marriage (but also true love), concubinage, foot binding of women and multiple names of scholars in ancient China, as well as Chinese garden design and Chinese philosophy, etc.

Second, the reason why *Six Records of a Floating Life* is accepted by general readers in the English world is inseparable from its unique aesthetic values. By reading and analyzing the comments on Amazon.com and goodreads.com, the largest book sales website and the largest book rating website respectively in the English world, we can find that general readers in the English world love the book mostly because they are moved by the ordinary lives of the couple. Their upright personalities, touching husband-wife relationship, quiet and interesting marital life as well as suffering are of universal significance, which certainly can transcend time and space and resonate with readers in the English world. Next is the author's superb and unique narrative style. Shen Fu wrote his autobiography not in chronological order, but in terms of different themes, which is rare in the history of both Chinese literature and world literature. It is precisely because of those characteristics above that the book greatly touches general readers of the English world. One reader commented that Shen Fu's work is a remarkable one in the history of classic Chinese literature. It does not belong to any literary genre, but has memoirs, gardening manuals, eulogy, travelogue and social document of the Qing dynasty, however, "it is perhaps best thought of as a moving, even mystical, love story."<sup>1</sup>

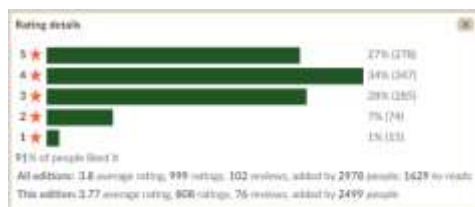
## 2. The Penguin Classic *Six Records of a Floating Life*: Western Readers' Favorite

In 1983, *Six Records of a Floating Life* was published by the world-wide famous Penguin Classic, whose publications are all world literature classics which are tailored not only for general readers but also for scholars and students as well. From the perspective of readers' reception, Penguin edition is the leading one among the four English translations of *Fushengliuji*. First, as mentioned above, that version is selected as the teaching material in universities and even some senior high schools in English speaking countries, which shows its incomparable advantage compared with the other three versions. Second, the penguin version is also general readers' favorite, which is demonstrated by readers' rating on goodreads.com. Up to August 13, 2020, a total of 999 readers have rated the English version of *Fushengliuji* on that website, with an average score of 3.8 points (the full score being 5). Among the readers who rated the book, 91% of them said they liked the book, 102 readers wrote book reviews, 2,978 readers put the book on the shelf, and 1,629 readers said they would like to read it. Among the total 999 readers, 808 of them have selected the Penguin Classic version, with an average score of 3.77 points, 76 book reviews, and 2,499 potential readers that have put the book on the shelf. Therefore, it proves that among the four English translations, Penguin Classic version has gained the best reception effect among general readers in the English world, as is shown below:

Readers' rating of *Six Records of a Floating Life*<sup>2</sup> on goodreads.com:

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.theworldofchinese.com/2015/08/shen-fus-floating-life/> (data acquisition date: July 12, 2020)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/524116.Six\\_Records\\_of\\_a\\_Floating\\_Life?from\\_search=true&from\\_srp=true&qid=8pl8kdjqt&rank=1](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/524116.Six_Records_of_a_Floating_Life?from_search=true&from_srp=true&qid=8pl8kdjqt&rank=1) (data acquisition date: August 13, 2020)



Of course, the four translations of *Fushengliuji* were created in different times, with different translation purposes and strategies, and thus have different focuses on the interpretation of the original work, but they have all made a contribution to the dissemination of *Fushengliuji* in the English world. However, from the perspective of readers' reception, penguin version is by far the most popular one. So, what are the factors behind its popularity? The in-depth discussion of this issue is of great significance to the improvement of the English translation and dissemination of Chinese literature.

### 3. The Penguin Classic *Six Records of a Floating Life*: an Easy-read Translation with Appropriate Cross-cultural Interpretation

At present, more and more Chinese literature works are seeking global recognition. However, the global reception environment is not that friendly. As a result, even though a considerable number of English translation works of Chinese literature have been published, very few of them have made a substantial influence on international readers. Therefore, it is particularly important to consider the reception environment of the target country, especially the target readers' expectations, and to carry out cross-cultural interpretative translation, so as to improve the reception effect of the translation work. In terms of readers' reception, Penguin Classic *Six Records of a Floating Life* is a popular translation with cross-cultural interpretation for readers, which is an important factor in attracting readers.

