

梁實秋：關於莎士比亞的翻譯

On Translating Shakespeare

By Liang Shih-ch'iu

Translated by Chau Sui-cheong and Derek Herforth

Essayist, critic, teacher and lexicographer, Liang Shih-ch'iu has been a quiet influence on Chinese writers and writing for nearly a half-century. His long and fruitful writing career began shortly after he returned in the mid-1920's from post-graduate work at Harvard University, where he studied under the humanist, Irving Babbitt. He played a leading role in founding 新月社 (Crescent Moon Society), and later on the editorial board for the magazine of the same name. His earlier books, which dealt not only with the content and mission of literature but also matters of taste and style, included 浪漫的與古典的 (The romantic and the classic), 文學的紀律 (Literary discipline), and 偏見集 (Prejudices). Among his numerous translations from Western literature were The Love Letters of Héloïse and Abelard, Silas Marner and Wuthering Heights.

In 1931, when Prof. Liang was head of the English Language Department of the National Shantung University at Tsingtao, he began the work that was to culminate 37 years later in the translation of the complete works of William Shakespeare in 40 volumes. The present article was written in 1963 when the author was preparing to publish his first 20 translations in Taipei. Now retired and living in Seattle, he is thinking of writing a "sequel" to tell of his thoughts upon the completion of this gigantic task.

IT WAS IN 1931 that I first took up the task of translating Shakespeare. Since then thirty years have passed, eight of which were consumed by war. Great changes took place after the war and I was forced to move from place to place. As I was unable to settle down, my work was interrupted time and again. After all these years I have managed to prepare no more than twenty plays for publication—hardly a record to be proud of. According to my original plan the plays were to be published only after completion of the entire project. In recent years a number of friends have urged me to publish those already translated, while others have misunderstood my intentions and assumed I had already abandoned the whole scheme. In fact, I have not deviated from my original plan; but while working at a snail's pace, I had never thought of reporting on my own progress. More recently I heard that this year [1963] is the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, an event which has inspired literary enthusiasts the world over. We have felt the repercussions even here in Taiwan. Years

ago Mr. Hsiao Meng-neng (蕭孟能)¹ suggested that I should publish my translations, but I had always declined to do this. The occasion of this 400th Anniversary seems to have added an irresistible pressure, and so I have finally agreed to publish twenty of the plays. At the same time I feel I owe the reader an explanation and account of the whole project.

THE TRANSLATION of Shakespeare was first suggested by Dr. Hu Shih (胡適),² who took up the post of Chairman of the Translation Committee of the Board of Directors of the China Foundation for the Promotion of Education and Culture in 1930. His plans were ambitious, and the translation of Shakespeare was but one of them. The output of this Translation Committee was later published by the Commercial Press. So far as I can remember, there were books on philosophy translated by Kuan Ch'i-t'ung (關琪桐), such as Bacon's *Novum Organum* and Descartes' *Discours sur la Méthode*, together with at least a dozen others. Literary works included several novels of Thomas Hardy translated by Chang Ku-jo (張穀若), a number of Greek tragedies translated by Lo Nien-sheng (羅念生), Liang Yu-ch'un's (梁遇春) versions of Conrad's novels and some of Dumas *fils*' works, like *La Dame aux Camélias* translated by Ch'en Mien (陳綿). There were also translations of *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Travels of Marco Polo* and many others. The work of this Translation Committee gradually expanded until it came to an abrupt end at the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. I cannot recall clearly how we planned the translation of Shakespeare. Fortunately, I managed to uncover a number of letters addressed to me by Dr. Hu, and reproducing them here in abridged form will help to provide an idea of our preliminary plans.

Dear Shih-ch'iu,

I have received both of your letters, and officially assumed the post in the Translation Committee. The list Kung-ch'ao has been preparing is almost ready. He has not yet handed it to me as the names of the various editions have yet to be filled in. I discussed the matter with I.A. Richards recently and with Chih-mo in Shanghai. The idea is to invite I-to (一多), T'ung-pe (通伯), Chih-mo (志摩), Kung-ch'ao (公超)³ and you to work out a plan for the translation of the complete works of Shakespeare. We hope that a standard version can be made available within five or ten years' time. Do discuss the matter with I-to.

¹Manager of 文星書店 (Book World Co.), Taipei, whose firm published in 1964 the first 20 of the Liang translations in a uniform edition. The complete plays in 37 volumes were issued in 1967 by 遠東圖書公司 (Far East Book Co.), Taipei, in regular and paperback editions; in 1968, three more volumes of Shakespeare's poems were added. Prof. Liang's translations of Shakespeare first saw print in Shanghai, in 1934, when the Commercial Press brought out nine plays—*Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *As You Like It*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Twelfth Night*. In Taiwan, 明華書局 (Ming Hwa Book Co.) published *Henry IV, Part I*, in 1957.

