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Translation of *Strange Encounters with Beautiful Women* and Construction of Early Asianist Discourse

As one of the products of Japanese national consciousnesses, Asianism arose in Japan at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. This ideology quickly swept through other Asian countries with the introduction of Western ideas such as global geography, the hierarchy of civilizations, and the Yellow Peril. Originated as a reaction of Asian countries to Western colonialism, Asianism finally developed into a national independence movement. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the process of developing early Asianist discourse in late Qing China via Liang Qichao's translation work *Jiaren qiyuji* 佳人奇遇記 in 1898, which was published by Xinmin She 新民主社 and serialized in *The Complete Works of Qingyi Bao* 清議報全編, Vol. 3, No. 13. This novel is the translation of Shiba Shiro's 柴四郎 political novel *Kajin no Kiguu* 佳人之奇遇 (*Strange Encounters with Beautiful Women*), which was published by Hakubundo 博文堂 between 1885 and 1897. In the first half of the novel, the protagonist Tokai Sanshi and the two female revolutionaries, Honglian 紅蓮 and Yulan 幽蘭, hope to fight the Western invaders through a union of weaker nations. It shows that Asianism originated in the independence movement of the invaded nations around the globe. The two female revolutionaries split up from Tokai Sanshi in the second half of the novel, however, because the latter became a nationalist and advocated for acts of expansionism and aggression. The bifurcation of the two parts symbolizes the process of Asianism's transformation from one based on "the same culture and species 同文同種" to one based on nationalist expansion. The history of the novel's translation demonstrates that early Asianism was based on a shared fate of colonization and was centered on opposition to Western imperialism and a focus on Asian culture and values. However, when Japanese expansionism emerged, Chinese intellectuals became aware of Japan's Asianism dangers. They rejected simplistic expressions such as "oppressed yellow Asians" and "white oppressors," and began to consider the threat from within Asia.

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