First of all, by means of cross-cultural interpretation, the Penguin Classic *Six Records of a Floating Life* caters to western readers' expectations, that is, reading Chinese story and learning Chinese culture. In the Introduction, the translator emphasizes the literary value of the original work, and at the same time objectively evaluates Shen Fu and his life based on the social and cultural backgrounds of Shen Fu's era. Moreover, 217 end notes and several maps of China are attached to the story at the end of the book. All of those explanatory words and pictures facilitate western readers' understanding of the story as well as Chinese culture involved.

In fact, one strong motivation for the translation of *Six Records of a Floating Life* is that the book has significant historical and documentary value, which is evident in the introduction to the book, either in translator's Introduction, at the back cover text of the translation work, or on the Penguin Classic official website and amazon.com. For example, in the brief introduction on the back cover of the book, the book is regarded as "an extraordinary blend of autobiography, love story and social document" (Shen, *Six Records of a Floating Life*). "The introduction describes the ways in which the book offers a unique insight into family life, government and the powerful role of the courtesan in nineteenth-century China." (ibid.), because readers of the English world know little about Chinese literature and culture. In order to help them have a better understanding of the book, the translator provides readers with a detailed introduction and objective analysis of the above aspects. For example, in the second paragraph of the Introduction, the translator points out the reason why the book is a "valuable social document" (Shen, *Six Records of a Floating Life* 9) for Western readers, and takes courtesans as an example to illustrate that point. The translator says that it is not easy for Western readers to understand what a courtesan was in traditional Chinese society, because in the English vocabulary, the only equivalent for that is a prostitute, but there are great differences between a prostitute and a courtesan in China. In traditional Chinese society, a courtesan was "respectable and respected" (Shen, *Six Records of a Floating Life* 9). Her sexual favors were not necessarily for sale. Compared with the men they served, these courtesans were more independent and powerful. The translator points out that "It is this kind of small but significant alteration to our perceptions and presumptions which the *Six Records* can effect that makes it so important a book for Westerners." (Shen, *Six Records of a Floating Life* 9)

The translator also mentions that for Chinese readers, the original work is mainly a love story, while for Western readers, the love story is “unique” (Shen, *Six Records of a Floating Life* 9). Apart from his true love for his wife Yun, Shen Fu also had affairs with courtesans, and Yun even tried to help her husband take a concubine. For Chinese readers, there is no need to elaborate, but for readers of the English world, it is hard to understand whether there is true love between Shen Fu and his wife. In order to help readers understand and evaluate the love story, the translator emphasizes that “And yet, for all that, it is none the less love.” (Shen, *Six Records of a Floating Life* 9) because the story occurred in a traditional Chinese society, when it was acceptable to the society that men took concubines or had an affair with courtesans.

Second, another important embodiment of cross-cultural interpretation is that the translator adds a lot of end notes about Chinese celebrities, traditional Chinese festivals, historical allusions, religious culture, etc., to help those readers who want to know more about Chinese culture better understand the book and Chinese culture, and ensure at the same time that those readers who only want to read the story are not interrupted by the notes during their reading. More importantly, the notes are added from the perspective of western readers’ reception, especially with a strong cross-cultural awareness. For one example, among the end note for the second part, the translator compares the construction methods of traditional Chinese and western architecture to help western readers understand the unique features of traditional Chinese architectural culture. For another example, in the third part, Shen Fu’s father wrote to Shen Fu without knowing the truth, reprimanding Yun for borrowing money behind her husband’s back and trying to put the blame on Shen Fu’s younger brother Qitang. As for the Chinese form of address “小叔子”, Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui translated it literally into “little uncle” (Shen, *Six Records of a Floating Life* 75) and at the same time provided an explanation in the end note to help English readers understand its meaning: “It is a form of address that a wife is supposed to use in speaking of a brother-in-law who is not as old as her husband.” (Shen, *Six Records of a Floating Life* 154) Lin Yutang paraphrased it as “your brother” (Shen Fu, *Six Chapters of a Floating Life* 131), while Graham Sanders adopted the method of domestication, transferring it into “her brother-in-law” (Shen, *Six Records of a Life Adrift* 57), neither of which could retain the Chinese culture.

