

Liang Shih-ch'iu's *Ma K'e-pai* and *Li-erh Wang* : The Role of the Intended Audience in Translation

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Shakespeare is considered one of the greatest dramatists of the Western world, and there are those who would claim that he is the greatest of Western men of letters. So, it seems that if one is interested in the translation of western works into Chinese, the translation of Shakespeare must necessarily provoke curiosity. While the qualities of a "good translation" have never been agreed upon by translators, it is generally assumed that it is easier to render a work into a sister language than it is to render it into a distantly related language. How much more difficult it must be then, to render it into a language not only linguistically unrelated, but culturally unfamiliar! The translator who undertakes to render English into Chinese or vice-versa must keep his aim in mind constantly; he has no cognate words to act as crutches.

My reason for choosing to examine the translations of Liang Shih-ch'iu (梁實秋) is simply that he is the best known of all the Chinese scholars who have attempted to render Shakespeare. Mr. Liang has the distinction of being the only one to have translated all of Shakespeare's works; furthermore, he was the first to translate any of them. Since Liang began translating in 1930, many others have published Chinese translations of Shakespeare.¹ No one, however, has translated more than a few, and no one has managed to become as well-known in the field as Mr. Liang.

Of Liang Shih-ch'iu's translations, I have elected to discuss *Ma K'e-pai* and *Li-erh Wang* for a variety of reasons. Firstly, I believed that limiting myself to one category of Shakespeare's dramas, either tragedy, comedy

or history, would prove more fruitful in a short paper than a mixing of categories. Secondly, I found in the translations of these plays the richest variety of examples of Liang's successes and failures. Finally, I was limited by library resources and my own taste. In the following paper I propose to examine the relative "successes" and "failures" of Mr. Liang's translations in terms of his professed aims, and the standards set by some theorists, most notably T. H. Savory.

Liang Shih-ch'iu's career as translator of Shakespeare may be said to have begun in 1930, when Hu Shih (胡適) was elected president of the Chung-hua Chiao-yü Wen-hua Chi-chin Tung-shih Hui's² (中華教育文化基金董事會) committee on translation. Hu's plan was to have several Western works translated into Chinese, including the complete works of Shakespeare, and he drew up an elaborate plan: (excerpt)

1. Wen I-to (聞一多), Liang Shih-ch'iu, Ch'en T'ung-pe (陳通伯), Yeh Kung-ch'ao (葉公超) and Hsu Chih-mo (徐志摩) 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.

However well-organized Mr. Hu's plan seems at sight, it did not work for several reasons (some of which were beyond his control) which we need not discuss here. What finally happened is that Liang Shih-ch'iu was the only one to translate.

Very little has been written in Chinese on translation. However, in a recent article Mr. Liang revealed his aims in his translations.³ He said that he chose to use prose translations throughout because trying to translate into rhyme was too cumbersome. He further stated that he used the sentence as his unit for translation, and that he strove for a rendition not quite literal

and not quite paraphrastic, but one which would be most faithful to the meaning of the original. His professed treatment of puns was to choose one of the meanings for translation, and to add a footnote to explain the pun.

In the West, on the other hand, there has been a plethora of treatises on the theory of translation, but as of yet there has been no agreement on a single universally applicable method of translating. Thus, traditional Western theories of translation, when viewed together, are so varied as to appear meaningless. In a famous passage from his book, T. H. Savory lists six contrasting pairs of theories:⁴

1. A translation must give the words of the original.
2. A translation must give the ideas of the original.
3. A translation should read like an original work.
4. A translation should read like a translation.
5. A translation should reflect the style of the original.
6. A translation should reflect the style of the translator.
7. A translation should read as a contemporary of the original.
8. A translation should read as a contemporary of the translation.
9. A translation may add to or omit from the original.
10. A translation may never add to or omit from the original.
11. A translation of verse should be in prose.
12. A translation of verse should be in verse.

For Savory, the art of translation lies in the making of an "aesthetic choice" somewhere between the extremes of each of the six pairs listed above. When the translator makes this choice he bases it on what he believes the original author says, what he means, and how he says it. S. S. Prawer, on the other hand, sees two types of translations: those that bring the audience to the author, and those that bring the author to the audience.⁵ It appears then, that the effectiveness of a translation depends on the intentions of the translator, who in turn makes a choice relative to the needs of his intended audience. It is in this light that we must view the translations of Liang Shih-ch'iu.

