

The Transmission of *Liaozhai Zhiyi* in the Malay World

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Abstract: *The first translation of Liaozhai Zhiyi appeared in Batavia in 1895. This translation contained about 28 stories on the supernatural including the 'Lien Hsiang' (Lian Xiang) that really originated from Liaozhai Zhiyi. Also included in this translation were stories from other Chinese classics. In fact, six years before that 'Lien Hsiang' was already translated into Baba Malay in Singapore. In 1915 another translation of Liaozhai Zhiyi appeared in Jakarta but it was almost identical to the original version. Similarly there was also another translation of 'Lien Hsiang' in 1938. However, in 1965 Neo Jo-lan translated three stories that had not before been translated into Malay in a work entitled Sastera Tionghua Sa-pintas Lalu. The supernatural featured in most of the translations; it was seldom known that besides the supernatural about half of the 500 stories dealt with common everyday life.*

Abstrak: *Terjemahan Liaozhai Zhiyi yang pertama dalam bahasa Melayu telah diterbitkan di Batavia dalam tahun 1895. Dalam terjemahan ini ada kira-kira 28 buah cerpen hantu dan siluman termasuk cerpen 'Lien Hsiang (Lian Xiang) yang benar-benar dari koleksi Liaozhai Zhiyi. Selain dari itu terdapat juga cerita-cerita dari Klasik Tionghua lain. Sebenarnya, enam tahun sebelum itu, cerpen 'Lien Hsiang' sudah terdapat dalam terjemahan Tsap Suat Tuan yang telahpun diterbitkan di Singapura dalam bahasa Melayu Baba. Pada tahun 1915, terjemahan baru Liaozhai Zhiyi diterbitkan di Jakarta, tetapi terjemahan itu hanya mencetak semula terjemahan pertama yang disebut terdahulu itu. Pada tahun 1938, cerpen 'Lien Hsiang' telah diterjemahkan semula. Pada tahun 1965, Neo Jo-lan menterjemahkan tiga buah cerita yang belum pernah diterjemahkan ke dalam bahasa Melayu yang dimuatkan dalam buku berjudul Sastera Tionghua Sa-pintas Lalu. Terjemahan Liaozhai Zhiyi dalam bahasa Melayu mengandungi kira-kira 31 buah cerpen. Semua cerita yang diterjemahkan ke dalam bahasa Melayu terdiri dari cerita-cerita hantu dan siluman. Jarang pembaca-pembaca mengetahui bahawa selain dari cerita-cerita 'supernatural' kira-kira setengah dari jumlah 500 buah cerpen mengisahkan kehidupan manusia.*

This article is a follow-up of my previous articles on a similar subject.¹ Thanks to Claudine Salmon's annotated works,² I managed to acquire the translated works through the National University of Singapore inter-library service and through the assistance of friends. Now I am in a better position to make a report on my preliminary reading and checking of these translations with the original Chinese text. The process was rather painstaking as the spelling in the translations was not in the standardized form. Vocabulary was another problem. On top of that, names and place names had been changed. As I racked my brain to read these materials, I simultaneously en-

joyed seeing how some of the Chinese concepts were being put across in Melajoe Rendah or Baba Malay by the Chinese in this region.

The first translation was entitled *Boekoe Boelanan — Mengambil Tjerita Dari Boekoe Liauw Tjiaj Boet Meliboerken Hati Jang Koesoet*. It was translated in 1895 by Jo Tjin Goan and published in Batavia by H. Prange & Co. The book is 21 cm x 15 cm with 320 pages, 46 lines on each page and an average of 10 words in each line. Like many other translated Baba literature, there was no introduction or preface, and no postscript was discovered at the end of the book.

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¹See 'A Baba translation of *Liaozhai Zhiyi* story' *Reader's Companion Monthly* (October 1986), Hong Kong, Joint Publishing Co.; and 'The translation and dissemination of *Liaozhai Zhiyi* in Indonesia', *ibid*, (October, 1987).

²See Claudine Salmon, *Literature in Malay by the Chinese of Indonesia*, Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l' Homme, Paris, 1981.

