

# Historic Classic as Global Interculture: ??? Literary Heart Carving Dragon and its Translations

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## 6 Abstract

7 One: on the ??? he classic ??? is distinct and unique on at least three counts. One, this  
8 book is China's first major literary criticism, out about 501AD, centuries before medieval era.  
9 Two, as poetics is on poetry, so this literary criticism is careful scrutiny of literary writings,  
10 and all China's writings are literary. Three, ??? dares to be comprehensive, packed tight in  
11 poetic rhythm. Literary Heart Carving Dragon is a dragonish pivot in China, epitomizing  
12 Chinese writing and thinking. Born here now, the "dragon" soars far beyond here now in life's  
13 throbbing heartbeat of poetry; poetry is defined as packed rhythm jumping alive, humming  
14 tuneless tune, alias dragon self-carving in today's literary heart. The invisible dragon-beat is  
15 carved out ?? into the "literary heart ???" of China millennia young. Liu Xie ?? cannot help  
16 but write out such lifeact, intimate infinite, into Literary Heart Carving Dragon ??? in 50  
17 gem-chapters, orderly sparkling, compactly poetic, solid soaring. Thus Liu gives us poetic  
18 literature on Chinese literature; his Literary Heart Carving Dragon is itself the carved dragon  
19 soaring-crisscrossing into the literary heart of the dragon-cosmos, vast all over in history, to  
20 stun us to stabilize us, in joy breathless, by hitting the heart of literary beauty dragon soaring  
21 The book covers China's cultural horizons from its cosmic principles (chapters 1-4), spreading  
22 poetically (chs.5-9) in various genres (chs.10-25), elucidating inner-outer structure (chs.26-35)  
23 and patterns of progress of writing (chs.36-44), to concluding in historical trends of the times  
24 (chs.45-50). The whole book is a sparkling gem shining throughout China worldwide. II. Two:  
25 on two English Translations Now we are readied to consider translations by Shih and Yang.  
26 We first a. specify the ideal of translation, in whose light to scrutinize b. Shih, then

*Index terms*—

Ignoring this exigency of tight style-match, to arbitrarily add translator's explanations, adds alien legs to Liu-snake, Liu Xie is alive, critical and sophisticated, weaving rhythmically various senses and authors-he is punchy poetic. Therefore, he must be rendered poetic alive in English as he is in Chinese. Liu-translation is an English "dragon carved" by a poet in Liu's Chinese poetry, "literary heart" (English) to "literary heart" (Chinese).

33 2 1 Rainer Schute and John Biguenet in *Theories of Translation*, University of Chicago Press, 1992, say,  
34 translation lets the author talk in the target language as if the author knows the language. For more nuances  
35 and minute complexities, see Umberto Eco, *Experiences in Translation*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press,  
36 2001, and William Radice and Barbara Reynolds, eds., *The Translator's Art*, NY: Penguin Books, 1987. Here,  
37 the sole sine-qua-non is hit hard: China's dragonrhythm vigorous must transluscently soar throbbing in other  
38 tongue translated. 2 The ridiculous image of "drawing snake, adding legs ??" in *Warring States Stratagems*  
39 ("Qi Stratagems") ???, ??? (117/57/15-17 in ??????? 1993), is justly applied to botched translation here,  
40 for "state stratagems" amount to shrewd tactics of translating the situation of present danger into targeted  
41 prosperity. The whole *Stratagems* volume collects many gripping stories of how the situational translations  
42 astutely transpired, during the two and a half cutthroat centuries of Warring States.

<sup>43</sup> to botch up this translation that now turns ridiculously leg-disfigured, immobilizing the Liu-snake alive  
<sup>44</sup> dragonish. Sadly, such fatality is baldly shown in Shih and Yang. Now, let me unpack all this.

45 Liu's book is woven by the how of poetic rhythm into a what-said tapestry of each idea into others; what-said  
46 is part and parcel of how-saying. Any Chinese prose is poetic, a carved dragon soaring, a philosophical poetry;  
47 missing the how of literary rhythm misses what is said. This how-what unity is the normative principle of  
48 translating all Chinese writings historical, argumentative, literary, and fictive. The translator must be a poet  
49 embodying China's literary heart to carve out a comparable dragon-poetry in English, to write what is said in  
50 how it is said, as the Chinese original writes poetic beautiful.

51 The translator must exhibit poetry in English, translucently seeing the Chinese dragon alive. Explanation  
52 must be separated from translation. Let us begin with Shih's translation. Reading Shih's translation tastes some  
53 thin soup of de-zinged Chinese spirits thick vibrant. Shih is barely reminiscent of distant skeletal Liu Xie, as Shih  
54 even confuses prosaic explanation with strictly lyrical translation. Flatly wordy, Shih has lost echoes of rhythmic  
55 punches of the terse original, killing Liu gutsy.

