

Article

Shakespeare in Chinese as Christian Literature: Isaac Mason and Ha Zhidao's Translation of *Tales from Shakespeare*

Dadui Yao 

Department of Chinese, Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou 510275, China; yaodd3@mail.sysu.edu.cn

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Abstract: The introduction of Shakespeare to China was through the Chinese translation of Mary and Charles Lamb's adaptation of Shakespeare's plays, *Tales from Shakespeare*. The Western missionaries' Chinese translations of the Lambs' adaptation have rarely been studied. Isaac Mason and his assistant Ha Zhidao's 1918 translation of the Lambs' book, entitled *Haiguo Quyu* (*Interesting Tales from Overseas Countries*), is one of the earliest Chinese versions translated by Christian missionaries. Although Mason was a Christian missionary and his translation was published by The Christian Literature Society for China, Mason adopted an indirect way to propagate Christian thoughts and rewrote some parts that are related to Christian belief. The rewriting is manifested in several aspects, including the use of four-character titles with Confucian ethical tendencies, rewriting paragraphs with hidden Christian ideas and highlighting themes closely related to Christian ethics, such as mercy, forgiveness and justice. While unique in its time, such a strategy of using the Chinese translation of Shakespeare for indirect missionary work had an impact on subsequent missionary translations.

Keywords: Shakespeare; *Haiguo Quyu*; Isaac Mason; Ha Zhidao; Missionary in China

1. Introduction: Western Missionaries and Shakespeare in Chinese

"Will the clumsy five or seven syllables which go to make a Chinese line convey any idea of the majestic flow of Portia's invocation of Mercy? We trow no."¹ This is a question from an anonymous author's article, "Shakespeare in Chinese", published in the newspaper *The North China Herald* in 1888. In this article, the author states that he/she has heard the news regarding the translation of Shakespeare into Chinese from an American press in Peking. It reads as follows, "An Imperial Mandate directs the President of the Academy to translate Shakespeare into Chinese for the benefit of the young Princes."² The author indicates that this message does not clearly state either which "Academy" was being referred to, or who the "President" was. After making a series of invalid speculations, the author proposes that perhaps W. A. P. Martin (1827–1916), an American missionary in China, would be the best candidate to complete this project. In August 1898, Martin was appointed by Emperor Guangxu 光緒 (1871–1908) as the inaugural president of the Imperial University of Peking 京師大學堂. Martin himself was a prolific translator, but he did not engage in any project of translating Shakespeare into Chinese. Meanwhile, there is no way of knowing the result of this Imperial project.

While it is true that it is challenging to translate Shakespeare into a classical Chinese poem of either five- or seven-character lines, there are several translations of Shakespeare into classical Chinese in narrative form. The earliest was rendered from Mary and Charles Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*³

¹ See (Anonymous 1888, p. 295).

² See (Anonymous 1888, p. 295).

³ See (Lamb and Lamb 1973). The following citations of this book record the page number only.

(Henceforth “*Tales*”), a collection of stories for children adapted from twenty of Shakespeare’s plays. This is a fascinating cultural phenomenon: when Shakespeare’s plays were introduced to modern China, they were transformed into other genres such as short stories, to the point that Chinese readers themselves wondered if Shakespeare was really the one who had written them. The first two Chinese versions of *Tales* were rendered into classical Chinese, the *Haiwai Qitan* 海外奇譚 (*Bizarre Remarks from Overseas*) by an anonymous translator in 1903 and *Yinbian Yanyu* 吟邊燕語 (*Chatting Next to the Place Where the Poets Write Poems*) through the cooperation of Lin Shu 林紓 (1852–1924) and Wei Yi 魏易 (1880–1930) in 1904.⁴ We do not know who translated the 1903 translation. Judging from his/her skill and mastery of both Chinese and English, the translator was no ordinary literatus. Although Lin Shu’s translation achieved great success and was the one that made Shakespeare widely known in China, the 1903 translation is more elegant in terms of its usage of classical Chinese.⁵

In this area, we also find that Western missionaries played a pivotal role in introducing Shakespeare to Chinese readers. There are at least three understudied Chinese translations of Shakespeare produced by Western missionaries in China. These missionary translations are important since these texts involve cultural exchanges, religious conflicts, and cultural re-production. The earliest Western missionary translation of Shakespeare was by Miss Laura White (1865–1937), from the American Methodist Episcopal Mission. White’s abridged translation of *The Merchant of Venice*, entitled *Wanrou Ji* 剝肉記 (*The Story of Shedding Flesh*), was made for a students’ performance in a girls’ school where White served as a teacher. Categorized as “xiaoshuo/novel,” White’s translation was serialized from 1914 to 1915 in *Nu Duo* 女鐸 (*The Woman’s Messenger*), which was a magazine for foreign missionaries and Christian women in China.⁶

In 1918, British Quaker missionary Isaac Mason⁷ and his Chinese assistant Ha Zhidao 哈志道 worked together to translate twelve stories from *Tales*, entitled *Haiguo Quyu* 海國趣語 (*Interesting Tales from Overseas Countries*),⁸ which turned out to be the first of its kind published by a Western Christian missionary. Although not much is known about the Chinese assistant Ha Zhidao, it has been established that he was a Muslim who was later converted to Christianity, possibly by Mason. Together, the two produced some pioneering works on the study of Chinese Muslims.⁹ It is possible that Mason had read the 1903 anonymous Chinese translation of *Tales* when he started his translation project, because the titles of the two translations in Chinese, *Haiwai Qitan* (*Bizarre Remarks from Overseas*) and *Haiguo Quyu* (*Interesting Tales from Overseas Countries*) are quite similar. Moreover, at the time, Mason was in Shanghai, where the 1903 translation *Haiwai Qitan* was published, and he might have been able to acquire a copy before starting his translation.¹⁰

⁴ See (Lamb and Lamb 1903; Lamb et al. 1904). Subsequent references to this book cite the page numbers only. Lin Shu is considered as a conservative reformer who upheld Confucian doctrines and acknowledged the translations of foreign works as vital to save China from further decline. See (Chen and Cheng 2014, p. 1205). Lin Shu was once misidentified as the first translator of the Lambs’ *Tales*, and his translations are considered as an “ideological manipulation of the religious materials of the source texts (*Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and others).” See (Huang 2006, p. 13; Cheung 1998, pp. 127–49).