This book contains 43 stories of which 28 *pien* are genuinely from *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. For easy identification by future researchers, the titles of these *Liaozhai Zhiyi* stories are given below. Because of space constraint, most of the titles are given in incomplete form. An original copy which is kept in the National Museum in Jakarta can be used for verification purposes. For the convenience of checking, page numbers of the Chinese text are also given. The Chinese text of *Liaozhai Zhiyi* used here was published by the Shanghai Guji Chubanshe in 1978, abbreviated as *LZZY*, which is widely available.

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|---|--------------------|
| 1. Tjerita Tjo Song Kong | <i>LZZY</i> p. 1 |
| ['Kao Chenghuang'] | |
| 2. Tjerita Kho Seng | <i>LZZY</i> p. 2 |
| ['Tongren Yu'] | |
| 3. Tjerita Tjoe Haun Liam | <i>LZZY</i> p. 10 |
| ['Huabi'] | |
| 4. Tjerita Saorang Soedagar Boea | <i>LZZY</i> p. 35 |
| Laij | |
| ['Zhong Li'] | |
| 5. Tjerita Hong Seng Dapet Ilmoe | <i>LZZY</i> p. 35 |
| Kesatian | |
| ['Laoshan Daoshi'] | |
| 6. Tjerita Satoe Wesio Jang Berpake | <i>LZZY</i> p. 38 |
| Hati Soetji | |
| ['Changqing Seng'] | |
| 7. Tjerita Ien Tian Saorang Jang | <i>LZZY</i> p. 53 |
| Miskin Dapet Pangkat | |
| ['Hu Jia Nu'] | |
| 8. Tjerita Wesio Kong Seng Seh | <i>LZZY</i> p. 57 |
| Kawin Sama Siloeman Rase | |
| ['Jiaona'] | |
| 9. Tjerita Saorang Senseh Pokhoa | <i>LZZY</i> p. 67 |
| Jang Soeka Djoestain Orang. | |
| ['Yaoshu'] | |
| 10. Tjerita Jap Seng Soedah Mati | <i>LZZY</i> p. 81 |
| Hidoep Koembali | |
| ['Ye Sheng'] | |
| 11. Tjerita Tjioe Seng Dan Ie Sang | <i>LZZY</i> p. 87 |
| ['Cheng Seng'] | |
| 12. Tjerita Ong Seng Sa-orang Jang | <i>LZZY</i> p. 104 |
| Amat Miskin | |
| ['Wang Cheng'] | |
| 13. Tjerita Pin Seng Kongtjoe | <i>LZZY</i> p. 112 |
| Bertjinta-an Sama Saorang Prampoean | |
| Moeda Bernama Tjeng Hong | |
| ['Qingfeng'] | |
| 14. Tjerita Saorang Prampoean Tian Sie | <i>LZZY</i> p. 119 |
| Yang Tiada Setia Pada Soewaminja. | |
| ['Huapi'] | |
| 15. Tjerita Istrinja Khe Hang | <i>LZZY</i> p. 125 |
| Bertjinta-an Sama Siloeman Rase | |
| ['Guer'] | |
| 16. Tjerita Tang He Soe Di Goda Sama | <i>LZZY</i> p. 133 |
| Saorang Prampoean Atsal Siloeman | |
| Rase | |
| ['Dongsheng'] | |
| 17. Tjerita Tjoe Djie Tan Bersobat | <i>LZZY</i> p. 139 |
| Sama Malekat Liok Kwan Koea | |
| Dari Geredja Sip Ong Tian. | |
| ['Lu Pan' (Judge Lu)] | |
| 18. Tjerita Ong Tjoe Hok Kawin | <i>LZZY</i> p. 147 |
| Sama Eng Leng | |
| ['Yingning'] | |
| 19. Tjerita Beng Tjaij Sin Yang | <i>LZZY</i> p. 160 |
| Berboedi | |
| ['Nie Xiaoqian'] | |
| 20. Tjerita Toekang Tauw Tjio | <i>LZZY</i> p. 180 |
| Poenja Anak Prampoean Di | |
| Masokkin Setan | |
| ['Shuimangcao'] | |
| 21. Tjerita Isterinja Soe Djin | <i>LZZY</i> p. 187 |
| Mengimpiken Soewaminja | |
| ['Fengyang Shiren'] | |
| 22. Tjerita Lie Hoa Hoe Poenja | <i>LZZY</i> p. 194 |
| Anak Tjoe Djie | |
| ['Zhuer'] | |
| 23. Tjerita Taij Soe Kong Saorang | <i>LZZY</i> p. 200 |
| Jang Alim. | |
| ['Xiao Guanren'] | |
| 24. Tjerita Ouw Sie Nio | <i>LZZY</i> p. 201 |
| ['Hu Sijie'] | |
| 25. Tjerita Tjiok Seng Bertjinta | <i>LZZY</i> p. 205 |
| Dengan Istrinja Dari Hidup | |
| Sampai Mati. | |
| ['Zhu Weng'] | |
| 26. Tjerita Kho Seng Sa-orang | <i>LZZY</i> p. 210 |
| Jang Boediman | |
| ['Xianu'] | |
| 27. Tjerita Kie Seng Dapat Toeloengan | <i>LZZY</i> p. 217 |
| Dari Siloeman Rase. | |
| ['Jiuyou'] | |
| 28. Tjerita Lien Hian. | <i>LZZY</i> p. 220 |
| ['Lian-Xiang'] | |