²At the time Dean of the College of Arts at the National Peking University. In his letters to Prof. Liang, quoted in this article, Dr. Hu signed himself with the style Shih-chih (適之).

³With his friend Prof. Liang, Wen I-to (聞一多), the poet, was then teaching at Shantung University. Ch'en T'ung-pe (陳通伯), or Ch'en Yuan (陳源), essayist, and Hsu Chih-mo (徐志摩), poet, were teaching at Peking University. Yeh Kung-ch'ao (葉公超), or George K. C. Yeh, was then Professor of English Literature at National Tsing-hua University.

The fundamental problem is to decide on the type of language we should use to translate Shakespeare. My suggestion is to ask I-to and Chih-mo to try verse, while T'ung-pe and you try prose. After these experiments we could then decide whether to use prose throughout or both prose and verse.

You'll be paid at the highest rates. This kind of books usually doesn't sell too badly and we may be able to retain the copyright for future reprints.

I invite comments from you and I-to. Please consult Chin-fu (金甫) and T'ai-mou (太侔) as well.⁴ I have already written to Chih-mo and T'ung-pe.

On the fifth of January I'll be leaving Peking and going south on the Tientsin-P'u-k'ou train. I have a meeting on the ninth. In the middle of the month I should be able to travel north again. If I can manage to find enough money for the trip, I'll come to pay you a visit—just to dispell the wide-spread belief that Tsingtao is inaccessible.

Best wishes for the New Year,

Shih-chih

23 December, 1930.

P.S. I've just passed my 40th birthday here. When I celebrate my Grand 41st next year we'll have to get together and share the fun!

Dear Shih-ch'iu,

Thank you for your express letter. I am leaving for the South today.

I'll be able to visit Tsingtao this time, and should be arriving on the 18th, if not the 17th; you will receive my cable as soon as the date is fixed. When I mentioned money for the trip in my last letter, I was merely telling you the bare facts and not hinting that I needed a travel subsidy from the University of Tsingtao!

Chih-mo arrived in Peking yesterday. He approved of the plan for translating Shakespeare.

Happy New Year to you, Chih-fu, T'ai-mou, I-to and Ch'un-fang (春舫).⁵

Shih-chih

Dear I-to and Shih-ch'iu,

After I received your letter dated 13 February, Kung-ch'ao arrived, and he approved of most of your suggestions. I have not replied till now because we had been waiting for Chih-mo who finally arrived yesterday. He also approved of your plan with the slight modifications I have made.

I enclose my modified version—almost identical to Shih-ch'iu's except for a slight change in item 6 and the addition of two other items.

No. 6: I think this will be more workable than the original suggestion.

No. 9: Suggested by Shih-ch'iu when I was in Tsingtao.

No. 10: Provision made for accepting good translations from persons not on the Committee.

⁴Chin-fu is Yang Chen-sheng (楊振聲), novelist, then Chancellor of the newly organized Shantung University at Tsingtao. Chao T'ai-mou (趙太侔), an early promotor of modern drama in China, was Dean of Studies.

⁵Sung Ch'un-fang (宋春舫), then teaching at Shantung University, was a well-known writer and translator in the field of drama. He is the subject of another article in this issue of *Renditions*, see page 81.

Please examine these items carefully and let me know what you think about them.

T'ung-pe has written to say that he did not think he was competent for translating Shakespeare, and he would rather proof-read your translations. All the same I have sent him our plan and we'll see what he will say.

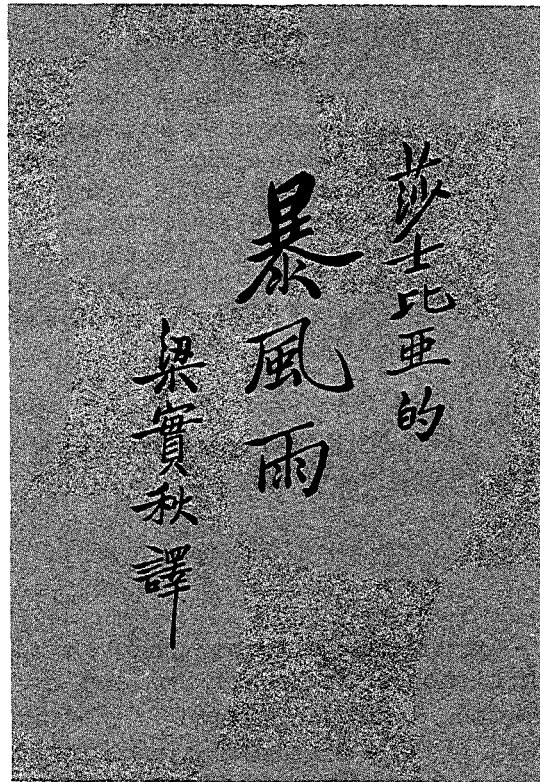
Shih-chih

25 February, 1931.

P.S. As for the annual meeting during the summer vacation, we all prefer Peking to Tsingtao.

