

The Representation of Modern Literary History in Zhao Jiabi's Editing Career

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Abstract—*Liangyou Series* and *Series of Chinese New Literature* edited by Zhao Jiabi, a famous editor, are precious collections of historical materials of new literature, collation and summary of the history of new literature, as well as a great opportunity of modern Chinese literature to fully display its modernity characteristics. This paper starts from Zhao Jiabi's life and literary experience to present his achievements in timely collecting and collating modern Chinese literature.

Keywords—*Series of Chinese New Literature; Zhao Jiabi; modern Chinese literature*

I. INTRODUCTION

Any good play, no matter how brilliant its author, must ultimately rely on a good director to make it a good stage production. In this sense, the famous editor Zhao Jiabi is undoubtedly an excellent "director". In 1935, Zhao Jiabi was still a 27-year-old "nobody". However, through his efforts, he edited *Liangyou Pictorial*, gathered some great figures in the literary world at that time, such as Hu Shi, Lu Xun and a large number of various writers in his "command", and published such classic works as *Series of Chinese New Literature*. He is not a prolific writer, but he was famous in Chinese literary world in the 1930s and 1940s. He was active in the literary and art circles and publishing circles with his own unique talents and personality charm, making outstanding contributions to the development of modern Chinese literature, and the collection and timely arrangement of the achievements of modern Chinese literature.

II. ZHAO JIABI'S LIFE AND EARLY LITERARY EXPERIENCE

Zhao Jiabi (1908-1997), male, famous editor and publisher. In 1908, Zhao Jiabi was born in Songjiang County, Shanghai. In 1926, at the age of 18, Zhao Jiabi, who was attending the second year of Shanghai Guanghua Affiliated High School, participated in the editorial work of the school magazine *Dawn* and served as the editor-in-chief of the journal from the Volume two, number one (published on November 20, 1926).¹ In 1928, Zhao Jiabi, who was studying in the first year of Shanghai Guanghua University, was chosen by Wu Liande, the general manager of Shanghai Liangyou Book Printing Co., and was appointed as the monthly magazine *Chinese Student* pictorial assistant. In January 1929, the illustrated *Chinese Student* was founded. The first issue was edited by Ming Yaowu and Zhao Jiabi. The issue was edited by Zhao Jiabi from the second issue until the publication was closed in 1931. During this period, Zhao won the trust of the company. In the fourth year of college, Zhao Jiabi began to compile a comprehensive *Yijiao Series* for Liangyou Company. In 1932, Zhao Jiabi graduated from the university and officially worked in Liangyou. Since then, his career has been closely integrated with the company.

After Zhao Jiabi entered Liangyou Company, he successively edited and published a series of books such as *Yijiao Series*, *Liangyou Literature Series*, *Liangyou Library*

¹ Zhang Zhiqiang. Zhao Jiabi, in *Chinese Editors Journal*, 2003(6).

and *Series of Chinese New Literature*. In 1937, due to the outbreak of the 8.13 Incident, Liangyou Book Printing Co. closed down. In 1939, Zhao Jiabi and colleagues established Liangyou Fuxing Book Company in Shanghai. In 1946, Liangyou Fuxing Book Company was dissolved due to shareholder disputes. Zhao Jiabi and Lao She jointly established Chenguang Publishing Company, inheriting the tradition of *Liangyou Literature Series*, edited and published *Chenguang Literature Series* and *Chenguang World Literature Series*.

In his later recollections, Zhao Jiabi divided his editorial career into two stages, the former and the latter, with 1949 as the boundary. The period before 1949 was divided into the period of Liangyou and Chenguang.² In fact, Zhao Jiabi's early literary experience can also be divided into three periods: the budding period, the Liangyou period and chenguang period. Budding period refers to the period before Zhao's graduation. Although it was not the beginning of formal editing activities, this experience and work experience not only gave him confidence, but also accumulated experience for editing large-scale books in the future. Moreover, the young Zhao Jiabi found the way to realize the value of life. The Liangyou period mainly refers to the period when Zhao entered the Liangyou Book Company and worked until the end of Liangyou Fuxing Book Company. During this period, as a literary editor, Zhao made his dream become a reality from the yearning. He first entered the literary garden through editing the *Yijiao Series*, devoted himself to the literary movement through *Liangyou Literature Series*, and then presided over the unprecedented event of unity and cooperation in the literary and art circles — editing *Series of Chinese New Literature*. He has left a profound and colorful chapter in the history of modern editing and modern Chinese literature. During the Chenguang period, Zhao Jiabi still insists on activity of literary and artistic editing. Although far from the front line of the war of resistance, he always maintained a close relationship with the literary giants such as Lao She and Ba Jin. During this period, many literary and artistic works that he edited reflected the real historical situation of the Anti-Japanese War, which not only gave off a strong flavor of the times, but also preserved precious historical materials for this particular period of history.