⁵ This issue is left to be discussed elsewhere due to the present limitations of space. For a discussion of the popularity of Lin Shu’s translation, see (Wong 2018, pp. 42–43.)

⁶ See (White 1914–1915).

⁷ Isaac Mason (1870–1939) was a British missionary to China, from a special denomination, Quakers (The Religious Society of Friends). Quakers “affirmed an ‘inner Light’ within all humanity, including the pagans. They gave greater esteem to the Word in their midst than the Word in Scripture...” (House 2018, pp. 649–50). Also, Quakers place special emphasis on the goodness shared by all human nature. Mason was a scholar specializing in Western China and the history of Chinese Muslims. In 1892, he came to Chongqing as a missionary and also participated in educational work. He moved to Shanghai in 1915 and returned to the UK in 1932. During his stay in Shanghai, he worked for a publishing house, *Guangxue Hui* (The Christian Literature Society for China), editing magazines and translating Western books. He published dozens of religious books and pamphlets and helped compile a Chinese dictionary of the Bible. The Western literary works he translated into Chinese, including Lambs’ *Tales* (1918), and two adventure novels translated for young readers, *The Swiss Family Robinson* (1920) and *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1923), were only a small part of his output. He was elected as a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in 1921.

⁸ See (Lamb et al. 1918).

⁹ See (Israeli 2018, p. 79).

¹⁰ There is no evidence to prove that Mason was influenced by Lin Shu’s Chinese translation.

The third Chinese translation of Shakespeare's plays by Western missionaries in China was a re-translation of Mason's work by Madge D. Mateer (1860–1939) and her assistant Wang Do K'wi 王斗奎 in 1929. Mateer's translation was reprinted several times after it was published. Mason's classical Chinese translation includes twelve stories, while Mateer's version consists of fifteen in modern vernacular Chinese.¹¹ These Chinese translations were produced by Christian missionaries and published by the same press in Shanghai, *Guangxuehui* 廣學會 (The Christian Literature Society for China).¹² The crucial question in this regard is: How did these missionary translators deal with the religious elements in the *Tales* when translating for Chinese readers in the Chinese context? Alternatively, how were Christian elements in Shakespearean stories transformed and localized in the target language? Yang Huilin once noted that Laura White deliberately excluded Christian information from her translation, and used a non-Christian tone to convey Christian significance.¹³ Since Mason himself was an erudite scholar with a prolific publication record in both translation and original work, he should have been familiar with the religious implications in the *Tales*. When Mason translated Shakespearean stories, how did he deal with the religious information in the texts? The following discussion focuses on Mason's Chinese translation of Lamb's *Tales* and leaves out Mateer's version because the latter is quite similar in content to Mason's translation.

2. The Chinese Title and its Confucian Implication

The Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* was an adaptation of the original plays for young readers (especially girls) which aimed to inspire exploration of the original works. To make it easier for young readers, the Lambs changed the verse and poetic expression of the plays to prose and adopted a narrative form to summarize the play's plots.

Mason used classical Chinese and expressions for his translation, which indicated that he preferred to give Shakespeare a familiar image and an easily understood voice for the Chinese audience. Mason's translation includes twelve stories, with each one having a four-character Chinese title following the original English one. The titles of each story (with my back translation) are as follows: (1) *Pianyu Zheyu* 片語折獄 (*Half a Word Settles Litigation*) [*The Merchant of Venice*]; (2) *Tianlun Qibian* 天倫奇變 (*A Weird Change in Heavenly/Natural Ethics*) [*Hamlet*]; (3) *Zhicheng Weixiao* 至誠為孝 (*The Most Devout of Filial Piety*) [*King Lear*]; (4) *Yewai Tuanyuan* 野外團圓 (*Reunion in the Wild*) [*As You Like it*]; (5) *Qing yu yu Chou* 情寓於仇 (*Love is Hidden in Hatred*) [*Romeo and Juliet*]; (6) *Yanshi Youren* 厭世尤人 (*Aversion to the World and Bearing a Grudge Against Men*) [*Timon of Athens*]; (7) *Hufeng Yinlei* 呼風引類 (*Summoning the Wind, and Recruiting the Same Kind*) [*The Tempest*]; (8) *Yaoyan Guhuo* 妖言鼓禍 (*Heresy Brings Disaster*) [*Macbeth*]; (9) *Xinchan Shaqi* 信讒殺妻 (*He trusted in Slander and Tried to Kill His Wife*) [*Othello*]; (10) *Juechu Fengsheng* 絕處逢生 (*Finding a Way Out in a Dangerous Situation*) [*Pericles, Prince of Tyre*]; (11) *Xiangjian Ruchu* 相見如初 (*Meet Again as Before*) [*The Winter's Tale*]; and (12) *Baigui Kemo* 白圭可磨 (*Spots on the White Jade can be Ground Off*) [*Cymbeline*]. Half of these twelve stories are from Shakespeare's comedies (like 1, 4, 7, 10, 11 and 12) and the other half are from his tragedies.

Mason not only translated the stories into classical Chinese but also used elegant Chinese four-character symmetrical titles. These four-character titles that summarize the story-line of each play allude to some classical Chinese texts and include the translator's extended interpretation. The Chinese

¹¹ See (Lamb et al. 1929).