Some confusion on the titles should be clarified before we touch upon other things. The title on 'Hu Sijie' was mistaken as Hu Siniang (Ouw Sie Nio). In fact, in *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, there is another story entitled 'Ouw Sie Nio', but there is no translation of this piece as yet. In this translation, the protagonist Ouw Sie Tjie was changed into Ouw Sie Nio, as was the title. Apparently the translator was unaware of this fact: thus I have made the necessary alteration. Another piece entitled 'Xiao Guanren' ('The Little Official') was translated as 'Taij Soe Kong', and 'Zhu Weng' (The old gentleman Zhu) was translated as 'Tjiok

Seng' (Scholar Zhu). Both are rather confusing, and difficult to identify at first glance.

Coincidentally these translated stories fall into the original *chuan* 1 and *chuan* 2, which were regarded as being written by Pu Songling before or around the 21st year of the reign of Emperor Kangxi (1682). By then, the author was 40 years old and led a more stable life when he took up a private tutorship in the Family of Bi, an influential local family in Zichuan, Shandong Province. Though Pu Songling was talented in composing ghost stories, this was of no help for his scholarly career. Besides, the requirements for a 'good' essay are rather different from those of this type of story-writing. His bureaucrat friend Wang Shizhen, who held a high position as a minister in the Imperial court, even advised him not to devote his efforts to writing ghost stories. This attitude might have been inherited from Confucius, for the Master did not touch on topics of prodigies, force, disorder and gods.³

Pu read widely, learned the traditional techniques of story-writing, and put them into practice in his works. The *Liaozhai Zhiyi* stories were full of folkloristic interest and as a result, Pu Songling achieved fame when the stories were privately circulated among friends. Though at a later stage, Pu Songling decided to write stories in more realistic settings, this did not help very much to change his image as a ghost-story writer.

Of the 43 stories in Jo's translation, only 28 of them actually originated from *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. The rest are stories from other sources, which, intentionally or unintentionally, were mixed together with the translations from *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. The most obvious piece is 'Tjio Hin Ko Dan Sam Kauw Dji', which was actually from *Yushi Minyan*.⁴ The story is equally famous among students of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world and has been translated as 'The Pearl Shirt Re-encountered'.⁵ This is a story portraying a divorcee's eventual reunion with his divorced wife. The plot is complicated, and the value judgments quite deviated from conventional norms. It has won the hearts of many readers. Another story, 'Tjerita Saorang Prampoean Lie Sie Jang Amat Tjinta Dengan Soewaminja Dan Mertoewannja' ('Batoe Bong Hoe Tjhio' or 'Wangfu Shi'), is a folktale, depicting a

faithful wife waiting anxiously for the return of her husband, but in vain. She eventually met her tragic end by turning herself into a rock, still waiting anxiously for her husband.