56 Shih's Introduction begins with general description of poetry and music in ancient China, to wander into  
57 "Chinese philosophy" of poetry as of moral utility, as Confucius appreciates music. Mencius' subjectivity is then  
58 added, with "fostering the vital spirit or breath" moral, continued with Hsüntzu repeating Confucius' moralistic  
59 socialism. Then Chuangtzu appears to criticize conventional morality and language, to stress shen (the spirit or  
60 divine) and mystical transcendence-all in vague if not deviated description. Thus it goes on for 30 pages.

61 Un-clarified platitudes are thrown about, and general terms today are used to explain ancient text, as profuse  
62 words fill pages. Bulky fluffy generality results, trite stale. We keep asking, "So, what else is new and not trivial?"  
63 In the last page but one, some later praises of the book are thrown in, and the last page closes with the difficulty of  
64 understanding terms of Chinese writers, to be resolved by understanding them in context, (surprisingly) citing I.  
65 A. In vague verbosity, all Shih's translations are of content only, cut and dried, omitting all the original colors and  
66 throbs as dispensable frills, to bring a set of skeleton-pieces out of the closet of the past. The whole Introduction  
67 and translations lay flat, scattered, bare and loose. I am sorry to have been harsh on Shih; still the magnificence  
68 of the original shows through his translation thinly mostly accurate, shorn of original rhythmic echoes (even in  
69 sense) as it is, so many points left to desire in each phrase, as it does.

70 The problem is that a word has a core-sense with halo-nuances, and Chinese word's core-sense constantly  
71 shifts with usage-contexts alive as Greek Proteus elusive allusive, and Liu Xie is the worst Chinese Proteus. To  
72 capture these subtle nuances requires poetic sensitivity to persistently trail the original poetic vigor. To transfer  
73 word for word kills the sense alive, and no explanation may clutter translation, as explanation is no translation.  
74 It is sheer joy to hit the Chinese just right in English, but it is quite a difficult art to hit it.

### 75 1 b) Yang

76 Let us now go to Yang's translation. Two bulky Yang volumes are due to cramming in the pages Chinese  
77 and its English equivalent (not quite), such as original Liu Xie's text, its Chinese translation ??, and its English  
78 translation. Yang's volume in English alone may be about Shih's size. Yang's General Preface is a rough historical  
79 survey, not on what China is, what the West is, and poorly translated into English, though its major stress on  
80 global interculture is correct. Yang's Introduction did touch on Liu's book's importance, but mostly on what it  
81 says, no why or how it is important, much less its signature characteristic of tight rhythm, and is again vaguely  
82 translated into English, often even surprisingly different from its Chinese equivalent.

83 Yang's long Introduction ?? on what ???? said (pp. 17-83, the Chinese version followed by its slightly different  
84 English version) is lucid, coherent, informative, and even ingenious, rather a delight to read, though it tends to  
85 be vague due to lack of definition of key terms, "genre," "imagination," etc., and Yang's whole setup deviates  
86 from Liu's. I must resolutely resist the temptation to present my summaries of it, "adding legs to Yang's snake." I  
87 should only mention one critical point: All Yang's introduction and translations are a "snake" drawn ingeniously  
88 prosaic and dead-set, not Liu Xie jumping alive exquisite.

89 Here are my miscellaneous comments. Yang' footnotes at the back are well researched, but his citations are  
90 hard to locate. Yang in p. 19 is good, but I would put it the other way: Dao is root of human, human is root of  
91 literary pattern, and so the literary exhibits humanity and heaven and earth.

### 92 2 c) Yang and Shih

93 Curiously (for I don't know why), Yang's Introduction is more appropriate (not precise) than Shih's, while Shih's  
94 translations are more accurate (not appropriate) than Yang's. Yang's simplified syllabary ?ä½?"? illicitedly lumps  
95 ? with ?, ä¼?" with ?, and so on.

96 More, Shih's odd "Glossary" replaces Yang's careful "Bibliography," while Shih's footnotes under each  
97 translation page are helpful, lacking in Yang. Shih's title-translations of chapters are more in rhyme with the  
98 original than Yang's illicitedly explanatory. Translations by Shih and Yang missed "how-expression intrinsic to  
99 what-expressed" that turns Liu sparkling coherent and alive; both translations are flat flabby, not the original  
100 poetry lush and tight.

