

**HONG
YING**

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AND ALL

IN WAR

WITH TIME

FOR LOVE

OF YOU

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**LIVING
SHAKESPEARE**

A collection of essays.

FOREWORD

CIARÁN

DEVANE

Why is it that four centuries after Shakespeare's death, the world is still talking of Romeos, Iagos and Lady Macbeths? They stand today as shorthand for love, jealousy and monstrous ambition – at once simplifying these consuming emotions and acknowledging how complex they are. Shakespeare was our finest creator of human archetypes.

But archetype is too dry a word. His characters are living and breathing people, whether kings, queens, jesters or plotters. Their task, during the two hours on stage, is to illuminate our personal struggles, and offer a cathartic lightening of our own human burden.

In this essay one of world's best-selling writers, Chinese novelist Hong Ying, looks back to the Cultural Revolution. She probes freedom of expression and sexuality in contemporary China, beginning and ending her journey with Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. These poems seem to create a space for individuality, through their extraordinary use of language.

This essay is part of a collection, for which we asked some exceptional public figures – Nobel Laureates and best-selling authors, musicians and politicians, actors and activists – to reflect on Shakespeare's continuing relevance to today's burning issues. The collection is part of *Shakespeare Lives*, our extensive, year-long programme marking the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death.

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HIS

POEMS

HAD A REAL

EFFECT

ON MY LIFE

AND MY

WRITING

7

INTRODUCTION

SHAKESPEARE

IN CHINA

Despite the long and rich history of theatre in China, Shakespeare was not translated into Chinese until 1903. Even then, his works were not translated directly – author Lin Shu worked instead from a copy of Charles and Mary Lamb’s 19th century prose adaptation *Tales from Shakespeare*. Shu’s version, which bore the title *Strange Tales from Abroad*, was popular with Chinese readers. Its text formed the basis for the first Chinese-language production of a Shakespeare play, a production of *The Merchant of Venice* staged in 1913. Other translations, including a version of the *Sonnets*, appeared in the 1920s and 1930s. After 1949, a number of Shakespearean plays were staged by state-run theatre companies and drama academies, but the vast majority of Chinese productions have taken place since 1980. An International Shakespeare Festival took place in 1986, attracting at least 100,000 audience members to over 70 live performances. A second festival took place in 1994, and Shakespearean plays are now regularly performed by drama companies across China.

In collaboration with Chinese theatre makers, writers and scholars, the Royal Shakespeare Company is currently embarking on an ambitious project to produce new theatrically-viable, actor-friendly and audience-accessible translations of Shakespeare’s First Folio over the next decade, leading up to the 400th anniversary of its first publication in 2023.

'AND ALL IN WAR WITH TIME FOR LOVE OF YOU'

by Hong Ying

Translated by Nicky Harman

As a child, I grew up in the Ye Miao Xi slum, on the south bank of the Yangtze River in Chongqing. The slum consisted of three courtyard mansions halfway up the hillside, once owned by rich folk who fled after 1949, and turned over to poor families by the Communist government after the takeover of Chongqing. A dozen or so families shared a courtyard with a communal kitchen. There were no bathrooms and one public toilet for the entire locality. Every evening, we had to carry our toilet bucket out for the night-soil collector to take away. Still, everyone felt that this was much better than life in the old society.

We lived in Courtyard Six and one of our neighbours in Courtyard Seven was a man we called Fat Uncle. Fat Uncle was in his early 40s and worked in a tobacco factory. He was married but his wife lived in a village and hardly ever came to town. He was a cheerful man, always friendly and his work mates often came around to his place to eat, drink and chat. One day, in the year I started junior high school, the police came and arrested him. Later, he was paraded through the streets, a board hung around his neck accusing him of 'buggery'. His face was thinner and his eyes had lost their sparkle. People said he had had sex with an apprentice. The young man in question had just finished high school and had a copy of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. Fat Uncle was fascinated and got him to read these foreign poems to him. He was reported and sentenced to 20 years in prison.

I was fond of Fat Uncle and full of sympathy for him. I was also filled with curiosity about these poems, although I never managed to get my hands on a copy, either from the school library or from anyone around me. But I never forgot the name Shakespeare.

