

Anna Holmwood: open the door to the int'l market further

“射雕”译者郝玉青：一点点推开国际市场大门

■ Qu Jingfan

Swiss translator Anna Holmwood translated *A Hero Born*, which came out in February of this year. It is the first volume in the English-language translation of the trilogy *Legends of the Condor Heroes*. The book were reprinted seven times. In its first month of launching, it was in the Top 100 books list on Amazon, and received excellent reviews from English readers. In June of this year Holmwood participated in StoryDrive, a conference sponsored by Frankfurt Book Fair and German Book Information Center (or BIZ Beijing), and shared her insights why the book resonates with English readers. CPMJ Reporter interviewed her at the conference.

Holmwood says that she was interested in Chinese literature since she was young. In 2006 she entered the University of Oxford's China Centre. Three years later she went to the language centre at Taiwan Normal University, studying ancient Chinese poetry and classical Chinese. As she'd been deeply interested in writing and foreign-language studies from a young age, she considered combining these two interests, and working as a literary translator. In 2010, she entered the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London and completed her second master degree in Chinese Literature. During this time she also participated in the first-session translation summer workshop at the British Centre for Literary Translation. She was lucky to have the opportunity to study under advisor Nicky Harman, who guided her through translating Ai Mi's *Under the Hawthorn Tree*, which was quite successful after it was published.

In 2014 under a friend's recommendation, Holmwood started to read Jin Yong's novels. In 2012, she recommended *Legends of the Condor Heroes* to The Ampersand Agency, a literary agency in London, and started to consider the possibility of the translation and publication of Jin Yong's works from a professional perspective.

Holmwood explains, Jin Yong's novels have relationships with ancient poems, classical literature, the Yi-Ch-



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ing and other complex content. The relevant knowledge she gained during her graduate studies made her task much easier, and at the same time she leveraged a large amount of reference material as background supplementation, in order to reduce the barriers in reading for English-language audiences. For example, in the novel, it talks of a time at which the Mongols were making incursions into the Song Dynasty. At that time the Mongols were also invading parts of Europe. When Western readers see the Mongols coming closer and closer to them, they feel the fear. This makes it easier for these readers to feel the sentiments of the characters in the story. Additionally, when the protagonist of the novel, Guo Jing, sees his parents die, he faces persecution and is forced to flee to Mongolia. Guo Jing was born and grew up there, and has feelings for Mongolia. The psychological conflict that he faces makes for an even better story.

Currently, Holmwood is translating the third volume of the first book in the trilogy, and hopes to finish within the year, to have the book published next January. The second volume's translation has already been finished by Gigi Chang. The MacLehose Press in UK has already bought all the rights to the trilogy *Legends of the Condor Heroes*. The trilogy comprises three works of Jin Yong, namely *Legends of the Condor Heroes*, *Divine Condor*, *Errant Knight*, and *Heaven Sword and Dragon Sabre*. Each work in the series will be published in four volumes, with one published every year, it is estimated a total of 12 years for the entire series to be published.

The founder of MacLehose Books, Christopher MacLehose brought Sweden's *Millennium Trilogy* to the

United Kingdom a number of years ago; it was massively popular there and the world over. Afterwards, a number of northern European literary works were translated and published in the United Kingdom and the USA, which was a big step forward for the translated literature market in the UK and US markets.

St. Martin's Press in the USA also bought the US rights for the novels for a high price, and prepares to publish an American edition in 2019. Additionally, publishers from Spain, Germany and 7 other countries have bought the foreign rights.

She believes that in addition to translating, a translator also has many jobs to do, including selecting works, leveraging connections, and understanding the market—only in this way can one have a say. Editors also need translators to provide a different angle. Holmwood joined the UK's DKW agency; she formerly worked at the Grayhawk Agency in Taipei. At DKW, she will give publishers advice on publications, including commissioning, text editing, the use of footnotes, and cover styles.