¹² *Guangxuehui* (The Christian Literature Society for China) was one of the most influential publishing institutions in modern China, publishing many Chinese works of Western learning, both religious and secular, through the cooperation of Western missionaries (from different denominations) and Chinese scholars (some of them are anonymous). In the second half of the nineteenth century, many European and American missionaries who came to China realized that in order to encourage the Chinese to accept Christianity, they had to transform the social and cultural foundations of China. Therefore, they published many works of Western learning to disseminate useful knowledge, and Christian messages are implicit in these works. As Tiedemann mentions, "It became the principal means of the Christian Literature Society to disseminate useful knowledge." See (Tiedemann 2010, p. 23).

¹³ See (Yang 2015, pp. 82–90).

title for *The Merchant of Venice* is *Pianyu Zheyu* 片語折獄 (*Half a Word Settles Litigation*), which is derived from Confucius's *Analects*. Confucius once praised his disciple Zilu 子路 by saying, “子曰：「片言可以折獄者，其由也與歟？」子路無宿諾。” [Legge's translation] “The Master said, ‘By one party's rhetoric, he can settle the litigation. Only Zilu has such a talent? All the things that Zilu promised will be done, never overnight.’”¹⁴ The Han 漢dynasty scholar He Yan 何晏 (196–249) once commented, “此章言子路有明斷篤信之德也。” (“This line is to say that Zilu has virtues of clear judgment and integrity.”)¹⁵ That is, Confucius appreciates his disciple Zilu, who can use unilateral testimony to settle litigation. People tend to tell Zilu the truth directly because he is a model of virtue. The line emphasizes Zilu's credibility, integrity and reliability, rather than simply underlining his clear judgment. He Yan's explanation was considered by the Qing Dynasty Confucian scholar Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849) to be an accurate explanation in *The Shisanjing Zhushu* 十三經注疏.¹⁶ One of the Confucian scholars in the Qing dynasty also mentioned, “This line is to praise Zilu who has the talent to convince others, rather than to praise Zilu who has the talent to settle litigation.”¹⁷ Some of these commentaries were generally accepted and canonized in some textbooks by the Qing court, so a Chinese scholar like Ha Zhidao would have been familiar with *the Analects* and their interpretation. If this is the case, what the Chinese titles refer to here is not only Zilu's quick and fair judgment (that is, the wisdom of quickly settling litigation), but more important his *duxin* 信 (steadfast faith). There is another line in the *Analects* regarding the word “*duxin*”, “子曰：篤信好學，守死善道。”¹⁸ [Legge's translation] “The Master said, ‘With sincere faith, he unites the love of learning; holding firm to death.’”¹⁹ The main idea is that a gentleman should stick to his faith, be diligent and eager to learn, and firmly protect the faith (good way) until death.

Why did Mason and Ha use this title with a Confucian moral implication for *The Merchant of Venice*? *Pianyu Zheyu* 片語折獄 (*Half a Word Settles Litigation*) illustrates Portia's eloquent speech and her excellent judgment, but its reference to the *Analects* shows that it has some religious implications. *The Merchant of Venice* is one of the most obvious Christian texts among Shakespeare's plays, in which “Shylock and Antonio embody the theological conflicts and historical interrelationships of Old Law and New.”²⁰ The play shows the theme of Christianity's triumph over Judaism by portraying the greedy Jewish Shylock and enjoining him to convert to Christianity. Therefore, the Chinese title *Pianyu Zheyu* is borrowed from the Confucian canon but refers to Christian content. Moreover, this story in the original *Tales* was not placed in the first part of the entire book, but Mason moved it to the forefront and turned it into the opening story. It means that, at least for Mason, this is the most important story in the entire collection. Perhaps the reason is that this story not only has a fascinating plot but also highlights Christian faith and virtues.

The titles of the other stories have similar ethical themes. For instance, the Chinese title of *The Hamlet*, *Tianlun Qibian* 天倫奇變 (*A Weird Change in Heavenly/Natural Ethics*), which has a peculiar Confucian tone, where the word “*tianlun*” (natural ethical relationship) refers to natural bonds and ethical relationships between family members. In *Hamlet's* story, King Claudius murders his brother

¹⁴ See (Cheng 1990, pp. 857–59). This line illustrates more than Zilu's decisiveness, intelligence, and loyalty. As Cheng Shude mentions, “Zilu is faithful and decisive. Therefore, whenever he speaks, people are convinced.” (子路忠信明決，故言出而人信服) In James Legge's translation, “The Master said, ‘Ah! it is Yu, who could with half a word settle litigations! Tsze-loo never slept over a promise.’” See (Legge 1861a, p. 121).

¹⁵ See (He and Xing 1990, p. 108).

¹⁶ See (He and Xing 1990, p. 108). Please see *The Shisanjing Zhushu* 十三經注疏 (*Commentaries and Explanations to the Thirteen Classics*). Modern Transcription of He, Yan and Xingbing's *Lunyu zhushu* 論語注疏, see (He and Xing 2016, p. 191). The *Shisanjing Zhushu* is an edition of the Thirteen Confucian Classics that includes all relevant commentaries from the Han 漢 (206 BCE–220 CE), Tang 唐 (618–907) and Qing 清 (1644–1911) periods. It was compiled by the Qing period scholar Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849) and became a canonical text for the study of Confucian classics.

¹⁷ See (Cheng 1990, p. 860). This is from Wang Fu 汪紱's commentary in the book *The Interpretation of Four Books* 四書詮義. His commentary in Chinese reads, “此稱子路有服人之行，非稱子路有斷獄之才也。” Wang was a scholar of the Confucian classics in the early Qing Dynasty. His interpretation and commentary on the Four Books are close to the school of Zhu Xi's commentaries on the Confucian classics which was officially accepted by the Qing court.

¹⁸ See (Cheng 1990, p. 539).

¹⁹ See (Legge 1861a, p. 76).

²⁰ See (Lewalski 1962, p. 334).