When I was 18, I left home and spent the next ten years, travelling all over China and mixing with writers and artists. One day I came across some of Shakespeare's poems in a mimeographed booklet:

Then the conceit of this inconstant stay
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,
Where wasteful Time debateth with Decay
To change your day of youth to sullied night;
And all in war with Time for love of you,
As he takes from you, I engraft you new.¹

This Englishman and these poems written so long ago, seemed to mirror my life at the time. I read on, fired with emotion, unable to put the book down, focusing on those lines that expressed resistance to society and noting them down. His poems had a real effect on my life and my writing.

Title '*And all in war with Time for love of you*' from *Sonnet 15*

¹ *Sonnet 15*

I sought out his tragedies and his comedies and enjoyed them. But most of all, it was his *Sonnets* that touched my soul. For the whole of the 1980s, the name Shakespeare became the mantra for our generation. We dubbed him respectfully 'Old Man Sha', and venerated him alongside other great writers like Emily Dickinson, Tolstoy and Balzac. Talking about classic Chinese poets like Li Bai and Du Fu was regarded as rather ordinary, while someone who mentioned Shakespeare was clearly a genuine artist.

At the end of the 80s, I met my first husband. He was a lecturer at a university in the UK, in China to attend a conference. He quoted Shakespeare's *Sonnet 116* to me:

'Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.'²

He told me that the lines were as sweet and beautiful as I was. I was very gratified. He told me that he had been sent to work in a coalmine when he graduated, because his family were considered bad elements and had been accused in involvement in the May 16th Conspiracy of 1968. Ten years later, when the Cultural Revolution was over and the universities re-opened, he was keen to take postgraduate entrance exams but did not have a single English language book. He asked his younger sister for help and she managed to send him a volume of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. He worked his way through it, day by day, falling in love with Shakespeare in the process. He came top in his exams, obtained a place at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing to do research on Shakespeare and left the mines behind him.

My then-husband became China's foremost Shakespearean scholar; after we married, I discovered that what he really loved in the *Sonnets* was the darkness and despair, which he once said could consume a person.

Over time, I realised that he was not the man I had taken him for. The feeling was mutual and we parted company. When I think back, he is always linked in my memory with Shakespeare: we no longer warred with time for love of each other, because our love was dead.

After my mother died in 2006, I wrote an autobiographical novel, *Good Children of the Flower*, which I dedicated to her. I wrote about the three years of hunger (1958-1961), the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and the lives of my family and our neighbours, taking up where *Daughter of the River* (1997) left off. (Naturally, I wrote about my former husband, telling the truth, and saying that we are still comrades.) Chinese people easily forget life's cruelties and disasters and how they got through them, once the events have passed. Chinese people may look hard as steel – we are ground down by the cruelties of life – but inside we are still human; however, we have not reflected or repented the past.

I remember when Fat Uncle was taken away, all his neighbours in his courtyard denounced him as 'scum'. No one had any sympathy for him.

² *Sonnet 116*

In the 1950s, homosexuality was punished with sentences of twenty years or more in prison. Fat Uncle was arrested in the seventies, and he still got twenty years.

Homosexuality is first recorded in China as long ago as the reign of the Yellow Emperor. During the Han Dynasty, almost every emperor took a male lover. The Emperor Wen of Han had a favourite, an official by the name of Deng Tong and bestowed on him the right to mine ore and mint his own money. As a result, Deng Tong became richer than the aristocracy and is the man who has made most profit from sex in the whole of China's history. Male homosexuality declined during the Tang and the Five Dynasties, revived during the Song, declined in the Yuan and revived during the Ming, when everyone, from the Emperor Zhengde down to officials and Confucian scholars, enjoyed male lovers, especially actors. The Qing (Manchu) Dynasty was no different and many novels, for instance *Precious Mirror for Gazing at Flowers* (trans. 1849), describe homosexuality in great detail.