*Tentative Arrangements For a Translation
of The Complete Works of Shakespeare*

- 1 Wen I-to, Liang Shih-ch'iu, Ch'en T'ung-pe, Yeh Kung-ch'ao and Hsu Chih-mo will be requested to form a Committee for the Translation of the Complete Works of Shakespeare with Wen I-to as Chairman.
- 2 The project is tentatively scheduled to take five years. (Each member is expected to complete one play every half-year, and devote an equal amount of time to revising one other play.)
- 3 The Committee will be fully responsible for all manuscripts of translations. After each play has been translated, it will be circulated among the other four members for corrections and polishing. No one should take more than three months to proof-read any single play.
- 4 Annual Meetings will be held during the summer vacation in a place agreed upon so that views can be exchanged and all problems of translation discussed.
- 5 It is not advisable to specify any literary style for the translation, but on the whole a rhythmic prose is recommended. Translators must take care not to produce mere paraphrases. Detailed footnotes should be supplied for difficult passages.
- 6 For the sake of uniformity, translators are requested to submit an alphabetical list with transliterations of place-names and characters so that these can be collected and delivered to one of the members who will arrange and record them.
- 7 As for expenses, the preliminary budget is \$XX, to be used for:
 - i. translator's fees—the rate being fixed temporarily at \$XX per play, including the payment for the translator as well as for the four proof-readers. Total sum for the complete project \$XX.
 - ii. books—approximately \$XX.
 - iii. miscellaneous expenses—including writing-paper, travel expenses for the annual meeting, the committee's expenses, etc. Total \$XX.
- 8 Advance payment for the translators: a sum not exceeding \$XX per person per month. No further advance payment can be drawn should the translator fail to finish one play within six months.
- 9 When translating, the translator may use at random the footnotes in the original text for his Chinese version. A fully annotated reading text of Shakespeare's works can be published separately later. The remuneration and arrangements for publishing this text will be determined in due course.



EARLIEST CHINESE VERSION of *The Tempest*, 1937, tr. Liang Shih-ch'iu, published by the Translation Committee of the China Foundation for the Promotion of Education and Culture. The calligraphy on the cover is that of Hu Shih, who sparked the Shakespeare translation project.

10 The Committee will examine any translation of Shakespeare's plays submitted by individuals outside the Committee. If the translation is found to be good, the Committee may accept and edit it for publication, and terms of payment will be arranged individually.

(Note) The exact allocation of the plays will be decided in the First Annual Meeting. For the time being and to facilitate progress, each translator will decide on one play and work on it at once. It is assumed that the choice will be:

- Hsu Chih-mo: *Romeo and Juliet*
- Yeh Kung-ch'ao: *The Merchant of Venice*
- Ch'en T'ung-pe: *As You Like It*
- Wen I-to: *Hamlet*
- Liang Shih-ch'iu: *Macbeth*

Dear Shih-ch'iu:

Very pleased to hear that you and I-to are going to start translating Shakespeare! Kung-ch'ao also likes to try and he intends to experiment with a kind of verse style, Chih-mo has just arrived and will probably start working on a play after he's settled in. . . .

Shih-chih
21 March, 1931.

Dear Shih-ch'iu,

I had a talk with Kung-ch'ao yesterday. He said that you had requested him to ask me about the matter of the Shakespeare translations as well as about the time of the next meeting. I had planned to call this meeting earlier but I understand that Chih-mo is at present busy with his mother's funeral and Kung-ch'ao with his wedding, and neither of them has started working. Kung-ch'ao told me that you had not yet started either. How is I-to coming along? If none of you have started it seems we had better not meet until the summer vacation. By that time something will have been achieved and we will then fix a date. What do you think? Please ask I-to's opinion and let me have your reply.

Shih-chih

21 June, 1931.

P.S. Kung-ch'ao is getting married on the 30th and will return to Peiping at the end of July.