King Hamlet, marries the Queen, his sister-in-law, and ascends to the throne, while Queen Gertrude marries her brother-in-law shortly after the death of her husband. All these acts are severe violations of Confucian ethics. In this way, the translator assumes the target reader's perspective and criticizes the violation of Confucian ethics.

The Chinese title of *Cymbeline* is *Baigui Kemo* 白圭可磨 (*Spots on the White Jade can be Ground Off*), which relates to a classical allusion that comes from *Shi Jing, The Book of Poetry* 詩經. *Baigui* 白圭 (the white jade) is not a general white jade, but a ritual tool used by ancient kings and princes in some sacred ceremonies such as sacrificial offerings to heaven. The original line from *The Book of Poetry* reads, “白圭之玷, 尚可磨也; 斯言之玷, 不可為也.” ([Legge's translation] “A flaw in a mace of white jade, May be ground away, But for a flaw in speech, Nothing can be done.”)²¹ This play has a happy ending, with the villain Iachimo confessing his misdemeanors, the resolution of all misunderstandings and the reunion of lovers. Imogen forgives her father King Cymbeline and her husband Postumus, who mistakenly believed the slanderous claims that led to all the misdeeds. The Chinese title of the story, *Baigui Kemo*, uses the opposite of the original meaning, in that it highlights repentance and forgiveness.

The Chinese title of *King Lear* is *Zhicheng Weixiao* 至誠為孝 (*The Most Devout of Filial Piety*). An important theme that runs throughout *King Lear*'s story is the parent-child relationship, in which Shakespeare (and the Lambs) focus on the discussions of human nature, morality, and even philosophical thinking. However, Mason emphasized Confucian filial piety in the Chinese translation. After being rejected by his two daughters, King Lear does not want to stay in the palace anymore and runs into the wilderness amidst a storm.

In this passage, the Lambs' story reads, “Not that a splendid train is essential to happiness, but from a king to a beggar is a hard change, from commanding millions to be without one attendant; and it was the ingratitude in his daughters' denying it, more than what he would suffer by the want of it, which pierced this poor king to the heart; insomuch, that with this double ill-usage, a vexation for having so foolishly given away a kingdom, his wits began to be unsettled, and while he said he knew not what, he vowed revenge against those unnatural hags, and to make examples of them that should be a terror to the earth!” (p. 133)

Mason's translation focuses on the fluency of reading, but it also covertly emphasizes filial piety. For example, the paragraph above is translated as, “(King Lear) 愈思兩女辜負親恩, 愈有忿恨之意, 以致腦筋病發, 口出狂妄之言。又謂將兩女不孝之行, 顯揚於天下, 因此負恩之女, 實為天地所不容。” (p. 16) “The more King Lear thought that his two daughters had failed his parenting, the more resentful he was. His mind soon became ill, and his mouth spoke frenzied remarks. He added that the unfilial behavior of these two daughters should be announced to every one under heaven so that these two unfilial children ultimately be unacceptable to heaven and earth (the world).”²²

Lear becomes crazy and swears revenge at the ending part of Lambs' adaptation, while in Mason's adaptation, Lear vows to expose the unfilial behaviors of his two daughters to the general public. The translator presupposes that the entire story takes place in the context of a Confucian society, wherein unfilial behaviors such as Lear's two daughters' misdemeanors is condemned. In many places, the translators' settings of the cultural background reflect the realities in a Confucian society. Hence, it is no exaggeration to state that the translator rewrote Shakespeare's stories, especially the social and cultural setting in these stories, for the target audience. To attract more readers, Mason deliberately changed the title of Shakespeare's plays to Chinese four-character titles and interspersed Confucian ethical themes throughout the text. It can be said that Mason adopted a localization strategy that fully considered the reader's context even at the expense of sacrificing the spirit of the original plays. However, I argue that, while Mason's localization strategy is premised on the use of a common Confucian vocabulary, the translation itself also implies some Christian ideas. Therefore,

²¹ See (Legge 1871, p. 513).

²² This and subsequent English versions following Chinese quotations from Mason's translation have been made by the author of this article, translating the Chinese translation back into English.

we still need to examine how Mason's translation deals with the overt Christian religious message in Shakespeare's plays.

3. Portia's Invocation of "Mercy" and Christian Thought

Mason and Ha's cooperation in the translating of *Haiguo Quyu* aimed to persuade people to do good deeds for others, guide readers to "civilized" life and promote acting for the benefit of humanity. As Mason stated in his preface (in Chinese), "因其（莎劇）文筆雋雅，意義深厚，中間亦具良好之教育，善惡之報，釐然不爽，更指導世人講公義、嫻禮義、尚忠厚，以及一切人類有益之舉。" (p. 1) "Shakespeare's plays are elegant in style and profound in connotation, which produces a good educational effect on readers. The karma for good and evil should not be absent since this also guides people to adhere to the principle of justice, be acquainted with etiquette, admire loyalty and kindness, and be willing to do everything for the benefit of humanity." Although Mason was a Christian missionary, he did not directly promote Christian doctrine in the translation. Each of these twelve Shakespeare stories has a different focus, but Mason's Chinese translation highlights two major themes:

- (1) Sin and redemption/forgiveness. In his view, all faults are caused by the complete depravity of human nature, while redemption relies in Christianity as a transcendental power.
- (2) Good, evil and righteousness. Wicked people will be punished, and good people will eventually obtain justice. Mason's text is, however, quite similar to some exhortation novels (勸懲小說) guided by Confucian moral tenets and quite popular in the Ming and Qing dynasties. Though the starting points and the footholds of the two belief systems, namely Christianity and Confucianism, are different, the literary representation of these two types of work is somewhat similar.