III. ZHAO JIABI'S MAIN LITERARY ACTIVITIES AND LITERARY THOUGHTS

After graduating from the English Department of Guanghua University in 1932, Zhao Jiabi was formally employed by Liangyou Book Printing Company and served as the director of the Publishing Department, responsible for editing and publishing literary and art books. This period is what he called Liangyou period. Zhao Jiabi's main editorial projects are:³

- 80 kinds of *Yijiao Series*;
- 43 kinds of *Liangyou Literature Series*;
- 18 kinds of *Liangyou Library*;
- 10 *Novella Creation New Collection*;
- 4 kinds of *Russian Fairy Tales*;
- 10 volumes of *Series of Chinese New Literature*;
- 3 kinds of *Translated Literature Series*;
- 7 kinds of *New Collection of Modern Prose*, and so on.

During his editorial career in the Liangyou period, Zhao Jiabi showed extraordinary achievements in building Chinese modern literature. The following analysis links his literary editing career in this period with the characteristics of the development of modern Chinese literature:

A. Initially Involved in the Literary Garden — Editing *Yijiao Series*

Initially, Zhao's knowledge of Chinese literature and art was extremely limited, and his contact with writers was limited to a few with democratic or liberal leanings. Before the January 28 incident in 1932, only 8 of the 20 books published in *Yijiao Series* were literature and art books, and the authors of these books were mainly Zhao Jiabi's teachers and fellow townsfolk. In 1932, left-wing federation writer Zheng Boqi entered the editorial department of The Young Companio under the alias Zheng Junping. His arrival broke the limitation of Zhao Jiabi, broadened his horizon, and undoubtedly played a vital role in the growth of Zhao Jiabi. In addition to helping Zhao Jiabi adjust the idea of topic selection and reposition of *Yijiao Series*, Zheng Boqi also used his extensive social relations to organize the author team. In his later recollection article, Zhao Jiabi said: "He's been a great mentor to me ... At the same time, through his connections, I got to know many 'wen zong', 'wen lian', 'she lian' and other progressive writers. The object of my clients was greatly broadened, which not only enriched the content of *Yijiao Series*, but also laid a foundation for the series of literature and art books I edited later."⁴ The editorial practice of this stage made Zhao Jiabi know the status quo of the Chinese literary and art circles at that time, and also got acquainted with a large number of excellent writers, which laid a solid foundation for his editorial series of literary books.

B. Committed to the Literary Movement — Editing *Liangyou Literature Series*

Liangyou Literature Series mainly collects the literary creations of Chinese and foreign writers at that time, and most of them are modern Chinese writers, which embodies the creative achievements of modern Chinese literature in the 1930s. The series has included Lu Xun's translation of *Harp*, Ba Jin's *Fog*, *Rain*, *Electricity*, Lao She's *Divorce*, Shen

² Zhao Jiabi. *The Record of the Literary World — Sequel of Review of Editing Career*, Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 1991: 197.

³ Zhang Dian. *Research on Zhao Jiabi's Editorial Activities in Early Stage*, Wuhan University, 1997: 3.

⁴ Zhao Jiabi. *Review of Editing Career*, Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 1984: 394.

Congwen's *Remembering Ding Ling*, etc. In addition to publishing a large number of works of "left-wing" writers, *Liangyou Literature Series* also includes various writers with different ideological tendencies. For example, writers with democratic ideas: Ba Jin, Jin Yi, Zheng Zhenduo; Xu Zhimo, Lin Huiyin of Crescent School; Du Heng, known as the third kind of man; Lin Yutang and Zhou Zuoren of Hsingling school; Mu Shiying and Shi Zhecun of Neo-Sensualism.⁵ This "inclusive" editorial strategy played a key role in expanding the series' influence.

It is no accident that Zhao Jiabi's success in editing the *Liangyou Literature Series*. At that time, the political situation was complicated and the literary world was changeable. With the help of his continuous practice, Zhao Jiabi gradually formed a mature literary field of vision, and also opened up an open space to fully realize his editing thoughts, which undoubtedly accumulated rich experience for the later editing of *Series*.