From these letters one can have a rough idea of how we went about planning the translation of Shakespeare. In using Dr. Hu's words rather than rely on my recollections, I feel the account gains authenticity and perhaps a certain intimacy as well. In this way I also want to express my admiration for and fond memories of Dr. Hu, without whose enthusiastic initiation I would never have embarked on the translation of Shakespeare at all. Dr. Hu is not a Shakespearean scholar, but he recognised the importance of translating Shakespeare and took it upon himself to plan the whole project responsibly and carefully.

IN FACT, we never actually proceeded according to the plan. The First Annual Meeting was never held. T'ung-pe refused to take part in the project. Chih-mo died unfortunately in November, 1931, while Kung-ch'ao and I-to's interests lay elsewhere. So I was left to take on this long and arduous task alone. I remember that I was living at No. 7 Yu Shan Road in Tsingtao at the time. Apart from twelve hours of lectures per week in school, I devoted every spare moment of my time to the translation. At first I did not have many reference books at hand as the school was a new one and there was not much in the library. So I began to build up a small, private Shakespeare library, and in five or six years' time my collection compared favourably with that found in any schools. But what a lack of reference materials for my work in those first years! The only thing I could count upon in those days was a strong dose of enthusiasm, and the belief that by dogged effort mountains might be moved. I decided to take it step by step and work at my own speed. In this way I could at least learn something in the process. I am hardly an authority on Shakespeare and though I had read, while in college, plays like *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Henry IV*, and so on, my knowledge of them is most superficial. I had seen while abroad Walter Hampden's *Hamlet* and Warfield's *Merchant of Venice* and that was about all. In spite of my ignorance of the subject, and without actually realising how unqualified I was, I dared to venture upon the scheme. If all

five of us had ever pooled our efforts and worked according to the original scheme, we should have completed the project long ago and in proof-reading each other have many of the errors eliminated. That we were unable to carry out the original plan is most regrettable.

The first problem I encountered in the course of translating Shakespeare was that of the choice of text. Textual problems do not exist for some literary works; but for those written in an earlier age, this problem is very common and can be crucial. Shakespeare, by Chinese standards, cannot be reckoned an early writer. He was born four centuries ago, around the end of the Ming Dynasty. And the English he used is 'Modern English'. His works, however, are chiefly dramas, and dramatic texts were not regarded as literature in those days, but rather as the property of the troupes that performed them. Thus Shakespeare never personally published any of his own plays. The sixteen 'Quartos' that appeared came from diverse sources, and were uneven in quality; some of them had been scripts provided by the troupes, others were pieced together from lines memorized, while still others originated in notes taken secretly during performances. The complete works were not published until 1623—seven years after Shakespeare's death—by two of his fellow actors. All this has complicated the textual problems of Shakespeare's plays. Furthermore, printing techniques in those days were poor. Typographical errors were multiplied by the practice of employing, in addition to a "reader", several type-setters. Moreover, Shakespeare's handwriting, as far as we know, is not easily legible. For these reasons the editing of Shakespeare's texts has developed into a specialized branch of scholarship. Since the eighteenth century there have been numerous scholars in the field who have edited and standardized the texts, divided it into acts and scenes where it had not been done, modernized the irregular spellings and supplied stage directions where they were incomplete or non-existent. The Shakespearean texts we use nowadays are the fruit of these labours. Yet in the process of editing, the specialists do not always agree, and it is common for them to offer different interpretations. Thus variant readings are frequently found in different texts. This presents no problem for the reader who can always pick and choose any modernized text he likes. The translator, on the other hand, is denied this freedom. He must choose one edition and base his translation upon it. This was quite a serious problem for me at the beginning. In Professor Kittredge's class⁶ we used Rolfe's edition. I have no idea why the professor had us use this version; it may be that this was an American edition that best suited the needs of the classroom. In selecting my text I did not base my choice on the number of footnotes—I would have to consult all the editions I could lay my hands on anyway, so the abundance of footnotes in any one edition did not matter to me. What mattered was the text itself. As a translator I could in no way contribute to the textual scholarship, nor would I have the time to collate the results of earlier textual specialists. The task of translating the text from one language to another was already work enough for me. So, I simply had to settle on an edition that is more popularly accepted. Finally I decided to use the Oxford text edited by W.J. Craig. This edition is widely used and is also the one on which the Yale Edition is based.

⁶George Kittredge, American authority on Shakespeare, taught at Harvard University from 1888 to 1936.