Perhaps the best way to begin the study is through the thorough analysis of a substantial speech in each of the plays. I have chosen Macbeth's soliloquy in act I, scene vii, and Edmund's soliloquy in act I, scene ii. In these scenes each of the characters in question is thinking aloud on his great plan:

SCENE VII. MACBETH'S castle.

[Hautboys and torches. Enter a sewer, and divers
SERVANTS with dishes and service, and pass over
the stage. Then enter MACBETH.]

MACB. If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly. If the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
With his surcease; success, that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here, 5
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgment here, that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which being taught return 9
To plague the inventor. This even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust.
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed. Then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door, 15
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels trumpet-tongued against
The deep damnation of his taking-off. 20
And pity, like a naked newborn babe,
Striding the blast, or Heaven's cherubin horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur 25
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other.

第七景：陰佛奈斯堡內一室

筓簫與火炬。一個司膳的管家，又僕役若干人，捧盤及其他餐具上，走過臺上。後馬克白上。
馬 如其這事做成了就算完事，那麼這事是愈快做成愈妙；如其此番暗殺能把後患一網打盡，於暗殺完成之時便算穩獲勝利；如其只此一擊便可實現這一生的懷抱，我僅僅說這一生，在這時間之海的淺灘上，——那麼我們寧可冒了死後的危險而不惜一試了。但是這些事就是在這一生中我們也永遠要受裁判的；所以我們只是教導人殺人，教會了之後，創始者反要遭殃；昭彰

的公理會把我們下毒的酒杯的殘瀝送到我們自己的臂上。他來到此地是有兩重的保障：第一，我是他的族人又是他的屬下，都是很強的理由使我不可下手；再說，我是主人，正該嚴防刺客，豈可自行操刀。況且，這鄧肯平日爲人如此的謙遜，從政又如此的廉明，他的美德將大聲疾呼像天使一般來抗議這窮凶極惡的毒手；並且惻隱心，有如一個跨風而行的裸體的新生的嬰孩，又如天上的御風而行的天使，將要把這段慘事吹到入人的眼裏，以至於淚雨淹溺了狂風。我沒有距鐵來刺我的意嚮的腹部，只是勃勃的野心，不免要跳得太猛，因而落到鞍的那邊。

T. H. Savory's first pair of extremes deals with the literalness of the translation. Are we getting a word-by-word "primitive translation,"⁶ a paraphrase, or something between? While Mr. Liang has not done a word-by-word translation, his version is extremely close to the original. This is evinced in his treatment of metaphors; Mr. Liang has the choice of keeping the metaphors used by Shakespeare, or finding a Chinese equivalent, and he opts for the former. Hence we are left with such phrases as:

If the assassination / Could trammel up the consequence . . .

如其此番暗殺 能把後患一網打盡

But here, upon this bank and shoal of time.

在這時間之海的淺灘上

When a translator uses the same metaphor in his translation as the author does in the original, his success becomes dependent on the adaptability of the metaphor in the target language. Fortunately for Liang, Chinese is already in possession of an expression meaning "to impede" or "to do away with" using a word for "net." However, Liang's "bank and shoal of time" does not achieve similar success. The Chinese simply are not in the habit of comparing time to an ocean, and so this metaphor sounds rather odd. Perhaps the least successful metaphor of this soliloquy is in lines 18-25. Here we find several phrases dealing with Christianity: angels, damnation, Heaven, cherubin. A literal translation of them requires an understanding of the terms (which Liang possessed), but it also requires the existence of equivalent terms in the target language. However, Chinese does not possess the words required to make such a translation. Liang uses its one word for

“Western personification of innocence and purity” (angel, cherub, etc.)
天使 twice, and is forced to paraphrase “damnation.”

Another problem in direct translation, which we can see here, is syntax. When it comes to modifying a noun, English is much more flexible than Chinese. As English is an inflected language word order is not as rigid as it is in Chinese, and one may heap modifiers upon a noun without it becoming too cumbersome by placing some before the noun and some after. In Chinese, however, modifiers must precede the noun, and often must take a suffix, thus adding a syllable. Hence the Chinese rendition of a lengthy noun phrase from English is often very awkward sounding. A perfect example of this problem can be seen in line 21 of the soliloquy:

Like a naked newborn babe, / Striding the blast
有如一個跨風而行的裸體的新生的嬰孩

The line is too encumbered by modifiers. It reads like a translation, and is at one of the extremes mentioned by Savory as undesirable.