Mason praised Shakespeare's plays, stating that they "are elegant in style and profound in connotation." His translation strategies, including changes in the narrative perspective, the usage of free-verse style, and literal translation, are intended to convey to readers the twists and turns of Shakespeare's stories. In *The Merchant of Venice*, some parts of the play, such as the love story of Portia and Bassanio, and the plot of law and benevolence, are controversial. In his preface to the adaptation, Charles Lamb said that the purpose of their own rewriting was to improve the moral quality of the stories for child readers and to mitigate the individual's tendency toward selfishness. The Lambs' adaptation thus proved to be an excellent textbook that laid the foundation for moral education. To make it easier for younger readers, the Lambs included judgments of good and evil deeds in their translations. When describing the characters' behavior, they included psychological descriptions to distinguish morally noble from corrupt acts that could not be found in the original play.

The adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice*, in which there were deletions of some episodes such as Portia's choosing among suitors, and Shylock's daughter Jessica's eloping with her Christian lover Lorenzo, was made by Mary Lamb alone. She kept one story-line, that is, Antonio's borrowing of money from the Jew Shylock and Antonio's trial. Mary Lamb tends to use adjectives with opposite meanings to enhance the difference of personality between characters. For example, she portrays Shylock as a greedy, insidious, cruel Jew, while Antonio is a charitable and merciful Christian. In the opening paragraph of the story, Mary Lamb says that the wicked Shylock is a "covetous", "hard-hearted man" who is "disliked by all good men," while the "generous" Antonio is "the kindest man that ever lived." The images of these two characters are sharply contrasted starting from their first appearance in the stories. In the trial scene, Mary includes several descriptions of Shylock's character, some of which were not in the original play, to strengthen the portrayal of his sinister intentions, describing him as a "cruel," "merciless Jew," who is "unfeeling," with "no mercy," and the "cruel temper of a curish Jew."

Mary Lamb used Shylock as a counter-example to sway readers toward Christian values like mercy, kindness and battling avaricious desire. In Shakespeare's original work, Antonio and Shylock have several disputes that epitomized the conflict between Judaism and Christianity. Mary Lamb simplifies this conflict into personality clashes between an avaricious Jew and a benevolent Christian.

At the end of the story, Shylock is asked to convert to Christianity to rectify his evil ways. Lamb's moral judgment is so straightforward that it has lost the complex discussion of the differences between the Old and New Testaments as found in the original play.

Aside from simplifying the conflict between Judaism and Christianity, Mary Lamb also turns to the "worldly" conflict between Antonio and Shylock. Jews are here depicted as greedy and cold, while Christians are merciful and kind. As already mentioned, Lamb's moral judgment did not anymore showcase the elaborate exposition of biblical comparisons in Shakespeare's plays because these were shifted toward cultural conflicts. In contrast, Mason did not wish to convey the differences between these two religions. He removed the plot regarding theological conflicts and racial contradictions between Antonio and Shylock and kept the plots simple. He believed that his mission was to convey the meaning of the story and provide essential moral instructions for readers. In order to truly understanding Shakespeare's plays, young readers would need to read the original texts.

By rewriting some critical plots details, Mason purposely minimized religious contradictions in his Chinese translation. For instance, almost all of the sections that include the word "Christian" in the original text were deleted. Only the word "Jew" is retained, to highlight Shylock's identity. When Shylock makes an appearance in the story, Lamb writes, "Shylock, the Jew, lived in Venice: He was a usurer who amassed an immense fortune by lending money at great interest to Christian merchants" (p. 92). Lamb's depiction of Shylock's lending money to Christians for usurious profits was omitted from Mason's translation, which simply reads, "(夏洛克)系以錢借出而求重利者, 家成巨富." (p. 1) "(Shylock) is a person who seeks to make a profit by lending money." In the scene of the trial, Portia says that according to the contract, the Jew Shylock can take a pound of flesh from Antonio's body, but cannot take even "one drop of Christian blood." (p. 102) Mason translated this sentence into "a drop of blood when the flesh is cut off," (p. 5) and also deleted reference to Antonio's identity as a Christian, which was highlighted in the original play. From the scene of the trial in the Chinese translation of *The Merchant of Venice*, Mason deleted almost all negative adjectives describing Shylock, the Jewish money lender, so the ethnic conflict is omitted. Therefore, in Mason's translation, Shylock is no longer a Jew who deliberately exploits Christians, but a wicked man by nature.

Mason's translation also changed the theme of the story. Shylock's hatred for Antonio is no longer an intense and intractable religious conflict, but a mere battle of interests. As a result, the contradiction between them is easier to resolve. If Shylock listens to Portia's exhortation and forgives Antonio, forgetting the grudge and giving up revenge, the conflict between the two can be ultimately resolved. In Mason's translation, the conflict between the two cultures or two religions that Shylock and Antonio represented is absent. Nevertheless, the purpose of this Chinese translation is to promote indiscriminate forgiveness and mercy, which is quite different from the Confucian emphasis on mercifulness in the literal meaning of the Chinese translation.

In Lamb's adaptation, Portia's exhortation to Shylock is taken closely from Shakespeare's original. Let us take a look at Portia's famous speech on the topic of Christian mercy.

In Lamb's text, "She spoke so sweetly of the noble quality of *mercy*, as would have softened any heart but the unfeeling Shylock's; saying, that it dropped as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath; and how mercy was a double blessing, it blessed him that gave, and him that received it; and how it became monarchs better than their crowns, being an attribute of God Himself; and that earthly power came nearest to God's, in proportion as mercy tempered justice; and she bid Shylock remember that as we all pray for mercy, the same prayer should teach us to show mercy." (pp. 98–99)

Mason's abridged translation is as follows, "上帝慈恩待人, 故人應效法, 彼此施恩。我等獲罪於上帝, 若求上帝寬待, 上帝必赦免之, 人若獲罪於我, 若求我寬待, 我亦當饒恕之。" (p. 4) "God is kind to others, so people should imitate the law and give each other grace. We all transgress against God. If we ask for God's mercy, God will forgive us. When someone offends me and later asks for my mercy, I shall also forgive him." In Lamb's adaptation, the purpose of Portia's speech is to open the possibility that Shylock will give up insisting on the terms of the contract and show compassion since it would be ruthless to enforce the contract strictly in accordance with the law. This way of dealing with the trial

embodies the Christian perspective of the Old and New Testaments, wherein mercy and forgiveness prevail over cruelty. In Mason's translation, he removed some parts of Lamb's adaptation that discuss the relationship between law and compassion.