The textbook versions of Shakespeare's plays used by most schools have one drawback in common: they are abridged in one way or another. The lines deleted are usually from the so-called bawdy passages. Shakespeare had an extremely diverse audience of which the majority were 'groundlings' whose tastes were far from refined. In common with popular audiences of all ages, Elizabethan play-goers liked off-colour jokes and bawdy allusions which Shakespeare dutifully supplied. As a result hardly a play goes without mentioning the *cuckold* with horns on his head; even the male *codpiece* was made fun of. Puns referring to sexual matters are only too common. In 1818 a certain Thomas Bowdler published in England an edition of the complete works from which all the bawdy passages had been carefully excised, so that the plays could be read in any family supposedly without causing embarrassment. This noble effort has itself become a laughing-stock. Ad-libbing and slapstick do reveal something about the background of an era and it should not really matter that much even if ribaldry is involved. This might even be a healthy sign psychologically. The Oxford Edition contains the complete, unabridged text, without any deletions, nor did I have any taboos or inhibitions in my translation. I simply tried my best to provide faithful renditions of the original. About a third of the original is in prose, and rendering this portion into Chinese prose was no great problem. However, the greater part of the text is in blank verse, that is, unrhymed iambic pentameter. Shakespeare did not adhere to this verse-form very strictly and often wrote lines with one or two extra feet. Nor did he end-stop every line; sentences often run for several lines in succession. Thus Shakespearean blank verse actually comes quite close to prose. A euphonious *pai-hua* prose style might vaguely approximate the blank verse of Shakespeare but the distinctive rhythm of blank verse is not easily transplanted into another language. I have used prose throughout my translation. Quite frankly, I was unable to take care of the meter of the original. If a translator can fully and correctly render the meaning of the original, he has, to my mind, achieved no mean feat. Dr. Hu's suggestion that Wen I-to and Hsu Chih-mo should try to translate Shakespeare into verse—blank verse, that is—represents a very high ideal, for would it not be more colourful to translate Shakespeare into *pai-hua* verse? Such a task must be left to the poets who have their own inspired ways with words. It is a great pity that Chih-mo died prematurely, and that I-to became immersed in ancient tomes, so that neither of them could take part in the project. I would only say that my prose version is one way of tackling the job. Rhymed couplets are found in abundance in Shakespeare, especially in the earlier plays, their frequency decreasing in the mature works. The rhymes, in many cases, are forced and the couplets may sound grand, but they are, for the most part, devoid of meaning. I have done my best to reproduce them, forced rhymes and all. In short, my translation is largely prose. If some inspired translator can render Shakespeare's blank verse into Chinese verse, then he is certainly the answer to our prayer, and I should be the first to congratulate him. However, it should be borne in mind that blank verse is by no means the same thing as prose printed in separate lines.

I have taken considerable pains to acquire an understanding of Shakespearean meter. Is it enough to explain it by simply defining it as "iambic pentameter"? I do not think so. Shakespeare's artistry cannot have been as simple as that. I have found Percy Simpson's *Shakespeare's Punctuation* illuminating in this respect. Shakespeare's

use of punctuation seems to have deviated from the accepted norm. In fact it is a system unto itself. Shakespeare's purpose in punctuation was to guide the actors in the delivery of their lines and to indicate the proper vocal inflexion and the necessary pauses. In accordance with this interpretation, I tried as far as possible to preserve Shakespeare's original punctuation. The result is that every sentence in the original is matched by a sentence in the translation. Sentences in the original text are used as units of translation. My translation is by no means 'literal'. Word-for-word translation would produce passages which would be unreadable in Chinese. Neither is it 'free'. Free translation may result in fluency, but the tone and rhythm will diverge too greatly from the original. In making sentences the units of translation, I may have been able to retain some of the original rhythm.

THE TRANSLATION of proper names can be very frustrating too. I am for using *kuo-yu* transliteration to represent names according to their commonly accepted pronunciation. I do not believe in the practice of shortening foreign names to make them sound more Chinese. Foreigners do possess odd and unwieldy names; why should we bother to give them Chinese names instead? The name Sha-shih-pi-ya (Shakespeare) is well known enough and needn't be discussed. The translation of other names, however, requires careful consideration. For help in these matters I was able to consult only two reference works: *A Pronouncing Dictionary of Shakespearean Proper Names* by Theodora Irvine and *Shakespeare's Names: a Pronouncing Dictionary* by Helge Kokeritz. In principle I prefer to follow modern English pronunciation rather than Elizabethan, and to follow Anglicized pronunciations instead of their Greek, Latin, French and Italian originals. Many people, for example, have translated *Julius Caesar* as *General K'ai-sa* or *Emperor K'ai-sa*. I have no idea on what these translations are based and I would rather put it faithfully as *Chu-li-a-ssu-hsi-sa*. As for *Antony and Cleopatra*, instead of giving it an attractive and impressive title like that of a movie, I transliterate the whole name as *An-tung-ni yu K'o-li-ao-p'ei-t'ella*. This sounds a bit clumsy, a bit plain, I agree; but I feel much better about it. There are, of course, other names which do require translation of meaning and not transliteration. 'Bottom', the spinner, for one, I have translated as *hsien-t'uan* (clew) as the name actually means 'a ball of thread or yarn'. 'Hotspur' means a 'quick-tempered fellow' so I have translated it as *p'i-li-huo* (hothead), an epithet familiar to most readers.