In translating Edmund's soliloquy, Liang Shih-ch'iu achieves a different quality, which may be found to be typical of his rendition of *King Lear* as compared to his rendition of *Macbeth*.

[Enter EDMUND, with a letter]

EDM. Thou, Nature, art my goddess, to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me, 4
For that I am some twelve of fourteen moonshines
Lag of a brother?. Why bastard? Wherefore base?
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous and my shape as true,
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
With base? With baseness? Bastardy? Base, base?
Who in the lusty stealth of nature take 11
More composition and fierce quality
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops
Got 'tween asleep and wake? Well then, 15
Legitimate Edgar I must have your land.
Our father's lovers to the bastard Edmund
As to the legitimate — fine word, “legitimate”!

Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top the legitimate. I grow, I prosper.
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

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Liang's translation is still very close to the original, yet through careful word selection and slightly freer syntax, he has not only avoided awkwardness, but he has successfully rendered the subtleties in tone. In the first line, by placing the Chinese word for nature [天性] before the word for you [你] and adding the word [才] (an emphazier meaning "only"), Liang creates an effect of insistence, which is exactly the tone the original conveys. Furthermore, he continues the feeling through the repeated use of a word of restriction, [只]. In the translation of Edmund's soliloquy Liang does not seem to feel obliged to render the metaphors literally into Chinese, but rather seeks the Chinese equivalents.

哀德蒙持一函上。

哀 天性，你纔是我的神明；我只聽從你的法律，爲什麼我要受習慣的束縛，讓人間吹毛求疵的精神剝奪我的權利，只爲了我比我的哥哥遲生十二個月，或十四個月？爲什麼是私生子？何以是私？和良家婦女生出來的兒子比起來，我的身軀不是同樣的構造，胸襟不是同樣的寬敞，而貌不是同樣的酷肖嗎？爲什麼他們認定我們是私？私生？私生子？私，私？我們在情濃幽會之際所秉受的遺傳胎教，豈不遠勝過於半睡半醒之際在陳舊無謂的床上所苟合出來的成羣的蠢材？好罷，嫡出的愛德加，我一定要得到你的產業：我們父親對於私生子哀德蒙和對於嫡生子是一樣的愛。「嫡生子」，好一個名辭！好罷，嫡生子，假如這封信能成功，我的計劃順利，私生的哀德蒙就要壓倒了嫡生的：——我滋長了，我勝利了；上帝喲，來幫助私生子！

[格勞斯特上。]

格 坎特如此的被逐！法蘭西王盛怒而去！國王今晚就走！放棄了他的君權！只支用一筆給養費！這些事竟做得如此倉卒！哀德蒙，怎樣！有什麼消息？

哀 啓稟父親！沒有什麼？ [把信藏起。]

格 爲什麼那樣匆忙把信收起？

Two fine examples are his translations of "plague of custom" (習慣的束縛) and "the curiosity of nations to deprive me" (人間吹毛求疵). Liang does not feel obliged to translate the former literally, and as for the latter, he manages to find a popular Chinese saying to translate it. The result is something both readable and authentically Chinese.

The songs which Shakespeare includes in both *Macbeth* and *King Lear* are the only elements which Mr. Liang chooses to render in verse. We may assume that this is because Shakespeare also limited his use of regular rhyme to this section (he also changed stress from five per line to four).

In *Macbeth* it is the witches' lines that contain songs. The regular rhyme and four-syllable beat are both used throughout their incantations:

When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?
我們三個將在甚麼時候
再於雷電或雨裡聚首？

Here Liang has preserved the rhyme sequence. Though the rhythm is not the same four-syllable rhythm of the English, it is interesting to note that the first line is a very close approximation of a Western poetic form, the trochaic pentameter. The second line, however, is one syllable shorter than the first, sacrificing the chanting quality. This shouldn't be difficult, as Chinese poetry also traditionally places a heavy emphasis on equal number of syllables in each line of a couplet. Liang could have, for example, reduced 甚麼 to 甚, and kept the even rhythm. We may assume that his apparent neglect of equal rhythm is due to the literal translation. In the next couplet, however, Liang has managed a parallel structure between the two lines:

When the hurly-burly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.
等這場紛擾有了結束
等這場戰爭分了勝負

The effect is much different from the one earlier. Not only has Liang kept the literal meaning, but he has also preserved the incantatory effect.

