

The Life and Works of Ai Qing (1910 -)

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by

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E.H.

ABBREVIATIONS

- Beifang 北方 (North)
- Ta sizai dierci 他死在第二次 (He died)
- Kuangye 曠野 (Wilderness)
- Xian gei xiangcun de shi 獻給鄉村的詩 (Village)
- Liming de tongzhi 黎明的通知 (Dawn)
- Ai Qing Xuanji 艾青選集 (Selected works)
- Baoshi de hongxing 寶石的紅星 (Red star)
- Ai Qing shixuan 艾青詩選 (Selected poems)
- Haixia shang 海峽上 (Cliff)
- Ai Qing shuqingshi yibai shou 艾青抒情詩一百首 (100 lyrics)
- Ai Qing (Zhongguo xiandai zuojia xuanji 中國現代作家選集) (Ai Qing)
- Shilun 詩論 (On poetry)
- Shi xin minzhu zhuyi de wenxue 新民主主義的文學 (Literature of a new democracy)

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INTRODUCTION

The Literary Movement in China, which began in 1917, received a sudden burst of life during the May Fourth Movement of 1919, because this movement was actually spurred on by a general desire for socio-political changes rather than purely literary considerations. The desire for reform, prevalent since the second half of the Nineteenth Century, now manifested itself on the literary scene. As a challenge to all old forms and concepts, the vernacular was elevated to a literary status by Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962), its most prominent advocate. Started in Xin Qingnian 新青年 (New Youth) 1/, this development speedily spread among young writers, and the vernacular was soon adopted in the writing of essays, novels, plays and poetry.

The first collection of modern Chinese poetry, published in early 1920, was Hu Shi's Changshi ji (Experimental verses) 2/. This was soon followed by the works of Yu Pingbo 俞平伯 (1889-) 3/, Kang Baiqing 康白情 4/ and others. Although the avowed aim of these poets was

1. The vernacular was first used in Vol. IV of New Youth (1917).
2. Published in March, 1920 by Dong A 东亚 (East Asia) Library.
3. Yu's first poetry collection Dong Ye 冬夜 (Winter nights) was published in March 1922.
4. Kang's first poetry collection Cao Er 草兒 (Grass) was also published in March 1922.

to reject tradition and create something which reflects the realities of contemporary life, their works often unconsciously betrayed the deep-rooted influence of classical Chinese poetry, especially in their choice of diction and the evocation of mood and atmosphere. Plays and novels written in the vernacular had a long standing tradition in China. But poetry written in the vernacular was something new. 5/ It was thus not easy to achieve a complete and abrupt break with tradition, even though that was what poets at that time tried to do.

The 1920's was a period of tremendous poetic activities and experimentation. With the emergence of poets of the calibre of Wen Yiduo 聞一多 (1899-1946), Xu Zhimo 徐志摩 (1895-1931) and Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892-1978), modern Chinese poetry became firmly established. Wen, Xu and their fellow poets of the Crescent Society were well versed in the poetic traditions of China as well as the west, and it was they who first experimented with various western poetic forms on a significantly large scale.

The Crescent Society was not the only group to borrow western poetic forms and techniques in writing modern Chinese poetry. Guo Moruo acquired the expansive style of free verse popularized by Walt Whitman (1819-

5. Huang Zunxian ^{黃遵憲} (1848-1905) was probably the first poet to experiment with the vernacular, but with the exception of folk songs, he worked within the limits of traditional poetic forms.

1892), while Li Jinfa 李金髮 (1900-1976) and Dai Wangshu 戴望舒 (1905-1950), the so-called Symbolist poets, brought the exotic flavour of modernist French poetry to the Chinese literary scene.

Towards the end of the 1920's, the influence of political ideology was increasingly felt in literary circles. The ideological split in the literary field was completed with the establishment of the Association of Leftist Writers in Shanghai in March, 1930. While poets such as Xu Zhimo, Feng Zhi and Dai Wangshu continued their pursuit of aesthetic perfection, Guo Moruo and other poets of the Association of Leftist Writers saw it as their duty to propagate the socio-political functions of poetry. Whatever a writer's political inclination was, there is no denying that it had a significant influence on his creative outlook.

Amidst the theoretical wrangling and arguments of the 1930's, a poet emerged on the literary scene, untouched by these controversies. One may even say that he arrived there almost by chance. Ai Qing 艾青, now a sure favourite for the office of China's Poet Laureate if there is one, did not even think of becoming a poet. He was little influenced by the contemporary literary schools of thought. Though he was considered a Leftist writer when his name was firmly established, many of his early works were published in Xiandai 現代, usually considered a

stronghold of the Symbolists.

