

# Echo of the Classics: Translation of the *Shiji* 史記 by Yang Xianyi 楊憲益 and Gladys Yang

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Translations of the *Shiji* into European languages started as early as 1828, but the first volume of English *Shiji* chapters initiated by Chinese scholars appeared as late as 1979. The volume, *Selections from Records of the Historian*, was translated by Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang and published by the Foreign Languages Press. Although translations of the 31 chapters of Sima Qian's *Shiji* are nearly all to be found in other versions, the book takes on great significance since it is the first and the only volume to have been initiated by Chinese scholars. In collaboration, Yang and his wife Gladys translated many important works of Chinese literature into English, with an output amounting to more than 60 titles. Yang was praised as a “master translator” when awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Hong Kong in 1993. Yang's translation of the *Shiji*, however, has received little attention and is under-researched. The dozens of research articles about Yang's *Shiji* translation focus on Yang's translation methods, leaving some core translation questions untouched. How did it begin? What was the social and political situation like? How did the translators respond to the situation? What parties were involved in this translation project? What are some of the goals of the publication and republication of this volume? This current study will try to answer these questions and trace the dimensions of power inherent in this translation project.