101 A simple example is here. Liu Xie concludes every chapter with a short sharp poem he calls "tsan ?" a chanting  
102 sum-up. Shih sensibly leaves it untranslated, just explaining it with Chapter Nine ?? (12, n, 26), while Yang  
103 brutally puts it as "summary," to kill the chanting poetic aura at the core of tsan, a glorious finale of each chapter,  
104 as chorusing to round up Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. This instance exemplifies all Yang's barely correct, brutal

105 insensitivity in all tsan that, overinterpreted, turn into partial translations. Actually both translators' tsan are  
106 disasters.

107 It is easier to pursue Liu's skeletal "meanings" than re-presence-ing, in the novel world of English, Liu's Chinese  
108 vigor, his full-blooded "sense" punchy, luscious, and complexly fresh. Worse, even such skeletal pursuit is elusive  
109 as trailing a tiny boy jumping alive, as we vainly try to "download" his primordial bonemovements into our adult  
110 "chart" decently systematic, as he shouts to fight his favorite "monster." Downloading Liu spanking alive, Shih  
111 thinks he captured one aspect of Liu's "meanings" as Yang thinks he did another.

112 All this while, a third party beside both scratches his head, "Is this a real Liu?" Somehow their tones are off;  
113 their tunes are felt alien to Liu. Such bewilderingly elusive but clear mis-renderings are embarrassingly displayed  
114 as "translations," as we read them with Liu's original text beside. Still, remaining inaccurate, explanatory, and  
115 out of Liu-rhythm as both are, Shih's translation seems less so than Yang's.

116 And the list of my comparative complaints goes on. I said, e.g., that Yang is better in Introduction, while Shih  
117 is better in translation. My criteria (detailed in TWO, a. above) are poetic thrust as Liu's original, noexplanation  
118 as translation, and appropriateness, etc. But such comments have no end, as anyone can see. Still, the point has  
119 been made by just this much amount of comments. I had better cut off such a list at this point.

### 120 **3 d) Failing ideal**

121 In sum, Shih and Yang are literalistic unliterary, not literary poetic as Liu, missing this "as." To re-present ???  
122 alive, we need its comparable 5 poetic rendition in English, attending to the translation closely matching up  
123 to how its Chinese original is written in vivid rhythmic vigor ever fresh. For example, "?? divine musings" is  
124 flattened by Yang as "imagination." ??? says it is "big-scaled heart-travel ??????" to form a "trinity" with  
125 "hidden reverie ???" and "depth thought ???" 6 Even my entire meta-comments here are more literary-careful than  
126 literal-analytical, less Aristotelian than reminiscent of the literary and tight Warring States Stratagems ???; all  
127 this while, my comments are logical critical and involved passionate. Interestingly, a comparable view is expressed  
128 even more forcefully by Lattimore, That is translation in close match with the original literary vigor. The reason  
129 is obvious. As Liu insists and executes in ???, literary presentation portrays typical features of living; literary  
130 Liu hits essentials of life homo-cosmic. Translation must be as literary alive as Liu. Trying for literal accuracy  
131 to the original Chinese, literalistic translation ironically turns unliteral to Liu. 7 'Ancient and modern, at home  
132 and abroad' in ????? Chu Tzuch'ing: Complete Works, ??????, 1995, p. 212. 7 Richmond Lattimore, The  
133 Poetry of Greek Tragedy, Johns Hopkins University ?ress, 1958; ??rper Torchbook, 1966. The last chapter is  
134 punchy revealing.

### 135 **4 Three: on Intercultural Prospect**

136 It is time to take stock. Our grand finale is made of a. reviewing the translation-ideal and its actual failures so  
137 far, b. precisely via which we envisage our positive prospect today in global interculture.

### 138 **5 a) Ideal and failures**

139 Liu Xie delightfully crisscrosses writings to cross-refer sages ancient and contemporary into a network subtle rich,  
140 poetic peculiarly Chinese; he thereby alludes to the ubiquitous human living homocosmic. Liu Xie nods to a  
141 Greek sea-god Proteus shepherding seals, changing his self liquid as sea, to dodge capture until hung on to, to  
142 reveal future truths vast as sea. His oceanic elusiveness alludes to oceanic truths. 8 In sum, Chinese writings  
143 sing sense in tunes situational, as detailed by ??. Liu Xie's poetic web is Chinese Proteus fleeing our capture,  
144 too ancient allusive for us today. Still, Liu is not beyond our grasp. Let me explain.