C. Initiating the Editorial of Series

Zhao Jiabi is a young generation who has been bathed in the "May 4th" storm. Although he did not catch up to participate in the May 4th new culture movement, but the new cultural nourishment he had absorbed made him eventually inherit the "May 4th" spirit and determined to carry it forward. Zhao recalled that the idea of editing, staging, and compiling anthology of the May Fourth Literature was came to him when he saw *Series of Japanese New Literature* in a publication catalog at the Uchiyama Bookstore in 1933:

Once, Mr. Uchiyama sent me a few catalogues of new Japanese books. The catalogue contains a library of Japanese creative literature, which has been compiled according to time. \At that time, the Kuomintang advocated the retro movement and called the young students to read the classics. All progressive intellectuals believe that only by inheriting and carrying forward the revolutionary tradition of the May 4th movement can China be saved. The May 4th movement was only a decade or more ago, but many representative works are rare. Literary youth should look for these materials in bookstalls in the same way as they look for old books. The Japanese library project inspired me to publish "hundred literary classics since the May 4th movement".⁶

When Zhao Jiabi entered Liangyou Company, he was a young man in his twenties. He had an early ambition to be a great editor and publisher. Therefore, once there is a chance to realize the ideal, Zhao Jiabi will not hesitate to put into action. When he came up with the idea of editing *Series*, it was quickly approved by his boss, Wu Liande. Wu Liande is an entrepreneur with a modern publishing concept. At the same time, he is a patriotic businessman with a sense of justice and dedication. Zhao Jiabi grew up rapidly under his cultivation and protection. *Series* provides a rare opportunity for Zhao Jiabi to realize his dream and become the best

editor in the publishing industry. He must strive to achieve the integration of self-worth, editorial philosophy and publishing management.

The combination of historical accident and inevitability is just a point. *Series* is a successful example of modern editing publishing history, in addition to In addition to the above mentioned Zhao Jiabi's creative ideas and efforts, the more important reason is that it conforms to the demand of "making history" for the occurrence of new literature, and also exactly meets the desire of pioneers to "historicize" their own experiences and achievements of "conquering the world" in the initial period of new literature.⁷

D. Presiding over the Unprecedented Event of Unity and Cooperation in the Literary and Art Circles — Editing *Series of Chinese New Literature (1917-1927)*

From 1935 to 1936, Zhao Jiabi, a young editor, put forward a proper historical proposition at an appropriate historical moment with his profound academic vision, which was supported and affirmed by almost all creators and critics in the literary world at that time. In a sense, *Series* is the crystallization of the collective efforts of the literary world at that time, especially the progressive forces. But without Zhao's planning and organization, history might have been rewritten, and the massive project might have been delayed or even never reached its scale. The publication of *Series* is considered to be a grand event of the literary and art circles at that time — the brilliant achievements of the unity and cooperation of several different political forces of the Left, the neuters and the Right. Let's take a look at the powerful lineup of editors:

- *Series of Chinese New Literature (1917-1927)*
- Foreword: Cai Yuanpei (the neuters)
- Volume 1: *The Volume of Theory Construction* edited by Hu Shi (the Right)
- Volume 2: *The Volume of Literary Controversy* edited by Zheng Zhenduo (the neuters)
- Volume 3: *The Volume of Fiction (I)* edited by Mao Dun (the Left)
- Volume 4: *The Volume of Fiction (II)* edited by Lu Xun (the Left)
- Volume 5: *The Volume of Fiction (III)* edited by Zheng Boqi (the Left)
- Volume 6: *The Volume of Prose (I)* edited by Zhou Zuoren (the neuters)
- Volume 7: *The Volume of Prose (II)* edited by Yu Dafu (the Left)
- Volume 8: *The Volume of Poetry* edited by Zhu Ziqing (the neuters)

⁵ Zhang Dian. Research on Zhao Jiabi's Editorial Activities in Early Stage, Wuhan University, 1997: 6-7.

⁶ Zhao Jiabi. Review of Editing Career, Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 1984: 172.

⁷ Wen Minru, Li Xianyu, He Guimei, Jiang Tao, etc.. Introduction of Modern and Contemporary Chinese Literature, Beijing University Press, 2005: 36-37. (in Chinese)

- Volume 9: *The Volume of Play* edited by Hong Shen (the neuters)
- Volume 10: *The Volume of Historical Materials -Index* edited by A Ying (the Left)

It is obvious that the writers' political beliefs, literary sects, social status and so on are very different. Under the historical conditions of the time, Zhao Jiabi gathered these core figures with different ideological tendencies together and systematically sorted out and summarized the achievements of the first ten years of literary movement in less than two years, which has fully demonstrated his unique political mind and extraordinary unity and coordination ability.