Before 1949 China was a paradise for homosexuals, with the 'Oscar Wildes' of Europe drawn there like fish to water. In my novel *K: The Art of Love* (1999), I wrote about Sir Harold Acton, with whom the hero, Julian Bell, had an affair at one time. Sir Harold, a good friend of the British Queen Elizabeth, taught at Peking University in the 1930s and, together with the Chinese poet Chen Shixiang, translated a selection of talented Chinese poets into English. Their *Modern Chinese Poetry* was published in 1936. The pair, with Cyril Birch, also translated the famous romantic masterpiece, *The Peach Blossom Fan* (1976). Acton stayed for two more years after North China fell to the Japanese, returning to Britain in 1939. Chen Shixiang went to the University of California, Berkeley in the USA.

Acton's homosexual love affair with Chen is never mentioned in China to this day, with the exception of a piece by my ex-husband, which touches on it. Acton, a famous homosexual, preferred young Chinese men. In his novel about expatriates in Beijing, *Peonies and Ponies*, his hero falls in love at first sight with a young man, Yang, because 'he appealed to my imagination... he is a living symbol of China.'³ During the summer holidays, Chen Shixiang and his fellow students visited Sir Harold and the latter asked Chen to go and live with him. Chen 'bravely' agreed. The reason for this 'bravery' may simply be that he feared the other students would go green with jealousy, as if a student today were to move in with a foreign teacher, unimaginable as that is. However, it seems that Chen's fellow students harboured few jealous suspicions. Chen moved in on Acton's birthday and he and the other students celebrated with Acton. In the garden after dinner, Chen played his flute. This all happened at Peking University, China's top university, the pinnacle of young people's aspirations.

Chinese youth are familiar with Shakespeare now because he is a set author in universities. My present husband has just been to see the UK's Royal

³ Harold Acton, *Peonies and Ponies* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1941)

Shakespeare Company's Henry plays in Beijing, at the National Theatre for Performing Arts and he told me how amazed he was by the enthusiastic audience response. To the young people laughing at Anthony Sher's Falstaff, the play was 'fresh', he said, as if it was being performed for the first time. There is no denying the Bard's magic still works on the educated, cosmopolitan Chinese audiences of today. They have as much enthusiasm for his plays and poetry as we did a generation ago, the difference being that for my generation, the act of reading Shakespeare was forbidden or even dangerous.

A few years ago, I contributed a piece to Bookworm founder Alexandra Pearson's *Beijing: Portrait of a City* (2009), in which I described how 'lalas' (lesbians) met furtively in coffee shops, while male gays could only meet in toilets. I wrote about the sufferings and humiliations of these people abandoned by society, some of whom were even driven to take their own lives. For them, Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, with their description of the dark side of sex and gender, had a very personal meaning. They found consolation in the message conveyed by Shakespeare's poetry, that there is only love, without distinction between male and female.

'Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds
Or bends with the remover to remove.'⁴

Nowadays, the situation for 'lalas' and 'tongzhi' (gays) has greatly improved, although it is still not ideal. The majority of parents will feel distress when they learn that their son or daughter is homosexual and same-sex relationships are not officially recognised. The legalisation of same-sex marriages is still a far distant prospect, although if one partner is a foreigner, that can offer a way out. However, there is a now tacit acceptance of homosexuals who at least no longer have to worry about being put in prison. Of course, now that there is less risk, fewer are reading Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, seeking in them the voice of forbidden freedoms and consolation in their loneliness.

In order to write this article, I put *Sonnet 29* on my WeChat (Chinese equivalent of WhatsApp) for some friends. Some liked it, some loved it, especially those who were homosexual who commented that reading this kind of poem put them instantly in touch with others like themselves, true soul-mates and lovers. The heterosexual friends found the sonnet over-simple; it meant little or nothing to them. But 70 per cent of my friends felt that nowadays, just as during the Renaissance, his poems are a wake-up call, a reminder to discover and value humanity above obedience to God:

'For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.'⁵

When I think of China today, I wonder who thinks like that. I asked my millions of Weibo (Chinese equivalent of Twitter) fans: 'Is there anyone who