Punning was a fashionable diversion in Shakespeare's day. The dramatist used puns at every opportunity and they were readily accepted by the audience. A 'pun' is simply two or more meanings embodied in the same word. For instance, the word 'light' has three meanings: 1. brightness, 2. the opposite of heavy and 3. frivolous. Or again, 'gilt' and 'guilt' are homonyms; so are 'sole' and 'soul'. When read aloud these words cannot be distinguished one from the other, and much confusion and misunderstanding result. In Shakespeare's age 'Modern English' was gradually taking shape and absorbing large quantities of ancient and contemporary foreign vocabulary. People were interested in words, and therefore also interested in word-play. From our present-day point of view, puns are acceptable if employed sparingly. Excessively used, however, they easily become tedious. In translation puns present great difficulties as they are almost always untranslatable. But, if the translator chooses to ignore

them altogether, he will feel he is not being faithful to the original. So he is left with no alternative but to footnote his translation.

These are by no means the real difficulties on the linguistic side. Although it is termed 'Modern English', Shakespeare's language differs considerably from English as it is spoken and written today. A word used by Shakespeare may spell exactly the same as in modern English when in fact it had a different meaning. A moment's carelessness can easily lead to errors in the translation. Certain English words are quite complicated in meaning, having a variety of senses—radical, extended, transferred or archaic. The translator has to be continually on the alert and try to determine which meaning Shakespeare intended when using a certain word. Serious mistakes can result if, without thinking twice, he translates words according to their commonly accepted modern meaning. Problems occur all too often where no problem seems to exist. I have only to quote a few examples to illustrate this:

acre sometimes meant 'furlong' (i.e. approximately 220 yards) rather than the present 4840 sq. yards.

neat was used as a noun meaning 'an ox with horns', rather than as an adjective meaning 'orderly'.

doubt usually meant 'fear' rather than 'uncertainty'.

speak sometimes meant 'fight', 'exchange blows'.

virtue usually meant 'valour', not 'moral rectitude'.

complexion sometimes meant 'temperament' rather than 'colour and texture of the face'.

flag sometimes meant 'coarse grass' instead of 'a piece of cloth used as emblem'.

worm often referred to 'a snake' instead of 'a maggot'.

clown sometimes meant 'bumpkin' rather than 'jester'.

paint usually referred to the application of cosmetics and not to 'graphic art'.

pledge sometimes meant 'to toast' instead of 'to take an oath'.

nerve usually meant 'sinew' instead of 'fibre connecting the brain with the organs'.

will sometimes meant 'lust' instead of 'volition'.

port often referred to 'the gateway of a walled town' instead of a 'harbour'.

worry referred to a dog's seizing a man by the throat rather than 'anxiety'.

coat was usually an abbreviation for 'coat of arms' instead of 'the outer garment'.

in blood meant 'in good health' instead of 'lying amidst a pool of blood'.

in the tub was a euphemistic expression for contracting syphilis.

look upon the hedge was a euphemism for urination.

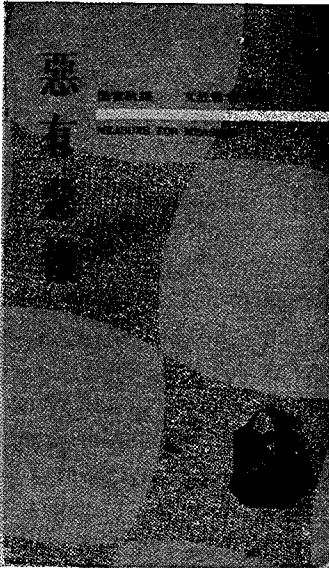
the fifth hour was eleven a.m., as people in those days started counting from six a.m.

in by the week meant 'to be caught', source unknown, rather than 'within the week'.

These are but a few of the interesting examples I have come across. The problem, however, is comparatively easy to overcome. The translator will be on safe ground if he is willing and able to consult the various textual commentaries whenever necessary. It is only out of carelessness or reluctance to consult the commentaries that mistakes are made.