The most famous line in this scene is the very last one, containing the words "fair and foul," which reverberate throughout *Macbeth*:

Fair is foul, and foul is fair
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

清白即是黑暗，黑暗即是清白
我們且從陰霾和濁氣中間飛過

The losses from the original here are striking. Mr. Liang has done a fine direct translation; we cannot accuse him of misinterpretation. Yet the Chinese version sorely lacks the tone of the original. Firstly, it lacks alliteration. The repetition of fricatives in the English lends a sinister quality to the lines. Secondly, the Chinese is too wordy; the first line is twice the length of the English, though it does maintain an incantatory rhythm. Finally, the second line is awkward; there is a seven-syllable locative phrase between the verb and its auxiliary.

A more successful example of the rendering of the witches' chanting comes in act IV, scene i. Here we have a lengthy incantation interrupted occasionally by a chorus, which is as follows:

Double, double toil and trouble,
Fire burn and caldron bubble

加倍，加倍努力幹
火燒熱了鍋滾翻

In his direct translation Liang hit on a line that reads exceptionally well; it reads like a couplet from the seven-syllable truncated verse form (chüeh-chü 絕句). Here Liang has reformed the English into something natively Chinese. Unfortunately, however, this appears to have only been a happy accident. The rest of the incantation does not read as smoothly.

A few lines further we see evidence that Liang's varying quality of translation is a result of his pursuit of the "direct method":

Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blindworm's sting,
Lizard's leg and howlet's wing,

The above is a series of nouns and genitives. In the first two lines, Shakespeare lists the noun before the genitive. In the second two lines, he reverses this order. The only thing altered is the word order; the rhythm is still the same. The translator has an option here, if he is translating directly: either to follow the change in structure, or keep the rhythm. Liang

Shih-ch'iu opted for the former:

壁虎眼，哈蟆脚，／惡狗舌，蝙蝠毛
蝮蛇的叉，盲蛇的刺，／蜥蜴的腿，鳥鳥的翅

Yet in the Chinese, the change in structure does not entail a change in word order; the only change is the addition of the particle 的, but the effect is a break in rhythm. It would seem that this is unnecessary.

Later in the same passage, Liang's direct translation renders "finger of a birth-strangled babe" as:

被娼婦在溝裏生出世
就遭勒死的嬰孩的手指頭

One might very well term this a twenty-syllable monstrosity. Chinese simply cannot handle the direct translation of complex English noun phrases without sacrificing fluency.

Liang's treatment of songs is not much different in *King Lear*. In this work it is the fool who does the singing:

FOOL. Mark it, Nuncle: 130

'Have more than thou showest,
Speak less than thou knowest,
Lend less than thou owest,
Ride more than thou goest,

Learn more than thou trowest, 135

Set less than thou throwest.
Leave thy drink and thy whore,
And keep in-a-door,
And thou shalt have more
Than two tens to a score.'

有的要比露出來的多，
你知道的別盡量的說，
出借不可多於你所有，
能騎馬時莫要徒步走，
多聽而不可太輕信，
賭注不可過於野心，
莫縱酒，莫宿娼，
足跡不可出戶堂，
你再數你的那二十，
就將不祇是個雙十。

Here again, the only thing which distinguishes the Chinese version as being a song is the rhyme. The rhythm is not regular, and the parallel structures of the lines are not kept. The English version reads like a nursery rhyme: the first six lines have identical grammatical structures, and identical rhymes. Such repetition has a didactic effect, and is crucial to the poem. The only element kept in the Chinese is the rhyme; yet it would not be difficult for Mr. Liang to keep the rhythm and parallel word order in these six lines. Chinese lends itself to that, and indeed those two are characteristics of traditional Chinese poetry.

One of the most difficult things to translate is a pun. In his essay on translating Shakespeare, Liang Shih-ch'iu humbly conceded that he failed to meet the challenge, and chose as his aim the translation of one of the meanings of the pun, and a footnote as explanation. Yet he is not always as unsuccessful as he claims. Three methods (other than the "footnote method") that he uses serve him well. In act I, scene iv of *King Lear*, Shakespeare plays with the several meanings of the word "crown":

FOOL. No, faith, lords and great men will not let me. If I had a monopoly out, they would have part on't. And ladies too, they will not let me have all the fool to myself, they'll be snatching. Give me an egg, Nuncle, and I'll give thee two crowns.

LEAR. What two crowns shall they be?