145 In my opinion, Liu's ??? is poetic crisscrossing, so inter-involved in sense, in rhythm, and in allusions as to  
146 be well-nigh untranslatable, but it does not mean we cannot understand it. for example, the Bible is a mixed bag  
147 of literary beauty in many ancient languages; it has been variously translated, and reading many of them with  
148 sensitive care surprisingly enables us to approach it more than we can expect, as we hear great sermons based  
149 on translated Bible passages. Similarly, reading many imperfect translations of ??? awesomely unapproachable  
150 enables us to appreciate its cultural magnificence beyond we initially suspected; thus it excitingly nourish our souls  
151 everywhere. 9 "Tune is mood groping for its logic" (Robert Frost); mood is attunement (Heidegger) 10 8 Ocean-  
152 elusive, ocean-truthful, Proteus the sea-god of the future is interestingly portrayed in The Oxford Companion  
153 to Classical Literature, ed. M. C. Howatson, 1991, p. 470. 9 See "???? On 'poems express intentions,' in -,  
154 ?, ??????, ?72, pp. ??85-355. with things around. So, in order to mean ??962, indexes on pp. 518 (stimmen,  
155 Stimmung), 526 (attunement), and 551 (mood). Heidegger is so poetic as to inspire another translation of his  
156 Being and Time by Joan Stambaugh, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996. Heidegger can claim  
157 to be today's Liu Xie. Both translations agree that mood is attunement for Heidegger.

158 See Stambaugh's comparable indexes on p. 424 (attunement) and 453 (mood). We have quoted US Frost and  
159 German Heidegger to show how Liu Xie's dragon-poetic principle is supported just right, felt logic must be in  
160 the writer's mood in tune with the mood of things. Our mood means; it must sound good to mean good sense.  
161 How-said means what -said, and meaning must be in things' mood. All this makes for dragon-poetry pulsating  
162 sensible sense, good sense just right, and in things.

163 To capture such mood-sense is to translate into today, to sing to understand, poet for poet, mood to mood  
164 to feel that way together. This is how "literary heart" of mood "carves dragon" soaring rhythmic vigorous in  
165 matters homo-cosmic. Explaining all this kills the poetry of translation felt together in the right mood, never  
166 analytically explained in the general field. It is thus that literalistic-explained translations of ??? fail, fail in  
167 mood in tune and in sense. It is so serious, so sad.

## 168 6 b) Positive global prospect

169 Still, Shih and Yang are not exceptions. Being an avid collector of translations, I closely observe how literary  
170 renderings of ??, ??, and even the poems of I hardly need to mention stellar elucidators Waley, Legge, Giles,  
171 Creel, Watson, Chan, Lau, Dobson, Wilhelm, Spence, Snyder, Graham, Watts, etc., all so close to the Chinese  
172 originals and so helpful, and so far from the originals. The reason is simple, and alarming. None has captured  
173 China's tight poetic dragon-thrust intrinsic to the literary heart of what is said, as performances shape musical  
174 compositions, though Waley and Graham vaguely approached the saying-said unity unawares.

175 I am happy that ??? says Chinese sentences are rhythmic ??, tightly packed ??, I am sad as he says translation  
176 caters to the taste of audience, not faithfully conveying the translated work, as all authors and translators I know  
177 say. 11 He criticized Tagore, English translation of Li Po's poems, and translated Arnold's "Rugby Chapel,"  
178 12 even abroad; the dragon-principle is basic to humanity, intercultural, global. 11 See Eco dictating various  
179 modes of translating his volumes, and Emil Brunner thanking his translator for consulting with him. Umberto  
180 Eco, *Experiences in Translation*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001 ?? Emil Brunner, *The Mediator*,  
181 London: Lutterworth Press, 1949, pp. 11, 17. And the list goes on. and his own sentences are 12 ????, ?, ????,  
182 ?89, ?161, 162, 164-165, ?203-221, 275-279 and ????, ????????, 1993, 2:228-330. His Chinese translations read  
183 like his usual writing. Does it show his good translations? I omit comments on his critiques of English ??? knew  
184 English well, summing up English books, translating English translations.

185 On Chu, see many pages in ????, ????????, 1996. passages, wrote on English influences, and wrote vivid  
186 travelogues of the West. 13 Poetry sings sense-music; China is the culture of poetic music. It behooves us to  
187 spread globally China's poetic-musical thinking embodied in ????, as Chinese musical depths are heard throbbing  
188 in German Schumann. China is as musical as Schumann is poetic, as his tuneless tuneful "Abendlied" But neither  
189 paid special attention to translation as such.

190 Noteworthy is Roger Ames's skillful incorporation of China's "idea-system" (J. Huxley) in his various  
191 translations of ?ç¶?", ??, é?"?ç¶?", and many others. Ames' "translations" are actually an excuse for unobtrusive  
192 initiation of global interculture. We are grateful. Of course, nothing is easier than to quibble over the adequacies of  
193 his translations, and his explanations of Chinese idea-system, but we must remember, he has just initiated global  
194 interculture; he is the world's only translator firmly and tacitly to commence interculture. For his pioneering  
195 initiation we are grateful deeply, rightly.