TRANSLATION IS NOT considered scholarly research. That is why it is usually ignored by academic institutions. After translating twenty of Shakespeare's plays, I have come to realise that the translator, as often as not, has to involve himself in a little research work from time to time. He will hesitate time and again to put anything down, always hoping that he could understand the original more thoroughly and so lessen the chances of making regrettable errors. For this purpose he will have to consult widely the commentaries written since the eighteenth century. There are numerous annotated texts of Shakespeare available. Those I consulted most often include the Arden, Hudson, Rolfe, Yale, Deighton, Clarendon Press, Kittredge, Harrison, Craig, New Cambridge, New Variorum, Warrick and Scholar's Library editions, as well as others. Among these, the New Variorum is not only rich in its collection of textual criticisms, but also includes an abundance of reference materials. It is a pity that not all the plays have been published in this edition, while those published in earlier years now seem a little out of date. From the academic point of view, these materials can only be regarded as secondary sources, being the results of the research of earlier scholars. But these secondary references must not be overlooked. Without having absorbed them as thoroughly as possible, one can never approach the realm of primary source materials. It requires tremendous time and effort to survey this vast critical apparatus. And the translator has to do a little pondering whenever he comes across disagreements among the scholars. That is why I say the translator has to involve himself in a bit of research work.

One's reference materials should not, of course, be limited to annotated texts alone. Ideally I ought to have collected and examined all the writings that have to do with Shakespeare. But what an extravagant idea this is. I had dreamt of visiting the Shakespeare Memorial Library or the Folger Shakespearean Library—how wonderful that would have been! And I do not mean merely making a quick tour of the spot; I would want to sit down and work seriously for four or five years, making full use of the books available there. As these dreams of mine have not been realised, I have had to settle for the second best and do my utmost to collect the reference books necessary for my work. This was not too much of a problem before the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. I was able to establish credit with a second-hand book-dealer in England. Catalogues were sent to me regularly, and I used to purchase some of the books not readily available in China. As time went by, my collection, humble as it might be, came to compare favourably with what one finds in any of our universities. For example, I managed to get hold of a large number of *Shakespeare Society Transactions*. Though they were fairly old publications and in shabby condition, their contents proved most valuable. After the war broke out there could be no more talk of such things. I remember that while in the hinterland during the war, I once heard of the publication of a "New Annotated Edition" and longed in vain to own a copy. It so happened that I managed to get hold of the relative of a friend who had a chance to visit the States and I begged him to buy me a copy. He went and he returned, bringing me a large number of gifts—but not the book I wanted. He did not even mention it. I am not trying to lay the blame on anybody; I merely want to emphasize how difficult it was to obtain reference books in those days. After coming to Taiwan empty-handed, I worked very hard to catch up on the Shakespearean scholarship of the previous decade. Research in this field had not stopped in England and America,



Two of the author's translations published in Taipei by Book World Co. Left: Measure for Measure, 1964. Right: The Tempest, 1965.

and books kept coming out in amazing quantities while my own studies had lapsed into dormancy. Yet in seeking to buy the necessary books I ran into many difficulties: my own budget was limited; then there were the foreign exchange restrictions; when I tried to buy books through my school I encountered a lot of red tape and incredible inefficiency. Once an American friend came to my aid and asked me to make up a booklist. I leapt for joy and immediately sent him the list. It was only after a very long time that I received his reply which, when I read it, left me with a wry smile: "I am sorry, your booklist was submitted to our Government but not approved, and the reason given was that all the books were about an 'English' author."

AS FOR THE twenty plays I have translated, the first to be completed were *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, and *The Tempest*. After I had finished these, the China Foundation sent them to the Commercial Press to be printed. So these plays came out between May and November 1936. At that time there was a Mr. Wei Ch'ueh (韋愨) at the Commercial Press who, after examining my translation of *Othello*, made a few suggestions which I received through Dr. Hu Shih, accompanied by this letter:

Dear Shih-ch'iu,

I have just received a letter from the Commercial Press which includes a few queries on your translation of *Othello*, and you are kindly requested to check them over. I enclose the manuscript of your translation together with the original letter. I am sure you won't mind, as these are by way of being scholarly discussions. Best Wishes,

Hastily,
Shih-chih
11 April, 1936.