Judging from Mason's translation strategy, Shylock's hatred of Antonio is no longer foregrounded by historical and religious worldviews. Whether or not the contradiction between the two can be resolved will depend on the presence of compassion and mercy. Moreover, the value of mercy does not only hinge on kindness towards others but also on offering forgiveness to those who offend oneself. The primary purpose of Mason's translation is to encourage people to forgive each other. At the end of the story, the Duke of Venice forgives Shylock's attempt to murder a Christian and returns his property upon his conversion to Christianity. The Duke says, “余當表明慈愛之性情, 以寬恕爾命, 與爾不用慈愛之心異。” (p. 5) “I should show the nature of my kindness (mercy), and forgive and save your life, which differs from your hard-heartedness without mercy.” This is quite different from Lamb's adaptation, wherein the Duke's forgiveness of Shylock is to show “the difference of Christian spirit.”

The idea of persuading people to do good deeds in Mason's translation is rooted in the principle of universal love that relates to mercy and kindness, and which has a broader meaning compared with Lamb's adaption. Mason changed the theme of religious conflict by omitting characters and sections of plot and “softening” the impact of these conflicts in his translation. Mason believed that, for young Chinese readers, topics such as religious and ethnic conflicts should be avoided. The more critical issue that Chinese readers needed to learn was forgiveness and mercy. Mason worked for The Christian Literature Society for China, where he was tasked with introducing Western knowledge to Chinese readers on one hand, and disseminating Christianity in China by means of these Western classics on the other. He needed to reach Chinese readers, which was why the translation sought common ground with Chinese experience. The Western background, which was puzzling to some Chinese readers, was eliminated, and the concept of universal Christian love was instead introduced.

This kind of discourse of benevolence and mercy closely relates to the translator's aim of moral education. While both the original and the adaption of *The Merchant of Venice* forced Shylock to believe in Christianity, the Chinese translation stresses the need to do good deeds, and to be kind and merciful. In these twelve stories, the translator repeatedly highlighted acts of mercy and kindness as a way of overcoming sinful behavior caused by jealousy, cruelty, and the wickedness of human nature.

Although each of Shakespeare's plays has a particular focus, several of these stories, when rewritten, are based on the common themes of suspicion and jealousy. Such is the case of Chinese adaptations of stories like *Othello* and *Cymbeline*. These stories end with all disputes being settled, the wicked person either forgiven or punished, and, most importantly, the virtuous characters obtaining their reward. The translators used these techniques to demonstrate that forgiveness and kindness “cure” evil in human nature. In the Chinese translation of *Hamlet*, the translator added this comment at the end of the story: “因哈太子夙為慈愛性質、溫柔品格之人, 並非偏好殘忍者可比。故衆人因其死而惜之, 倘能久存於世, 則丹麥之王位可就, 國其庶幾矣。” (p. 12) “Prince Hamlet has always been kind and gentle, and he is different from those who like cruelty. Therefore, everyone is deeply saddened by his death. If he could survive in the world for a long time, he would be able to sit on the throne of Denmark, and the country would be better.” Hamlet is a controversial figure because he also has negative traits like indecisiveness, hastiness, and brutality. In the Chinese translation, however, he becomes a kind and gentle prince. Mason preferred to use the Chinese word “ci-ai” 慈愛 (literally meaning “kindness and love” or “mercy”) in the translation of twenty stories in describing his favorite characters. The word “ci-ai”, however, is not appropriate for describing Hamlet. When using this word “ci-ai” in other stories, Mason described how some characters, especially those who were merciful and compassionate, could bridge God's attributes, particularly his love, to Chinese sensibilities.

4. The Reconfiguration of Themes

Haiguo Quyu reveals that Mason reconfigured themes highlighted in the Lambs' *Tales*. Quite similar to *The Merchant of Venice*, there are other stories in *Haiguo Quyu* which are related to themes

of mercy and forgiveness. The purpose of such kinds of stories is to show “the mercy of God.” The ultimate implication is that God forgives sinners and justice prevails. Even though there are some Christian references in the original plays, Shakespeare hardly uses a direct religious tone, let alone putting doctrinal issues to the fore. Among the twelve stories in Mason’s Chinese translation, many places emphasize on “tianli” 天理 (the Heavenly/Natural Truth) or “gongdao” 公道 (Justice or Fairness), meaning that there is a God who maintains justice in the world. Therefore, although there are many injustices, and good people might not obtain their recompense immediately, there is justice in the end. Whether good or bad, everyone gets what they deserve for their deeds.

At the end of the story of *Zhicheng Weixiao* [*King Lear*], Mason comments on the outcomes of good and evil deeds. When narrating the tragic fate of King Lear’s third daughter Cordelia, Lamb describes, “... the lady Cordelia, whose good deeds did seem to deserve a more fortunate conclusion: but it is an awful truth, that innocence and piety are not always successful in this world.” (p. 139) In Mason’s Chinese translation, “可德理亞在監內病故, 以此德孝兼備之人, 竟遭惡人之毒手, 但善者為惡者所致死, 世界亦所常有. 然善惡之報自在, 非不可信者也.” (p. 17) “Cordelia died of illness in prison. A person like her who has both virtue and filial piety is killed by a wicked man. However, good people are sometimes murdered by wicked ones, and this often happens in this world. Nevertheless, the reward for good or evil, as found in nature, is trustworthy.”