IV. THE HISTORICAL INFLUENCE OF *SERIES OF CHINESE NEW LITERATURE*

From 1935-1936, *Series of Chinese New Literature (1917-1927)*⁸ edited by Zhao Jiabi was finally published by Shanghai Liangyou Book Company.⁹ The literary anthology is a collection of theories and works of the first decade of the new Chinese literary movement compiled by Lu Xun and Mao Dun. The book is divided into ten volumes, classified and selected according to literary theory construction, literary debate, novels, prose, poetry, drama, historical data index, etc. Cai Yuanpei makes the foreword, and each editor made the introduction of each collection. As the first large-scale literature collection of the history of modern Chinese literature, *Series* has preserved extremely rich historical materials of new literature and has become a classic document of new Chinese literature. Its diversified view of literary history and historical facts are constantly flashed in the later studies of modern literary history, and its specific editing style has an important impact on the compilation of such documents.

V. THE HISTORICAL VALUE OF ZHAO JIABI'S EDITORIAL WORKS

In October 1940, Liangyou Company published the introduction of *Series* in the Introduction to *Series of Chinese New Literature*. This is not only the earliest collection of works to preserve the introduction of *Series*, but also a unique history of Chinese new literature. As the editor-in-chief of *Series*, Zhao Jiabi has published many articles in academic journals since the late 1970s, recalling his early experiences and contacts with many academic masters, such as *Comment on Series of Chinese New Literature*, *Recall on Lu Xun and Chinese New Paintings*, *Thinking of Mr. Cai Yuanpei's Last Will*, *Memory of Mao Dun among Editing*

Career, and *It's Hard to Write a Book — from Association to Hope*.¹⁰ In the 1980s and 1990s, Zhao published several memoirs, such as *Memory of Lu Xun among Editing Career*, *Review of Editing Career*, *Review and Prospect of Series of Chinese New Literature*, *Books Live Longer Than Men*, *The Record of the Literary World*,¹¹ reviewing and summarizing the editor's life and experience in his early years.

Zhao Jiaxuan's editorial career and editorial works truly reproduce the Chinese new literature movement. It is a valuable collection of historical materials of the new literature, a collation and summary of the history of the new literature, and also a collection of modern Chinese literature that fully displays its modern characteristics.

VI. CONCLUSION

In 1936, under the efforts of young editor Zhao Jiabi and modern literary masters, the ten volumes of the *Series* appeared on the historical stage. As a classic of the collection of modern literature, *Series'* new editorial ideas, theories and styles are of great significance. It has not only become a kind of paradigm to sort out and summarize the history of literature, but also its open and diversified editing thoughts and respect for the spirit of objective history are the criterion for the construction of Chinese cultural classics today, which has directly influenced the compilation of the collection of modern and contemporary literature after it. The publication of *Series* is a pioneering work in the history of modern publishing in China. The editing style and editing method initiated by *Series*, and even some specific views, have exerted great influence all over the world.

"Learning merit from others to mend one's shortcoming." Zhao Jiabi is well versed in it. He created a new compilation method of the collection of modern literature by integrating the style of the ancient literature collection and the collection of books together, and named it as *Series*, which made it the first collection of literary classics in the history of modern Chinese literature.

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⁸ In addition to the full name *Series of Chinese New Literature: The First Volume (1917-1927)* necessary for the writing, the following is referred to as "Series". *Series of Chinese New Literature: Introduction* is abbreviated as "Series: Introduction". The introduction to each volume is expressed by the full name of each volume plus the introduction. For example, the introduction of *The Volume of Theory Construction* is called *The Volume of Theory Construction: Introduction*.

⁹ In 1935, *Series of Chinese New Literature (1917-1927)* edited by Zhao Jiabi was published by Shanghai Liangyou Book Printing Company. Book Printing Company. All 10 volumes were published in February 1936.

¹⁰ Zhao Jiabi. *Comment on Series of Chinese New Literature. Historical Data of New Literature*, 1984(1). *Recall on Lu Xun and Chinese New Paintings*. Arts, 1979(8). *Thinking of Mr. Cai Yuanpei's Last Will*. Reading, 1979(8). *Memory of Mao Dun among Editing Career*. *Editors Monthly*, 1987(4). *It's Hard to Write a Book — from Association to Hope*. *Luxun Research Monthly*. 1987(6).

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