Unlike Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui, Graham Sanders added a lot of footnotes, occupying a considerable part of the page, which is convenient for readers to understand Chinese culture at any time during the reading process. Moreover, Graham Sanders supplied much more annotations than Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui did, and the annotation content is more detailed and in-depth. Some annotation contents are not even familiar to today’s Chinese general readers. For example, when Shen Fu’s mother celebrated her birthday, she invited the opera troupe to perform. Sanders provided detailed introduction to the opera pieces, such as “Tragic Parting”, “Assassinating Liang” and “Sequel to Seeking”. (Shen, *Six Records of a Life Adrift* 16-17) Obviously, the reason why Graham Sanders provided so many footnotes to make such a thorough and detailed interpretation of Chinese culture is to meet the needs of academic readers or at least those readers who have real interest in Chinese culture.

Thirdly, at the linguistic level, compared with other versions, the translation of Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui is more concise, straightforward, easy to understand, and thus more suitable for general readers. Here are some examples:

The original sentence: 少焉一轮明月已上林梢·渐觉风生袖底·月到波心·俗虑尘怀爽然顿释·  
(Shen, *Six Chapters of a Floating Life* 34)

Lin Yutang’s translation: After a while, the moon had already arisen from behind the forest, and the breeze was playing about our sleeves, while the moon’s image sparkled in the rippling water, and all worldly cares were banished from our breasts. (Shen, *Six Chapters of a Floating Life* 35)

Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui’s version: A full moon soon rose above the trees, and we gradually felt a breeze beginning to tug at our sleeves. The moon shone on the stream below, and quickly drove away our cares. (Shen, *Six Records of a Floating Life* 36)



Graham Sanders' version: Before long the full bright moon peeked out over the treetops and we felt our sleeves begin to flutter in the breeze. The moonlight touched the heart of the rippling waters below and all our mundane worries and dusty concerns were washed away. (Shen, Six Records of a Life Adrift 15)

In comparison, the translated text of Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui is more colloquial and the sentence patterns are simpler and easier to understand. In Lin Yutang's translation, words such as "sparkle" and "banish" are used, and similar to the original sentence, there is only one long sentence with a complex structure. In Sanders' version, the images in the original text are retained, which is more faithful to the original text.

When strolling through the Ko Garden, Shen Fu prevented Miss Wang from picking the fresh flowers, and Miss Wang asked him for the reason. Shen Fu laughed and said the following sentence.

The original sentence: 笑曰：“将来罚嫁麻面多须郎·为花泄忿。”(Shen, Six Chapters of a Floating Life 40)

Lin Yutang's translation: "All right," I said, "you will be punished for this one day by marrying a pock-marked bearded fellow for your husband to avenge the flowers." (Shen, Six Chapters of a Floating Life 41)

Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui's version: I laughed and told her, 'You are going to marry a pock-marked, hairy fellow. That will be the flowers' revenge.' (Shen, Six Records of a Floating Life 38)

Sanders' version: I laughed and said, "When you are punished by having to marry a tassel-bearded man with pocks blooming on his face, then the flowers will have their revenge!" (Shen, Six Records of a Life Adrift 18)

Comparing the above translation examples, we can see that Lin Yutang's and Sanders' versions have relatively long sentence patterns and complex structures, while Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui's version uses two sentences with simple words and simple sentence patterns.

The original sentence: 沈复答曰：“坊间有蝴蝶履·小大由之·购亦极易·且早晚可代撒鞋之用·不亦善乎？”(Shen, Six Chapters of a Floating Life 58)

Lin Yutang's version: I told her there was a kind of shoes called "butterfly shoes", which could fit any size of feet and were very easy to obtain at the shops, and suggested buying a pair for her, which she could also use as slippers later on at home. (Shen, Six Chapters of a Floating Life 59)

Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui's translation: 'In the street they sell "butterfly shoes"', I said, 'in all sizes. They're easy to buy, and afterwards you can wear them around the house. Wouldn't they do?' (Shen, Six Records of a Floating Life 44)

Graham Sanders' translation: "In the street market, they have butterfly shoes in all sorts of sizes," I suggested, "It would be easy to buy you a pair and later you could even wear them as slippers in the house. Wouldn't that be perfect?" (Shen, Six Records of a Life Adrift 25)

Lin Yutang changed the direct speech in the original sentence into an indirect one, and used two non-restrictive attributive clauses with a long sentence structure, while the other two versions both cut the translation into three sentences. However, compared with Sanders' translation, Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui's version looks more colloquial.