⁴ *Sonnet 116*

⁵ *Sonnet 29*

would 'scorn to change their state with kings'⁶, and all for love?' No matter what the results of my survey, I personally still remember how, when I was young, lonely and a social outcast, Shakespeare seemed to offer me a voice; his poems had humanity, and they had feelings, and they challenge us, no matter when and where we live. I can see in my mind's eye Fat Uncle and his young worker, one reading, the other listening with intense concentration in the dim lamp light:

'And all in war with Time for love of you,
As he takes from you, I engraft you new.'⁷

Every year, when I go back to Chongqing, I ask about Fat Uncle. Some say he served his sentence but could not find work when he was released, and moved away, who knows where. I never saw him again. If he is still alive, he must be in his 80s. I sincerely hope that he is enjoying his declining years, and that the spirit of Shakespeare continues to shine on him.

China's homosexuals have been out in the streets of big cities in recent years, demonstrating against discrimination and for the legalisation of gay marriage. In 2013, CNN's Steven Jiang reported that:

'A lesbian couple in Beijing recently saw their marriage application rejected by local officials, and a video of their futile attempt made the rounds on the internet. Activists also complain about periodic government crackdowns, citing a recent case in May. In the central city of Changsha, a 19 year old activist leading a street rally against homophobia was jailed for 12 days. Local police accused him of 'holding an illegal protest'⁸ in a statement.'

The Chinese media estimate that more than 100,000 gay men have married heterosexual women in order to appease their family and maintain their normal lifestyles at the same time. Sociologist Li Yinhe has called for the authorities to put a stop to what she calls the 'tragedy' of these 'gay wives' who will never be loved by their husbands, just like the village wife of Fat Uncle.

Postscript

In 1997, the crime of 'hooliganism' as defined in Article Six, Clause 160 of Chinese criminal law, was abolished. Homosexuality was no longer defined as 'hooliganism' although most law courts still meted out the same punishment for homosexual behaviour.

In 2002, Beijing Number One Middle Court, in a final ruling on a case involving homosexual rights to a reputation, overturned a judgment which declared that homosexuality was 'a sexual perversion rejected by the general public', thus offering redress for homosexuals for the first time in a legal judgment, although the People's Republic of China Marriage Law explicitly lays down that same-sex couples may not register their marriages.

Clearly, China has taken a step forward where homosexuality is concerned.

⁶ *Sonnet 29*

⁷ *Sonnet 15*

⁸ Steven Jiang, CNN, 30 June 2013

“为了爱你，我将和时间对抗”

虹影

我的童年在中国重庆长江南岸贫民窟的野苗溪度过，江边半山腰上有三座有钱人在1949年逃离大陆时的院子，共产党掌管这个城市后，把院子分配给穷人居住。十几户人家同住大院子里，共用一个大厨房，虽然没有浴室、整个地区共用一个公共厕所、每天傍晚端出马桶来倒给收粪便的人，人们依然觉得日子过得跟旧社会不同。

我家所在六号院子，邻居胖叔住在七号院子，他四十岁出头，是烟厂工人，有农村老婆，不过少来城里。他成天乐呵呵的，对人也好。同事们常在他家吃喝唱歌聊天。我上初中那年，有一天警察把胖叔抓走，后来被游街示众，脖子上的木牌上写着鸡奸犯。他的脸瘦了一圈，眼睛里没有平日的光亮。人们说他与徒弟睡觉。徒弟刚从学校毕业，手里有本莎士比亚的十四行诗集，胖叔好奇，让徒弟给他读这洋人的诗。结果他被人告发了。胖叔被判刑二十年。

我喜欢胖叔，心里对他充满同情，也对那本诗集充满了好奇，虽未从学校图书馆或是周围人那里借到这本书。可从那天起我记住了莎士比亚的名字。

十八岁时，我离家出走，有十年在路上，在中国南北方与各路艺术家相遇，有一天我在一个油印手抄本上读到莎士比亚的诗：

“于是这瞬间停留的诡计，
让你青春的容颜出现在我面前。
而残暴的时间和腐朽商议，
要把你青春的白日变成暗淡黑夜，
为了爱你，我将和时间对抗，
它从你身上夺走的，我会重新嫁接。”
(第15首)

