

# Detecting Meaning with Sherlock Holmes\*

## Sherlock Holmes in Translation

based on slides by Uganda Kwan

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# SH in China

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- SH introduced into China in 1896 (光緒二十二年)
  - Shiwu Bao 《時務報》 Chinese Progress
  - Serialized (non-fiction) magazine
  
- Chinese modernization was not uniform
  - “Why Should We Learn from the Barbarians?”
  - China resisting foreign knowledge 1840-1860
  - Partial absorption 1860-1890 (self strengthening movement)
  - Conscious learning 1895-
  - Wholesale westernization 1911-1917

# True Crime

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➤ The first stories were:

1. 《英包探勘盜密約案》 1896.9.27–10.27 (Vol 6-9) NAVA
2. 《記伧者復仇事》 1896.11.5-25 (Vol 10-12) CROO
3. 《繼父誑女破案》 1897.4.22—5.12 (Vol 24-26) IDEN
4. 《呵爾唔斯緝案被戕》 1897.5.22-6.20 Vol27-30) FINA

➤ Rewritten from first person to third person

- Matches the Chinese court case/ kung-an 公案
- common in late Imperial China
- this matches the readers' taste and social convention

➤ Subsequent translations treated the stories as fiction

# 夏洛克·福爾摩斯

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- Xiàluòkè Fú'ěrmósī
- Translations came in through Hokkien
  - Sherlock Holmes
  - “歇洛克. 阿尔唔斯” 1895-6  
Translated by Lin Shu (1852-1924) from Fu Jian province who spoke Hokkien  
this would be pronounced “ho-ee-mo-see” or “hock-ee-buah-see”
  - 休洛克福而摩司 1902
  - 福尔摩斯 1904 — 5

## Cheng, Xiaoqing (程小青)

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- Cheng Xiaoqing (1893-1976) was the most popular author of Chinese detective fiction in the first half of the twentieth century
- He translated Holmes stories into both classical Chinese and then vernacular
- He then went on to write his own crime series set in Shanghai
  - Huo Sang ( $\approx$  Sherlock)
  - Bao Lang ( $\approx$  Watson)
  - The duo lived in a spacious apartment on Aiwen Road, where Huo Sang played the violin (badly) and smoked Golden Dragon cigarettes as he mulled over his cases.
- a 1940s edition of his Huo Sang stories ran to 30 volumes!

# Sherlock Holmes in Japan

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- Sherlock Holmes reached Japan for the first time in 1894: an abridged Japanese version of "The Man with the Twisted Lip" was published in the January issue of a magazine "Nippon-jin".
- In April 1899, the newspaper "Mainichi Shinbun" began a three-month series featuring an adaptation (by unknown translator) of "A Study in Scarlet"
- Between 12 July and 4 November of the same year, the "Chuo Shinbun" newspaper published the first complete Japanese translation of a Holmes story, "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes", in a translation by Gaishi Nan-  
yo.
- The first book-length translation appeared in 1907.
- After that, Sherlock Holmes was always popular in Japan, but it was not until 1955, twenty-nine years after Conan Doyle finished his last Holmes stories, that the translation of all 60 stories by Ken Nobuhara appeared in Japan.

# Bibliography

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- Christian Metz (1974) *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema* [Essais sur la signification au cinéma], Oxford University Press, 1974