In Ai Qing's own words, he composed poetry because he felt the need for self expression ^{6/}. The choice of form and subject matter was entirely determined by his own outlook, experiences, and whatever knowledge of European literature he had acquired. In this sense, Ai Qing is very much an individualist amongst his contemporaries. This was not merely due to the fact that he was placed in enforced isolation because of imprisonment. Even after the Communist victory of 1949, when he was firmly established as one of the most prominent literary figures in China, he remained comparatively a loner. Many of his more intimate friends were in the art rather than literary circle. And yet, a large part of his poetic career was shaped by political ideologies and forces.

Ai Qing is thus an interesting subject in the study of the interaction between objective (especially political) forces and a poet's own sense of mission. Even when politics does not interfere directly with literature, there are always literary trends and schools of thoughts which would guide and influence a writer; but the writer would have a choice. However, when politics actively intervenes in the development of literature, for how long would a highly individualistic, but also extremely

6. Conversation with Ai Qing.

patriotic poet like Ai Qing follow the lead of the revolutionary drumbeat? What would be the effect on a poet's development when political demands were in conflict with his creative instinct? In attempting to chart the stylistic development of Ai Qing's poetry, this study hopes to look for answers to the above questions.

Ai Qing's poetic career is a long one, and his recent output has been prolific. As a study of this nature is limited in time as well as space, I have decided on the year 1957 as a convenient stop in my analysis. From 1957 to 1978, Ai Qing was forced to remain silent for 21 years. After he resumed writing in 1978, his style, though terser and frequently reveals a more philosophic vein, remains basically the same as his works of the mid 1950's. Therefore I hope that an analysis of the stylistic developments and changes of Ai Qing's works up to 1957 will adequately illustrate the forces which shaped his poetic career.

CHAPTER ONE BIOGRAPHY 1 /

Coming into this world, first of all we are men, then we write poems.

-- On Poetry

In the mountain areas of Yiwu 義烏, about twenty-five miles northeast of Jinhua 金華 District, Zhejiang 浙江 Province, there is a small village called Fan 天 Jiang 田 蔣. Ai Qing was born here on 27th March, 1910 (the 17th day of the 2nd moon according to the Lunar calendar).

Given the name Jiang Jinghan 蔣正涵, styled Yangyuan 養源, he nevertheless preferred to use his alternative name Haicheng 海澄.^{2/} He was born into a comparatively well educated and well to do family. His grandfather Jiang Wenpeng 蔣文蓬 had been a student in Jinhua Secondary School 金華中學堂 and was an Imperial Candidate. His father Jiang Zhongzun 蔣忠樽 (1839-1940), also known as Jiang Jingjian 蔣景鑒, inherited the family land as well as a joint interest in a sauce and wine shop 'Yong fu xiang' 永福祥 and a general store 'Jiang

1. The main references for this biography are two tables of chronology, one sent to me by Ai Qing in spring, 1980 (Hereafter referred to as CT1), compiler unknown but with minor corrections by Ai Qing, and one given to me in the summer of 1981 (Hereafter referred to as CT2), which formed the basis of the preliminary biography prepared by Yang Kuanghan 楊匡漢 and Yang Kuangman 楊匡滿. Another table of chronology referred to is the one by Ai Qing's brother Jiang Haitao 蔣海濤 in Ai Qing zhuanli 艾青專集 (Special collection on Ai Qing) (Jiangsu: Renmin Pub.Co. 1982). Lo Hanchao's 駱寒超 Ai Qing lun 艾青論 (On Ai Qing) (Zhejiang: Renmin Pub. Co. 1982) and conversations with Ai Qing and his wife Gao Ying also helped to fill in much of the details. The preface to the 1980 Renmin wenxue edition is yet another major source. Information on Ai Qing's father are gathered from the poem 'My father' unless otherwise specified.
2. Yang Kuanghan & Yang Kuangman, 'Ta he guang yiqi qian-jing' 他和光一起前進 (He advances with light), Shehui kexue zhanxian 社會科學戰線 1980 no.4

yan xing' 蔣賢興 in the nearby Fu Village 傅村 and Xiaoshun 孝順 Town. In both businesses the Jiangs were the smallest share holder. 3 /

Living at a time when China was undergoing rapid changes, and himself a graduate of the Seventh Provincial Secondary School, Jiang Zhongzun had come under the influence of some new ideas. Climatology was a subject of his interest, and in his leisure he often studied the world atlas. Being always fond of reading, he was a subscriber of the Dongfang Zazhi 東方雜誌, and Shen Bao 申報, the first newspaper in China. Among his friends were a retired major general of the army, who was a business associate in the wine shop 4/, teachers of Chinese at the provincial capital's secondary school, university students studying law and economics, the chief police officer in town, and the district officer. He was aware of, and up to a certain extent, sympathized with the social changes taking place in China. In his village he was the first person to be rid of his pigtail. 5 / The idea that women should no longer bind their feet was also supported by him, and he sent his daughters to a missionary school despite opposition from the elders in his clan. He encouraged his children in the study of foreign languages, realizing that this would yield social and career advantages.

