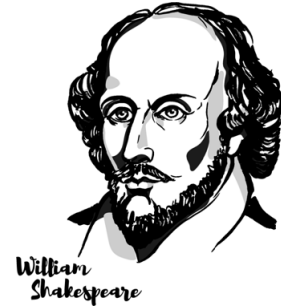


Chinese gift stirs up drama

adapted from an article by Valentine Low

- 1 "Beauty," William Shakespeare wrote in *Love's Labour's Lost*, "is bought by judgement of the eye." Whether he would have anything to say about the aesthetic merits of a Chinese pavilion given to his birthplace in a gesture of international friendship is another question, but either way, the residents of Stratford-upon-Avon are unimpressed.
- 2 A public garden in the town has become the focus of a dispute since the council approved plans to install an Oriental pavilion. The 22ft structure is a gift from Stratford's twin town of Fuzhou, which is so enamoured of its Shakespearian links that it wanted to donate the Peony Pavilion to Stratford. Some have accused the council of accepting the offer because it did not want to offend the Chinese government. Some residents have said that the 'eyesore' will distract drivers, bring tourists to a quiet area and encourage rough sleepers. About 45 letters of objection were submitted to the council.
- 3 The pavilion, which could be in place by April, is a reference to a play by Shakespeare's Chinese contemporary, Tang Xianzu. *The Peony Pavilion*, written in 1558, is seen as the Chinese equivalent to *Romeo and Juliet*. Tony Jefferson, the council leader, called the pavilion "a tangible symbol of the international status of Stratford".



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