196 On the whole, imperfect these translations are as I have complained so far, every bit of their elucidations still  
197 adds to our stunned appreciation of the Chinese original vast deep, intimate infinite, and rhythmically magnificent  
198 beyond even its Chinese explication (as ?? in Yang's volumes show). We are deeply grateful to all translators for  
199 their decades of meticulous assiduity. We their beneficiaries owe them this realization: ??? with its translations  
200 are not an end but our means to interculture worldwide, as Ames nudges us to stare at to initiate.

## 201 7 14

202 In sum, dragon-translations of Chinese writings remain in our hand in our literary-hearts as our urgent task of  
203 interculture toward the future worldwide. We have job to carve alive, beginning today, inspired by our great  
204 echoes in deep sensibility the faintly rhymed rhythms of ???.

205 It is thus that the most local is the most cosmopolitan; cultural locals are the pride of the global ubiquitous.  
206 Interculture global advocates the heartfelt echoes of cultural localities, Liu Xie with Proteus, Schumann, the  
207 Bible, etc. We carve out various English dragon-translations of the literary heart of ????, to use them as our  
208 poetic mood-means to global interculture, excitingly to nourish our souls everywhere.

209 13 See Chu's sparkling penetrating travelogue throughout the Western hemisphere in ????, ????????, 1996,  
210 pp. 269-327. Wen was educated in Chicago, Colorado Spring, and NYC during 1922-1925, ????, ??: ????,  
211 1993, I: 1-9.

212 14 Listen to channel 9, wonderfully done, in "Meister des Bogens: Georg Kulenkampff: Kleine Stücke für  
213 Violine und Klavier oder Orchester," Podium 4. None even played this rare deep piece, much less so deeply  
214 movingly-to the best of my knowledge.

215 predecessors with their mixed accomplishments so vast illustrious. Our daring dragon-translations of China,  
216 however imperfect, perfectly dawn our cosmopolitan con-cord-hearts-together-worldwide. Now, let us soberly  
217 tighten up the whole bit so far. Someone may demur, "Why bother with moldy China? We are too busy for such  
218 silly nonsense." We can gently remind him. Technical knowledge ?? we are so proud of came from primordial  
219 life-wisdom ??, to facilitate wisdom. Sadly, as a teenager despises his parents, knowledge tends to disdain of  
220 wisdom, to turn inhuman human, a tragic monster worse than useless.

221 The "moldy" China warmly pats us on the shoulder, pointing to the glorious dragon soaring, carved out by

222 our literary heart of primordial humanity; ???? is the primal sine qua non to our basic humanity, the be-all and  
223 end-all of all. Everything, including technical knowledge, begins and ends here.

224 Our busy-ness that mocks this life-basic wisdom mocks our self to death, as shown by our technical knowledge  
that brings on ecological disasters to bring down everything, including our proud technical knowledge. 15 <sup>1 2 3</sup>



Figure 1:

Figure 2:

225 4  
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<sup>1</sup>Why the original Chinese order in the title is reversed in Yang's English translation is not told. 4 I. A. Richards, *Mencius on the Mind: Experiments in Multiple Definitions*, Westport, CT: Hyperion Press, 1932.

<sup>2</sup>Historic Classic as Global Interculture: ???? Literary Heart Carving Dragon and its Translations

<sup>3</sup>Of course, what is comparable can only be felt, discerned, by those at home in both cultures of translation and translated, and agreement among the bicultural is not determinate. Still, what is comparable has a rough parameter and has to exist to tell an apt good translation.6 See the fabulous "????????? 'Ocean wide, sky vast' and

<sup>4</sup>We do belatedly begin to use technical knowledge to redress disasters wrought by technical knowledge, but this redress is dictated by life-wisdom, not by knowledge.



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227 Disdain of "moldy" life-wisdom, since time immemorial, commits proud suicide so silly so tragic. Now, what  
228 is sillier, technical knowledge today or ancient moldy life-wisdom in China's ?????

229 Thus promotion of China's ???? is never silly but indispensable to save the world from the brink of total  
230 destruction. Promotion of ancient wisdom, dragon soaring at the core of literary heart of humanity, is global  
231 interculture. So, China-promotion via its translation is the absolute essential of global interculture to save the  
232 world. This conclusion is inescapable, indicating China-translation to be our historic task indispensably urgent  
233 worldwide, right here and now today.

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