FOOL. Why, after I have cut the egg in the middle and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i' the middle and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt. Thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so. [Singing]

大爺，你給我一個蛋，我就給你兩個「金冕」。

李 什麼樣的兩個金冕？

李 唉，我把一個蛋從中間割開，把其中的肉吃掉，剩下的蛋殼就是兩個金冕了。你把你的皇冕從中間裂開，把兩半都給了人，你簡直就是背着驢子走泥濘：你放棄你的金冕的時候，你那禿殼裏面實在是沒有多少腦筋。

Liang Shih-ch'iu is able to create a similar effect in his Chinese version. Taking advantage of the natural tendency of modern Chinese towards the formation of compound words, he keeps the word「冕」(meaning “cap” or “crown”) and combines it with other words, as Shakespeare changes the meaning. Thus we get:

金冕 = golden covering, cap (crown)
皇冕 = emperor's crown

Liang also uses a word for head covering to refer to the eggshell, and a word for eggshell (秃殼) to refer to Lear's head. While his words do not qualify as puns, still he is able to create some word-play.

In act II, scene iv, the fool puns again:

FOOL. Ha, ha! He wears cruel garters. Horses are tied by the heads, dogs and bears by the neck, monkeys by the loins, and men by the legs. When a man's overlusty at legs, then he wears wooden netherstocks.

他戴着一雙好厲害的絨襪帶哩。

Here again, Liang forgoes the footnote and by way of metaphor translates the fact that the fool is playing games, rather than translating the game itself. The English game centers around the double meaning of the adjective “cruel” (creweil). The Chinese game is one of understatement (“What wild silk garters he is wearing!”).

Lastly there are times when the translator is lucky enough to be able to translate a pun with a pun. This happened once in *King Lear* (and never in *Macbeth*).

But for all this, thou shalt have as many dolours for thy daughters as thou canst tell in a year.

不過，雖然如此，你爲了你的女兒們所感受的「隱怨」將要和你在一年內所能數得清的「銀圓」一般多哩。

While there is a tonal difference between the pun words used by Liang (隱怨 and 銀圓, hence it is not a “perfect” pun), still, we are dealing here with a game on sound translated by a game on sound.

There are probably as many theories of translation in existence as there are translated works. However, if any idea is universal it must be that where a translation falls between Savory's extremes depends largely (if not

entirely) on the audience for whom the translation was intended. Savory has also distinguished four types of audience:

1. the reader who knows little or nothing of the original language (and desires a freer translation)
2. the student of the language, who reads the literature in the original with the aid of a translation (this reader needs the most literal translation)
3. the reader who once knew the language of the original but has since forgotten it (he needs a translation that sounds like a translation)
4. the scholar who still knows the original language (this reader enjoys "occasional touches of scholarship")

Hu Shih's aim in commissioning the translations of Shakespeare (and Liang's aim in translating) was to make some great Western literature available to the Chinese reading public, most of whom knew no English. They were what one might call "curiosity readers," reading due to an interest in Western culture, about which they knew little or nothing. It would seem then, that perhaps a freer translation might have been more appropriate. Indeed, *King Lear* is freer than *Macbeth* and it makes for much better reading; one does not get lost in awkward sentence structures nor in obscure metaphors to the same extent that one does in a reading of Liang's *Macbeth*.

On the other hand, if we take Liang Shih-ch'iu's translations for what they were intended to be (disregarding the target audience): direct — indeed nearly literal — translations of Shakespeare into Chinese, they are a great success. Liang's meticulous scholarship admits of few errors.

Notes

1. Among them: T'ien Han (田漢), Ku Ch'ung-yi (顧仲彝), Chang Ts'ai-chen (張采真), Yang Huei (楊晦), Ts'ao Wei-feng (曹未風), Sun Wei-fu (孫偉佛), Ch'iu Ts'un-chen (邱存真), Ts'ao Yü (曹禺), Chu Sheng-hao (朱生豪), Yu Erh-ch'ang (虞爾昌), Sun Ta-yü (孫大雨) and Hsia Mi (夏丏).
2. Board of Directors of the China Foundation for the Promotion of Education and Culture.
3. "On Translating Shakespeare", in *Renditions*, 3 (Autumn 1974); Chinese: 「關於莎士比亞的翻譯」, 翻譯的藝術. 台北: 晨鐘, 1970. pp. 12-13.
4. *The Art of Translation* (London: Cape, 1959), p. 49.
5. *Comparative Literary Studies: An Introduction* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1973).
6. Term used by Savory in his *Art of Translation*, p. 50.