In Lamb’s adaptation, the phrase “an awful truth” acknowledges the difficult reality of a good person not rewarded for his/her goodness. In Mason’s translation, this is translated as “this often happens in this world.” After this, Mason attaches his own comments, “Nevertheless, the reward for good or evil [善惡之報], as found in nature, is trustworthy.” This sentence persuades people to be kind, and that the “reward for good and evil” will surely come in the end, and that the world is still fair.

Shakespeare, the Lambs, and Mason all have sympathy for Cordelia, and also condemned the other two daughters of King Lear. After King Lear’s two elder daughters have received the punishment they deserved, the Lambs’ adaptation concludes, “Thus the Justice of Heaven, at last, overtook these wicked Daughters.” (p. 139). Mason’s translation reads, “此乃天神懲罰兩不孝之女, 為罪惡之報應云.” “This is tianshen (the God of heaven)’s punishment of these two unfilial daughters as retribution (baoying; 報應) for their sinful behaviors.” Mason re-emphasizes that King Lear’s two wicked daughters are unfilial, and their behavior would eventually reap the punishment they deserve from the God of Heaven. The word “baoying” is derived from the Buddhist philosophy of karma, which was widely accepted in the Ming and Qing dynasties. Here, the word “Heaven” in Shakespeare’s original or the Lambs’ adaptation refers neither to “tianshen” nor to Buddhist karma. Mason added the idea of karma so that Chinese readers could easily understand it and translated “heaven” into “tianshen” 天神 rather than “tian” 天 or “shangdi” 上帝 (the Supreme God), deliberately avoiding being too straightforward in referring to Christian thought.

At the end of the story of *Qing yu yu Chou* (*Romeo and Juliet*), the translator adds his comments. The Lambs’ adaptation reads, “And the Prince, turning to these old lords, Montague and Capulet, rebuked them for their brutal and irrational enmities, and showed them what a scourge Heaven had laid upon such offences, that it had found means even through the love of their children to punish their unnatural hate.” (p. 261) This sentence has been shortened and translated as, “本城之王, 對二族長言, 兩家夙仇, 於理不合, 故上天不忍視之, 特以此法譴罰, 俾爾等消釋怨尤.” (p. 27) “The king of this city says to the patriarch of these two families, ‘it is unreasonable for your two families to have been enemies for a long time, so God cannot bear to see this situation and punish your two families in this way in order to dispel your resentment and complaints.’” (p. 27). Here, the phrase “God *buren*/has commiserating mind” (上天不忍)²³ does not exist in the adaptation. The phrase “God has a

²³ The phrase “上天不忍” comes from “先王不忍” in *Mencius*. In James Legge’s translation (Legge 1861b, p. 77), “Mencius said, ‘All men have a mind which cannot bear to see the sufferings of others. The ancient kings had this commiserating mind...’” (孟子曰: 「人皆有不忍人之心. 先王有不忍人之心...)

commiserating mind” shows that there is a personal and merciful God here who presides over the administration of justice.

The original theme of Shakespeare’s play *The Tempest* is forgiveness. Its Chinese translation *Hufeng Yinlei* sticks to the original theme and magnifies some religious content. The deposed Duke of Milan Prospero’s anger and resentment at the beginning of the story later becomes forgiveness and mercy and, eventually, he is restored to his title and returns to his territory. In the concluding paragraphs of the Lambs’ version, the King of Naples and Antonio ask for forgiveness from Prospero.

“‘Then I must be her father,’ said the king; ‘but oh how oddly will it sound, that I must ask my child forgiveness.’ ‘No more of that,’ said Prospero: ‘let us not remember our troubles past, since they so happily have ended.’ And then Prospero embraced his brother, and again assured him of his forgiveness; and said that a wise over-ruling Providence permitted that he should be driven from his poor dukedom of Milan, that his daughter might inherit the crown of Naples, for that by their meeting in this desert island, it had happened that the king’s son had loved Miranda.” (p. 15)

Mason’s translation reads, “(The King of Naples says,) 惟前已招怨於其父, 應請其父恕我。泡氏聞之曰: 舊惡不念, 前雖為禍, 後竟變為福, 吾儕宜喜之不勝。又曰: 慈悲之上帝, 能使憂轉而為樂, 且將來之樂, 較目前之樂更大。” (p. 35) “(The King of Naples says) I had previously become her father’s enemy, so I should have asked her father’s forgiveness first. Prospero hears this and says, ‘We should not recall the unpleasant things of the old days since though they were disasters, but now they have turned out to be blessings. We should all be happier, more than ever.’ And he continued, ‘The merciful God, he can turn worries into pleasures, and the joy of the future will be greater than that of the present.’”

In this part of the Chinese translation, most of the content can be identified with the text of the Lambs’ adaptation, but the following text regarding “the merciful God,” which cannot be located in the Lamb’s text, is appended by Mason. The Lambs’ text does not use words such as “God”, but refers to “a wise overseeing Providence”, which stands for the rulership of the Christian God over the world. The translator, however, directly rendered it as “The merciful God, he can turn worries into pleasures, and the joy of the future is greater than that of the present.” This eschatological commitment in the text comes from Christian theology. Thus, we see a follow-up translation that says, “安脫略大哭認過, 求兄赦免, 王亦承認前過。泡氏均恕之。” (p. 35) “Antonio cried, acknowledging the faults he had committed before, and begged for his brother’s forgiveness, and the King also confessed his previous faults. Prospero forgave them all.”