他这个英国人，那么早写的诗，仿佛是我那时生活的写照，我读得心潮起伏，不能自拔，专挑他十四行诗里那种对世界和人有对抗性的句子读，记在笔记本上。不能不说，他的诗影响了我的生活和写作。我找来他的悲剧和喜剧，很喜欢，但不如他的十四行诗那么直接地融入我的灵魂。上个世纪整个八十年代，莎士比亚的名字几乎成了我们那一代人常挂在嘴边的名字，我们尊称他莎翁，把他和艾米莉·狄更生、托尔斯泰、巴尔扎克等大师并列。谁提李白、杜甫，大家不觉得这个人了不起，反之谁提莎翁的名字，大家会认为这个人真正的艺术家。

八十年代末，我遇到我的第一个丈夫，他在英国一所大学当教授，到中国来开会时，与我相识。他随口而引“爱并不因瞬息的改变而改变，它巍然矗立直到末日的尽头。（第116首）”说莎翁的诗的甜蜜美妙如我，我听了心里很高兴。他告诉我他大学毕业后，因为家庭成分不好，被人整，打成五一六分子，被下放到一个煤矿里挖煤，十年过去，到文革结束，国家恢复高考和研究生考试时，他想参加这考试，以便逃离煤矿，身边没有一本英文书，找妹妹帮助，妹妹找到一本莎翁的十四行诗寄给他。他天天苦读这本书，爱上莎翁，以第一名的成绩考上中国社会科学院研究莎翁的研究生，离开了煤矿到了北京。

与他结婚后，我才发现这个中国最有名的莎翁诗研究专家，其实更喜欢莎翁诗里的黑暗和绝望，有一次他说，莎翁诗里的那种黑暗和绝望会吃了人。

渐渐地，我感觉他不再是一个原来那个人了，可能他也觉得我不是原来那个人了。与他分开后，回想他时，总会和莎翁联在一起，我和他都没有为了爱对方，而和时间对抗，因为爱情在我们心里已经死亡。

我母亲2006年去世后，我为了纪念母亲写了一本自传体小说《好儿女花》（Good Children of the Flower），其中写到文革和大饥荒，写到了《饥饿的女儿》之后我家人及邻居们的生活，当然也说到我的前夫，道出了真相，前夫与我至今如同路人。生活的残酷，灾难之后，如何度过，中国人容易忘记，中国人外表被残酷现实磨成钢铁，内心呢，我们也是人，可是我们没有反省，我们没有忏悔。

记得胖叔被抓走时，他院子里的邻居都在指责他，说他是流氓，没有一个人同情他。

五十年代对同性恋处罚是二十年以上重刑，胖叔被抓的七十年代，仍被判刑二十年。

同性恋在中国最早出现，始于黄帝时代，几乎每个汉代皇帝都有个把同性恋对象。汉文帝宠幸邓通，赐给他开采铜山自铸钱币的权力，邓通因此而富比王侯，成为中国历史上因“色”而获益最多的男人。唐朝五代，男色之风渐衰，宋朝重新兴盛，元代又衰，明代又复盛，从正德皇帝到下面的大小官员儒生，喜男色，尤其宠男戏子。清代情势并不逊色，不少小说，如《品花宝鉴》，都是对同性恋的仔细描写。

1949年之前，中国是全世界同性恋的最后一个乐园，欧洲的王尔德们来到中国，如鱼得水。我曾在小说《K》里写到哈罗德·阿克顿爵士 (Sir Harold Acton)，与我的男主人公朱利安·贝尔有过一段交往。他生前曾是英女王伊丽莎白二世的好友，三十年代在北京大学教书，他和中国学生诗人陈世骧一起，将有才华的中国诗人的作品译为英文，收入《现代诗选》在伦敦出版。华北沦陷日军手中后，他在北京留了两年，1939年回到英国。他和陈合译中国爱情名著《桃花扇》，陈后来去了美国加州伯克利大学。