Holmwood and two English friends studying German and Spanish built the website Emerging Translators Network in 2011; it already has almost 1,000 members. The platform has brought together translators of any languages. She said, everyone helps each other out, and works together to solve the problems that they encounter. This is a huge help to translators.

When we talk about what are models that we can follow for bringing Chinese-language works to the English-language market, she says, we can look at Liu Cixin's *Three-Body Problem* trilogy, which was recommended by both Barack Obama and Mark Zuckerberg, and received the Hugo Award, the most prestigious award in science fiction in the USA. This is a very good way to get noticed. Every work's success open the door to the international market a little further. "We should trust that once that door is opened, it won't be closed. This is just a question of speed, and I hope this whole process can speed up more quickly."

(translated by Moy Hau)

(Continued from F09)

□ What unique methods do you have for publishing original works of Children's Literature?

Bai Bing: We definitely have some unique methods for creating original works of Children's Literature at Jieli. Firstly, we established literary awards. This year, we have continued in holding the "Jieli Cup Jin Bo Literary Award for Toddlers" and "Jieli Cup Cao Wenxuan Children's Literature Award" events (Jin Bo and Cao Wenxuan are both famous Children's literature writers in China). This is a measure we've taken that has a great power to encourage the creation of new children's books and allows us to find new works. Through involving in the awarding events, we can publish newly discovered baby books and children's books. This year we will publish 30-40 new titles that are either the winners of the awards, or books we believe are especially excellent although they didn't pitifully get awarded. Secondly, we have improved our service for authors; we compiled our writer's work into a series and build their brands, such as Hei He, Mu Ling, Yuan Bo and Zheng Chunhua's works. We are also launching series out of the works of Xue Tao, Zuo Hong, Ba Lu and other new and sharp children's book authors. We believe if we can attract good authors, we can produce good new original works. Thirdly, we have been actively carried out policies to

lean towards original literature publishing, e.g., in the aspects of assessment of cost accounting, marketing input and editorial rewards. Because we hope to support editors to publish original works, which is more difficult than working on the translation of classics from abroad, and requires more time to wait. Our editors can thus have the patience to build brands out of these authors' works. Fourthly, we are putting our strength into promoting the works of good authors. For example, we've been putting great effort into promoting the works of Hei He abroad. We have also promoted the *I Didn't Expect That* series and other Picture Book series abroad with great results.

□ There are many projects in the realm of Chinese Children's books that have gained the attention of the international publishing world, including the original books as well as copyright trade and co-publishing projects. Please talk about your cooperation in 2017 with Usborne Books. How did it go, and how do you feel about it?

Bai Bing: I believe that aside from copyright cooperation, companies should also expand into other kinds of cooperation. In this way we can expand the international market, and generate relationships that allow mutual learning and trust. Last year we signed an agreement with Usborne to act as their strategic partner in China, and for us to have preferential treatment in the acquisition of the

rights for their books. We gained the rights for all their Picture Books, and we took on the responsibility of helping them understand the retail situation of the entire market here, such as pricing, discounting, marketing activities, and so on. Additionally, we also have deep cooperation with other foreign publishers. If we just stop at copyright buying and selling, this isn't nearly enough. We need to expand into varied cooperation forms.

□ What impact do you think it will have on Chinese children's book publishing that Zhang Mingzhou was selected as the chair of the IBBY?

Bai Bing: The IBBY (The International Board on Books for Young People) is a worldwide non-profit organization. It promotes interests for child reading, especially helping children in economically depressed countries and regions to read. Now, there are more and more awards for the Chinese publishing industry and literary world on the international scene, and more and more types of cooperation. The global landscape of children's literary works is changing. This has special meaning for China entering internationalized cooperation and competition. Its meaning is immeasurable; we Chinese publishers need to actively cooperate with Mr. Zhang and IBBY, do well at relevant work, and accordingly introduce excellent Children's works from China to the world.

(translated by Moy Hau)