The following example is the translation of two place names: 沧浪亭 and 爱莲居, which can also display the linguistic features of the different translations.

Lin Yutang's translation: the Ts'anglang Pavilion, the Lotus Lover's Lodge (Shen, Six Chapters of a Floating Life 19)

Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui's version: the Pavilion of the Waves, Lotus Lover's Hall (Shen, Six Records of a Floating Life 30)

Graham Sanders' translation: the Pavilion of the Azure Waves, Lotus Lover's Abode (Shen, Six Records of a Life Adrift 7)

In comparison, Sanders' translation is the most formal one, using the words "azure" and "abode", and thus of the most aesthetic appeal; Lin Yutang transliterated it into "the Ts'anglang Pavilion", so that the aesthetic taste disappeared; Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui's translation is in-between, transferring the main meaning of the original words "沧浪" and "居", but using only the common English words "waves" and "hall", so that the translation is readable to more general readers.

Take another example, 秋侵人影瘦, 霜染菊花肥。 (Shen, Six Chapters of a Floating Life 4)

Lin Yutang's translation:

Touched by autumn, one's figure grows slender,

Soaked in frost, the chrysanthemum blooms full. (Shen, Six Chapters of a Floating Life 5)

Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui's version: We grow thin in the shadows of autumn, but chrysanthemums grow fat with the dew. (Shen, Six Records of a Floating Life 26)

Graham Sanders' version: Autumn encroaches on my shadow wasting away; /frost paints the chrysanthemums growing full. (Shen, Six Records of a Life Adrift 10)

"Blooms full" in Lin Yutang's translation is more vivid, while Sanders' literal translation of "侵" and "染" into "encroaches" and "paints" is more faithful, which is related to his translation purpose, that is, to provide academic readers with more faithful translation. In comparison, Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui's version is simpler and easier to understand, which is more suitable for general readers who know little about Chinese culture. To some extent, Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui's version may not be the most faithful one, but it is the one most favored by western readers.

"Translation then, is not just a process that happens in the translator's head. Readers decide to accept or reject translations. Different types of reader will require different types of translation. In Goethe's words: 'if you want to influence the masses, a simple translation is always best. Critical translations vying with the original really are of use only for conversations the learned conduct among themselves.' ... The literal, the interlinear, and other such types of translation of literature are obviously not aimed at influencing the masses, but rather at making the text of a foreign work of literature accessible to scholarly analysis without having it enter the body of literature in the receiving culture, even though all scholarly translations do, to some extent, reflect the poetics of the time in which they are written." (Lefevere 5-6)

#### 4. Excerpts or Inclusion in Anthologies: an Effective Way to Reach Readers

In addition to the above translation factors, the success of Penguin Classic *Six Records of a Floating Life* in the English world is closely related to the publishing mode of Penguin Press. First, besides the paper book, at the beginning of the new millennium, Penguin also published the digital version of *Six Records of a Floating Life* to meet the needs of readers in the digital age. Second, in order to commemorate its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Penguin Press published the famous Little Black Penguin Classics series, only three Chinese classics included, *the Old Man of the Moon* being one of them, which is the first chapter of *Six Records of a Floating Life*, the couple's beautiful and romantic love story, and also the most attractive part of the whole book. Obviously, with the advantages of short story (only 64 pages) and cheap price (0.99 pounds), the excerpted version can facilitate the circulation of *Six Records of a Floating Life* among more general readers in the English world.

As for the essential role of the excerpted or abridged version in cross-cultural communication, especially from the perspective of the reception effect on general readers, some scholar said, "The excerpted translation may be far away from the standard of faithfulness at the language level, and it is often interspersed

with the introduction and explanation of the translator, but it can achieve the goal of helping non-Chinese readers understand Chinese literary classics and Chinese society at the cultural level. Therefore, this kind of translation, which is close to cross-cultural interpretation, is a beneficial attempt for the Chinese literature and culture to be known by the world.” (Wang Ning 6) Therefore, the faithful full translation may not be the most effective way of cross-cultural communication.