关于阿克顿和陈世骧的同性恋情，在中国至今无人提及，只有我前夫早年写有一文略略说到，阿克顿是著名的同性恋，最喜欢年轻的中国小伙，他在描写外国人在北京的小说《牡丹与野马》中写主角爱上中国男孩杨，对杨一见钟情，因为“他符合我的想象，是中国活生生的象征”。暑期陈世骧与同学一起去拜访阿克顿，阿克顿建议陈回校与他同住，陈“勇敢地”接受了邀请。之所以称“勇敢”，即使没有其他因素，也略似今天学生住到“外教”家里，有点不可思议，其他同学恐怕会嫉妒得眼睛发绿。然而陈的同学似乎没有过多猜忌。陈在阿克顿生日前搬来，与同学一起为他庆生。饭后在花园里，陈吹起了笛子。那一切发生在北京大学。北京大学，是中国大学的顶尖，是中国年轻一代最向往的学府。

现在的中国年轻人对莎士比亚的名字并不陌生，大学必学。我的现任丈夫刚看了斯特拉特福德最近的《亨利四世》、《亨利五世》在北京国家大剧院的循环演出，他跟我说，他很惊讶于观众的热烈反响。他说，对那些对安东尼·舍尔演绎的福斯塔夫报以笑声的年轻人来说，他们所观赏到的是“新奇的”，仿佛是首次演出。不可否认，对这些时下受过高等教育更国际化的人群而言，莎翁这位伟大的吟游诗人的魔力更奏效于他们对莎翁的爱戴，或者说对他的戏剧和诗歌的热情，与老一辈的中国人、我们这一代的人相同，只不过，对于我们这一代人来说，读莎士比亚是被禁止，甚至是有危险的。

不到十年前，我为北京老书虫汇编的《北京—城市画像》写了篇文章。我形容“拉拉”们在咖啡厅里躲躲闪闪的见面，而男同性恋们只能在厕所里幽会。我写到这些被社会遗弃的人们，他们受的屈辱，苦难，甚至有人因此而结束了自己生命，那些都只是发生在不久之前的事情。莎翁十四行诗里关于性和性别的阴暗面的描述对于他们来说是感同身受的。而他们暗无天日的生活，可以从莎翁诗中传达的信息里找到些许慰藉，那就是只要有爱，无所谓男女。

“我绝不承认两颗真心的结合
会有任何障碍；爱算不得真爱，
若是一看见人家改变便转舵，
或者一看见人家转弯便离开。”

虽然不是最理想，但拉拉和同志们现在的境遇好多了。多数父母在得知自己的子女是同性恋的时候还会陷入痛苦。同性关系不被正式承认。中国还远远谈不上同性婚姻合法化（其中一方如果是外国人，或许有可能被网开一面），但默许是有的，至少不用担心要因此进监狱。当然，没有了风险，也就没有了我们那代人读莎翁的十四行诗，以此寻求被禁止的自由的声音，汲取对他们的孤独的慰藉。

为写这篇文章，我把莎翁十四行诗29首放在微信上问好些朋友，尤其是同性恋的朋友，他们回答不一样：有的喜欢，有的非常喜欢，说是读他的这类诗，一下子可以找到同路人、真正的知音和爱人。异性恋的朋友大都觉得他的诗简单，对他/她无意义。不过百分之七十的朋友，觉得他的诗不管是在文艺复兴那个时代，还是当下，仍是有警示作用的，重视人的发现、人的价值，之前一切都听从上帝。

“一想起你的爱使我那么富有，
和帝王换位我也不屑于屈就。”

想想现在的中国，哪个人会这么想，我想问我的微博里几百万粉丝，谁会因为有爱人的爱，就算是帝王之位也不换？不管这调查的结果多少人会这么做，但我记得自己少女时代读莎翁的诗时，感觉他是替我这样的孤独人，社会边缘人，发出了声音，他的诗里有人性和各种各样的感情，而且不管在哪个国家哪个后代，都是一种新的召唤和挑战。难怪邻居胖叔会喜欢，我可以想象当年他的年轻徒弟在昏暗的灯下，给他读莎翁诗的情景，一个专心地读，一个专心地听：