Of course I did not mind "scholarly discussions", Dr. Hu's courteous request was most touching. As we all know, there is no such thing as 'perfection' in translation work. So long as there are no serious errors in the translation, one ought to feel a modicum of satisfaction. If there are those who can point out mistakes before the whole thing goes to press, the translator can but thank them wholeheartedly. I went through those few suggestions made by the Commercial Press and readily agreed to the changes, which would improve the tone of the translation—in all but one place. To my surprise, when the book came out, all the places in question were revised, including the one that I had decided should stand. Kuan Ch'i-t'ung of the China Foundation wrote to me concerning this matter in the following letter dated 5 January, 1937:

"*Othello* has been published, and I enclose ten copies. The Commercial Press tried to be clever and inserted an extra 'not'—the second word in line 9 on page 6, thereby making the meaning altogether different from that of the original. You ought to write them a letter of protest so that this will not happen again."

I did not write a letter of protest, as I understood that the editor had acted out of goodwill, even though the extra negative spoiled the passage. The Press had already been most helpful in pointing out a few mistakes in the translation. There were doubtless many others but I am nevertheless very grateful for their suggestions.

At the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War, Chang Tzu-kao (張子高) and later Jen Shu-yung (任叔永) took charge of the Translation Committee. I was notified that the Committee was not able to accept more than one Shakespeare play each year. In fact, I was unable to finish a play each year. At first I only completed *Twelfth Night* which was published in Hong Kong in September, 1939. Then I translated *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which I sent to the Commercial Press immediately after the war. The type was set and I finished correcting the proofs, but the play was not printed. This was because of the alarming rate of inflation at the time, I was told, and because the price of paper had increased many times. Blank paper became valueless as soon as anything was printed on it. So, publication was shelved for the time being. Later I brought the proofs to Taiwan. After the war I finished both parts of *Henry IV*, the first part of which was published by Ming Hua Bookstore in Taiwan. The other plays were translated one after another after I came to Taiwan.

There is no copyright on Shakespeare's plays. Anyone who cares to may translate them, and no one can monopolise this field. Besides, according to Dr. Hu's original plan, the job was not assigned to me alone. We welcomed translations from individuals outside the Committee. Before and during the progress of my own work, I have come across the following Chinese translations:

- 1 *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet* translated by T'ien Han (田漢)
- 2 *The Merchant of Venice* translated by Ku Chung-i (顧仲彝)
- 3 *As You Like It* translated by Chang Ts'ai-chen (張采真)
- 4 *Timon of Athens* by Yang Hui (楊晦)
- 5 *Julius Caesar*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and a number of other plays by Ts'ao Wei-feng (曹未風)
- 6 *Julius Caesar* by Sun Wei-fo (孫偉佛)

- 7 *Measure for Measure* by Ch'iu Ts'un-chen (邱存眞)
- 8 *Romeo and Juliet* by Ts'ao Yü (曹禺)
- 9 Twenty-seven tragedies and comedies translated by Chu Sheng-hao (朱生豪)
- 10 Ten historical plays translated by Yu Erh-ch'ang (虞爾昌)
- 11 *King Lear* translated by Sun Ta-yu (孫大雨)
- 12 *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus* translated by Hsia Mi (夏鼐)

And there are bound to be others I have missed. Among the translations mentioned above, I should particularly point out the works of Chu Sheng-hao and Yu Erh-ch'ang, which, when taken together, form the complete works, and that Sun Ta-yu's translation is the only version which attempts to render Shakespeare into *pai-hua* poetry.

As the twenty plays I have translated were done over a wide span of time, their format suffers one inconsistency, and that is there are fewer footnotes in the earlier translations and more in the later translations. I had imagined at the beginning of the project that, as the translations were intended for Chinese readers, I should do my best to make them comprehensible and readable without the help of footnotes. However, after I had completed several plays Dr. Hu suggested that I should put in annotations, so I inserted some where they were most needed. As I carried on with my work, my interest in footnotes grew and so their number gradually increased. I have no time now to go over the translations again thoroughly, so all addenda and revisions will have to be left till the publication of the complete corpus.

Finally, I should add a word of explanation on the illustrations I have used. They are all taken from *The Complete Works* edited by Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke, which was published about 1864 and includes some 300-odd etchings. Hsiao Meng-neng owns a copy of this edition. The reproduction of these etchings has done a great deal to enliven my volumes and I would like to express my thanks here to Mr. Hsiao for his kindness in this matter.

16 May, 1963.

How to Translate the Bard

With characteristic modesty and wry humour, Liang Shih-ch'iu likes to tell his friends that the translator of the complete works of Shakespeare must meet three requirements: (1) He must not be talented; because if talented, he will become a creative writer on his own, and translation will be beneath his dignity. (2) He must not be scholarly; because if scholarly, he will go into research, and translation will be against his inclination. (3) He must live to a ripe old age, otherwise he would not be able to finish the work. Prof. Liang claims to have fulfilled all three requirements and have therefore the good fortune of completing the Chinese version of Shakespeare, totalling three million characters.