Mason deliberately supplemented some Christian admonitions to make the whole text replete with Christian meaning. There is also a short paragraph at the end of the story, with some traces added by the translator. Mason’s text reads, “故大眾登船返國, 泡氏恢復原有之公爵權位, 其女與太子在那破里城行婚禮, 更有團聚之樂。先憂也如彼, 後樂也如此, 是亦天道無常也。” (p. 35) “As a result, everyone boarded the ship and returned to the country, Prospero was restored to the original title of Duke, and his daughter and the Prince married in the city of Naples. They felt the joy of reunion. One has to go through so much sorrow to be able to get such happiness, which is also the uncertainty of tiandao (the natural/heaven’s way).”

At the end of the Chinese translation, the translator comments on the entire story from a Christian perspective. The phrase “先憂也如彼, 後樂也如此” “One has to go through so much sorrow to be able to get such happiness” echoes to the aforementioned Chinese phrase “慈悲之上帝, 能使憂轉而為樂, 且將來之樂, 較目前之樂更大.” “The merciful God, he can turn worries into joy, and the joy of the future is greater than that of the present.” The term “tiandao” 天道 of “tiandao wucang” (The uncertainty of the natural/heaven’s way) has profound meaning in Neo-Confucianism. “Tiandao” is an essential category in Song Ming Neo-Confucianism. Some scholars argued that Neo-Confucianism during the Song and Ming Dynasties further elaborated terms like 性 (Xin/Nature) and 天道 (tiandao/heaven’s way).²⁴ Chen Chun 陳淳 (1159–1223), a student of the Neo-Confucian master Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200)

²⁴ See (Chen 1992, pp. 10–11; Chen 2014, p. 154; Hou et al. 1984).

defined these basic terms in his book *北溪字義 Beixi Ziyi (Neo-Confucian Terms Explained)*.²⁵ Zhu Xi's interpretations of Confucian Classics were officially recognized by the Qing court. Scholars during the late Qing and early Republican periods like Ha Zhidao were likely to be familiar with terms such as "tiandao, or the natural/heaven's way".

The word "tiandao" in the story, which in the English text is "Providence", refers to God's rule over the world and everything in it, or "God's will", which has profound theological significance in Christianity.²⁶ Thus, Mason's comment may be regarded as a summary and moral reflection on the story. Mason wanted to show the Christian "God of Mercy", and that that God will administer justice and restore faith and a hopeful future to believers. Mason used these stories to demonstrate forgiveness and justice, and these two are mutual proofs of each other. In short, Mason and Ha Zhidao utilized the canonicity of Shakespeare's play in promoting Christianity in the Chinese context. Mason's preface emphasized that the purpose of the translation of the book is to highlight "the reward of good and evil." Nevertheless, the book is not a traditional Chinese book that exhorts people to be kind in the general sense. Instead, the translators' rewriting is supported by Christian ideas. In the translators' view, the purpose of the translation was to "persuade the readers to do good deeds for others, guide them to know civility and promote every good thing for the benefit of humanity." The generalized concept of exhortations, "for the benefit of humanity," is the cover of Mason's preaching of Christianity.

Quakers believe that everyone has "the Light of Christ" within them, so a missionary like Mason, when compared with Christians from other denominations, places special emphasis on human values such as mercy, pity, peace and love, and these noble ideas espoused in Shakespeare. Mason's translation is designed for Chinese readers who might follow Christianity after reading the translation, especially in the chaotic beginnings of the new Republic period when the old system (of the Qing Dynasty and Neo-Confucianism) that had been overthrown had failed in maintaining and promoting universal goodness. As for those Christian convictions, this translation will undoubtedly make them more convinced of universal ethics and the omnipresence and omniscience of the God of Christianity. In short, Mason's translation can be viewed as a missionary activity in the cultural sphere of China through his promotion of the ethical ideals in Shakespeare, which are at the same time Christian ideas.

5. Conclusions

When Shakespeare's plays were introduced to modern China, they first came in the form of Lamb's adapted stories. *Haiguo Quyu*, translated by Mason and Ha Zidao, was the first missionary translation of the Lambs' Shakespeare tales and thus had a unique value as a seminal form of cultural exchange between the East and West, and dialogue between Confucianism and Christianity. The purpose of making this Chinese translation was to introduce Western classics to young Chinese readers and to enhance their interest in reading the original Shakespeare plays. Despite the use of classical Chinese, the two translators used an intelligible expression, as well as an indigenous strategy, in translating Shakespeare stories. They did their best to convey the intent of Lamb's adaptation which, on the one hand, showed the characteristics of Western literary classics, while on the other hand persuaded people to be good and do more good deeds. Although Mason was a Christian and the book's publisher was The Christian Literature Society for China, Mason used a localized translation strategy, hiding Christian significations throughout the text. He thus rewrote Shakespeare's plays into Chinese Christian literature in the form of short stories. Mason's translation contains twelve stories, some of which adopted classical Confucian allusions. Behind the localized translation, however, are implicit Christian messages. Mason consciously veiled the Christian message, reduced the portrayal of characters with overt religious overtones, and diluted religious conflicts among characters. In turn,

²⁵ See (Chen 1983, pp. 38–41). As Chen Chun elaborates in the first chapter of his book, "天命, 即天道之流行, 而賦於物者, 乃事物所以當然之故也。" [My back translation] Providence is the widespread dissemination of the Tao of heaven, and endows things with forms, which is also the reason why things become as such." See (Chen 1983, p. 1).

²⁶ See (House 2018, p. 623).

he emphasized mercy, forgiveness, and universal justice—all of which point to Christianity. Thus, it can be said that Mason used the Chinese translation of Shakespeare to spread Christianity, albeit indirectly. After the publication of Mason's translation, a certain impact of the translation may be seen. In 1929, Madge D. Mateer and Wang Do K'wi re-translated Mason's version into vernacular Chinese and published this under the title of *Shashibiya de Gushi* 莎士比亞的故事 (*Shakespeare's Tales*). As well as being a missionary, Mateer was also engaged in education. When she re-translated Mason's version, she did so for middle school students in the schools she founded. In other words, Mateer's re-translation was adopted as a textbook in some missionary schools.

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