*The old man of the moon*, since its publication in February 2015 up to August 13, 2020, has been rated by 630 readers on goodreads.com. 88% of readers said they liked the book, providing an average score of 3.5 points (the full score being 5 points) and 84 book reviews. The specific rating is as follows<sup>3</sup>:

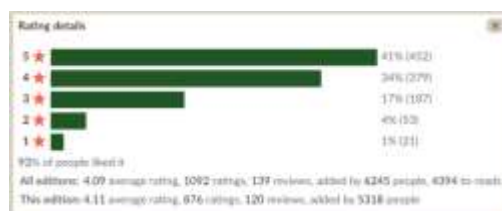


Some reader pointed out that although he had never read any Chinese or Japanese works in the original, Shen Fu’s memorial to his beloved wife is gorgeous. “It makes me want to hunt out Shen Fu’s complete work.”<sup>4</sup> Another reader has bought a complete set of 80 Penguin Little Black Classic books. The first book he read was *the Old Man of the Moon*, and “it really aroused my desire to read the complete book.”<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the excerpted version, anthologies also play an important role in the dissemination of *Six Records of a Floating Life* in the English world. In 2008, part of the book was included in *Longman Anthology of World Literature* (Volume D), which, together with *Norton Anthology of World Literature* and *Bedford Anthology of World Literature*, is recognized as one of the three authoritative anthologies of world literature in the English world and enjoys a very high reputation among readers. The inclusion of part of *Six Records of a Floating Life* in that anthology further proves that this version has been recognized by authoritative scholars and readers in the English world, and thus has greatly increased its influence in the English world.

In addition, in 1937, Lin Yutang added two fragments of his translation *Six Chapters of a Floating Life* into his anthology *the Importance of Living*, which has been reprinted dozens of times and has been still on sale now in the book market. By the data acquisition date, 1,092 readers has rated that book on goodreads.com, 93% of whom liked the book, with an average score of 4.09 points (full score being 5) and 139 book reviews. 6,245 readers added the book on the shelf and 4,394 readers planned to read it. It is clear that *the Importance of Living* still enjoys a large readership in English speaking countries. With the popularity of that book, *Fushengliuji* can be known and loved by more western readers.

The rating of *the Importance of Living* on goodreads.com is as follows<sup>6</sup>:



<sup>3</sup> [https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/24874327-the-old-man-of-the-moon?from\\_search=true&from\\_srp=true&qid=CmYwHCUOut&rank=1](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/24874327-the-old-man-of-the-moon?from_search=true&from_srp=true&qid=CmYwHCUOut&rank=1) (data acquisition date: August 13, 2020)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/24874327-the-old-man-of-the-moon?from\\_search=true&from\\_srp=true&qid=CmYwHCUOut&rank=1](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/24874327-the-old-man-of-the-moon?from_search=true&from_srp=true&qid=CmYwHCUOut&rank=1) (data acquisition date: August 13, 2020)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/24874327-the-old-man-of-the-moon?from\\_search=true&from\\_srp=true&qid=CmYwHCUOut&rank=1](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/24874327-the-old-man-of-the-moon?from_search=true&from_srp=true&qid=CmYwHCUOut&rank=1) (data acquisition date: August 13, 2020)

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/84352.The\\_Importance\\_of\\_Living?from\\_search=true&from\\_srp=true&qid=w71guFEkhh&rank=1](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/84352.The_Importance_of_Living?from_search=true&from_srp=true&qid=w71guFEkhh&rank=1) (data acquisition date: August 13, 2020)



As Steiner said, "The anthologies and a few study guides on how to teach and read world literature have become the most important sources on how to teach and read world literature from other areas and times. Textbook publishing and a number of inexpensive paperback series of the classics have been driving forces in the dissemination of canonized works from different areas." (Steiner 318)

### Conclusion

At present, Chinese literature is still on the periphery of the world literature map, and western readers know little about it. The popularity of Penguin Classic *Six Records of a Floating Life* provides with some enlightenment about the translation and dissemination of Chinese literature in the world. First of all, learning the target reader's interest and reading expectations is crucial for the selection of the original work and to a certain extent determines whether the translation is accepted by the target reader. Select short and touching Chinese stories with universal significance, aesthetic appeal and Chinese color, and translate them with appropriate cross-cultural interpretation and simple words and phrases to help general readers first of all understand Chinese stories, learn more about Chinese culture, and at the same time enjoy reading the story itself. Second, translation is of course important, publication and dissemination are equally important. The case of *Six Records of a Floating Life* shows that the publication of excerpted translation and its inclusion in some anthologies facilitate the dissemination of the translation among general readers. These readers then will help create a better reception environment for Chinese literature in the English world and lay a better foundation for more translation works faithful to the original to be enjoyed by Western readers in the future.

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