The second translated version was entitled *Boekoe Tjerita Liauw Tjaj, Roepa Roepa Tjerita Jang Bagoes dan Loetjoe, Tersalin dari Boekoe Tionghoa* compiled by Kho Tjeng Bie. This was just a selection of Jo's version. The book is 15½ cm x 10½ cm with 500 pages, 28 lines on each page and an average of 7 words in each line. It was published in Jakarta in 1915, and an original copy is also kept in the National Museum, Jakarta. It re-set the 24 *pien* from the first translation starting from Nos 18–41. The *Liaozhai Zhiyi* stories selected in the version were from Nos 16 to 27 in the above list. There is no way of monitoring the readership and the response of the public. Apparently with such a publication, we can see the persistent interest in, and the great demand for, such stories from the public.

According to Claudine Salmon's list, there are two other single stories translated and published separately. One of them is the 'Sair Liauw Tjaj', which, I confidently conclude, was not from *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. That piece of translation was not extant or published in printed form. Claudine Salmon obtained the information from an advertisement inserted in a newspaper. This is actually the story of 'The Pearl Shirt Re-encountered', which has already appeared in Jo's translation, but which was mistaken to have been a genuine *Liaozhai Zhiyi* story. The protagonists in this story are Jiangxingge (Tjio Hin Ko) and Chen Sanjiao (Sam Kauw Dji). Sam Kauw can be identified with Sanjiao, while the word 'Dji' is just the intimate way of addressing a person. The surname of Sam Kauw (Chen or Tan) was omitted in the translation.

The other piece is the story 'Lien Hsiang' ('Lian Xiang'). This is a faithful translation by S.L.P., known also by his Indonesian name Salam Sutrawan of Batavia,⁶ and it was published on 2 November 1938. It is significant that SLP managed to capture the spirit of *Liaozhai Zhiyi* and reproduce it in the translation.

This story is interesting because of its folkloristic elements. In this story, a mortal man had love affairs with a ghost and a fox-fairy. The shadowy ghost,

³ See D.C. Lau, *Confucius: The Analects*, Penguin Classics, 1979, p. 88.

⁴ *Yushi Minyan*, Hong Kong, Zhonghua edition, 1965, is also known as *Gujin Xiaoshuo*; there is no complete translation of the book as yet in English.

⁵ 'The Pearl Shirt Re-encountered' in *Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations*, edited by Y.W. Ma, and Joseph S.M. Lau, published by Columbia University Press, 1978.

⁶ For a brief description of S.L.P.'s life and career, see Claudine Salmon, *op. cit.*, o. 303.

after being in contact with the moral man, began to regain her 'bones' and 'flesh' and, with such a 'physical body', lived again. While the ghost was revived, the fox-fairy was reincarnated as a girl in the mortal world. Both the ghost and the fox-fairy eventually married this mortal man and they lived happily together. This story probably indicates the realization of human aspirations in the process of pursuing happiness, friendship and eternity.

In fact, six years before the publication of Jo's translation in Indonesia, a Baba Malay version of 'Lian Xiang' had appeared in Singapore in the book *Tsap Suat Tuan*, which was translated by Tan Meng Teck.⁷

The continuous interest in this piece of work, both in Singapore and in Indonesia, showed why *Liaozhai Zhiyi* was popularly known as a collection of ghost and fox-fairy stories.

In his book *Sastera Tiongkok Sepintas Lalu*,⁸ Nio Jo Lan devoted a chapter to *Liaozhai Zhiyi* and translated three pieces, namely: 'Fengxian', 'Huangying' and 'Cuzhi' (The cricket). These three stories are famous, but again because of space constraints, I do not wish to develop this further at this point. There could be other *Liaozhai Zhiyi* stories in Bahasa in book form or pictorials (*lienhuantu*) published elsewhere for the local market. However, so far I have not traced any. All I know is that there are 31 *Liaozhai* stories translated by people in this region, and to a certain extent, these translations, together with other translations from the Chinese originals, have contributed to the enrichment of the language and literature of the local society.

⁷See the author's article 'A Baba translation of *Liaozhai Zhiyi* story', *op. cit.*

⁸See Nio Joe Lan, *Sastra Tiongkok Sepintas Lalu*, Djakarta, Gunung Agung, 1965.