“为了爱你，我将和时间对抗。
它从你身上夺走的，我会重新嫁接。”

我每年回家乡重庆时，都打听胖叔的下落，有人说他刑满出狱后没工作，后来不知搬到哪里去了。我没有再见过他。如果还活着，他该八十多岁了，我衷心祝愿他有个好晚年，因为莎翁之魂会照耀他，把从胖叔身上夺走的，他会重新嫁接，还给胖叔。

中国同性恋近年来频频在大城市走上街头游行，反对社会歧视，要求婚姻合法化。CNN记者Steven Jian曾专门报道过：一对女同性恋的结婚申请被当地官员部门拒绝了，但申请的视频在互联网上被曝光，而引起反响。在长沙，一个同性恋在一条街上集会反对悲剧发生，被判入狱12天。当地警方在一份声明中指控他“举行非法集会”。中国媒体估计有超过10万同性恋者和异性结了婚，以此安抚家人和维护他们正常的生活方式。社会学家李银河呼吁那些部门终止“悲剧”，“同妻”现象在中国出现，他们是假设的妻子，得不到丈夫的爱，如同我文章中提到的胖叔的农村的妻子。

额外的话

1997年新《刑法》取消了第6章第160条的“流氓罪”条款。不再明确同性恋行为是“流氓罪”，但当时大部分地方的司法审判是按“流氓罪”来惩罚同性恋行为的。

2000年2月，北京市第一中级人民法院在一起涉及同性恋名誉权案件的终审判决中，撤销了一审判决中“同性恋目前在中国被认为是一种性变态行为，不被公众接受”的判词，从司法审判的角度第一次为同性恋“平反”。《中华人民共和国婚姻法》中明确规定，同性无法办理婚姻登记。

以此看来，中国在同性恋问题是向前进了一步。

ABOUT THE WRITER HONG YING



Hong Ying began her writing career in China during the early 1980s, as a poet. She relocated to London in 1990, where she settled as a writer. Best-known in English for the novels *K: the Art of Love* (for which she won the Rome Prize), *Summer of Betrayal*, and *Peacock Cries*, Hong Ying achieved great acclaim for her memoir of the Cultural Revolution, *Daughter of the River*.

Hong Ying has been published in 30 languages and has appeared on the bestseller lists of numerous countries. A number of her works have been adapted for television and film.

In her writing, Hong Ying explores powerful human stories of hardship and from history. She has shed light on the lives of marginalised groups struggling for visibility – and for compassion – in contemporary China.

Hong Ying now lives in Beijing and Italy.

Translation by Nicky Harman

Nicky Harman is a prize-winning translator of fiction, and occasionally non-fiction and poetry, from Chinese. She has translated work by Hong Ying, Xinran, Jia Pingwa, Han Dong, Chen Xiwo and many more. She also organises translation-focussed events, writes occasional blogs, mentors new translators, teaches summer schools, and has judged translation competitions. She co-runs the *Read Paper Republic* short story project, on the Chinese literary translation website Paper-Republic.org, works with the Writing Chinese project at the University of Leeds, and with the London Free Word Centre, and tweets as the China Fiction Bookclub @cfbcuk. She is also co-chair of the UK Translators Association.

The British Council has commissioned a collection of essays by eminent thinkers around the world, from politicians to Nobel Prize-winning writers, interpreting themes in Shakespeare's work for today.

Living Shakespeare is a dialogue between exceptional public figures and Shakespeare's works in relation to the burning questions which each writer faces. The collection demonstrates Shakespeare's relevance, from the stage, to our homes, to the staterooms of power.

The issues raised include optimism in diplomacy, female empowerment, listening, racial integration, and a response to extremism.

The essays are part of *Shakespeare Lives*, a global celebration of the influence of William Shakespeare on culture, language, education and society.

The British Council, the GREAT Britain campaign and an unprecedented number of partners are commemorating the 400th anniversary of his death with a series of initiatives including a unique online collaboration, performances on stage and film, exhibitions, public readings, conversations, debates and educational resources for people all around the world in 2016.



With thanks to our partners The Open University and BBC World Service.