3. Ye Jing 葉錦, 'Ai qing tan ta de liangshou jiuzuo' 艾青談他的兩首舊作 (Ai Qing on two of his old poems) Donghai 1981.4. Collected in Special collection on Ai Qing pp.62-69.

4. Ibid.

5. Yangs, 'He advances with light'.

But in many respects he was a conservative figure. Traditional beliefs and customs were observed and superstitions upheld by him, often because of the advantages inherent in such practices but sometimes also because he genuinely believed in them. His wife Lou Xianshou 樓仙壽 (1890-1941), a native of Wuhan Village 五圩村 in Yiwu District, was quite an ordinary woman of her times. Though illiterate, she could recite some Tang poetry as a result of her husband's influence. 6/

Ai Qing was born when his father was still at secondary school. That his parents should be bound by superstitions affected Ai Qing adversely from the day of his birth, for it was a difficult delivery, and the fortune-teller concluded that this new born child was a threat to the well being of his parents. To alleviate the danger he represented he was taught to address his parents as 'uncle' 叔 and 'aunt' 嬸. As a result, Ai Qing complained in later days, humourously perhaps, that he could never pronounce the words 'father' and 'mother' correctly. 7 / Another safety measure saw him exiled from home to be reared in a poor farmer's family. Such treatment laid the foundation for Ai Qing's antipathy for fortune telling and superstitions, and, in his own words, he grew up

6. Ibid.

7. Ai Qing, 'Yu qingniang shiren tan shi' 與青年詩人談詩 (A talk with young poets on poetry) Shikan 詩刊 1980.8

to become an atheist. 8 /

Ai Qing's wet nurse came from a very poor family. Sold to Fan tian Jiang village at a tender age as a child bride of Jiang Zhongpi 蔣忠丕, she had no name of her own, and was known to fellow villagers as Da ye he 大葉荷. 9 / After Jiang Zhongpi's death she married Jiang Zhengxing 姜正興 out of necessity. 10 / It was the kind of marriage in which the man came to live with the woman's family. 11 / Altogether she had four sons, and had just given birth to a girl around the time of Ai Qing's birth, but the baby did not survive. 12/ Being poor, and having had so many children meant that Da

8. Ai Qing, Ai Qing shixuan 艾青詩選 (Selected poems of Ai Qing) (Beijing: renmin wenxue, 1980), preface. Hereafter referred to as Preface.
9. According to Yang Kuanghan, the wet nurse's name was Da ye he, after the name of her native village, about two miles from Fan tian Jiang. (CT2 and 'Da yen he de jiaxiang' 大堰河的家鄉 (Da yen he's native land) in Haiyang wenyi 海洋文藝 1980.10) Ai Qing originally contended the validity of this claim. In Dangdai shaonian 當代少年 (Contemporary youth) July, 1981 there is an article 'Da ye he, wo de muqi' 大葉荷, 我的母親 (Da ye he, my mother), which gives the same details. Ai Qing's name is put down as the author, but he condemns it as plagiarization, since he had never written such an article for any magazine. However, in an interview conducted by Ye Jing, he said that he had been told by friends and relatives that 'Da yen he' was indeed a misrepresentation of 'Daye he', the mistake arising from the fact that these names are phonetically identical in his native dialect.
10. Yang Kuanghan, 'Da yen he's native land'.
11. Ye Jing, loc.cit. p.67
12. The article in Contemporary youths claims that the girl was drowned by Da ye he because she could not nurse both babies, and therefore had to sacrifice her own daughter.

ye he could not nurse Ai Qing very well, and he said that as a child he was deficient in calcium. But she compensated for the material poverty of her home by a genuine love for the child. In later years, Ai Qing asserted that his stay in the house of his wet nurse had cultivated in him a deep-rooted love and compassion for the peasants and for rural China, which was to be a major source of inspiration in his future career as a poet.

At the age of five Ai Qing was taken away from his wet nurse and returned to his parents' house because it was time for him to start his schooling. By then there was a younger child in the family; a girl of four, named Xihua 希華. Three more children were to be born into their family; another girl and two boys. But due to age difference, Ai Qing was never very close to his youngest sister and two brothers (named Haiji 海濟 and Haitao 海濤), who were respectively nine, twelve and thirteen years his junior. 13/

After five years of plain living in the home of a loving wet nurse, the comparative luxury of silk clothes and good food did not compensate for the sense of loneliness thrust so suddenly upon him. To him, 'home' was still the house of Da ye he, where he had lived since his birth. He was somewhat consoled as his wet nurse, out of love for him as well as economic necessity, began to help out in his parents' house.

13. Conversation with Ai Qing.

Soon after his return home, Ai Qing started schooling. At first he was sent to a traditional teacher in the village, who taught him the rudiments of the classics. Then the Qiao-shan 喬山 Primary School was set up in the village and Ai Qing became a pupil there for four years. 14 / As a child he was taciturn and showed a strong interest in painting and handicrafts. He would cut lengths of bamboo and carve them into small buckets; or shape red clay into a toy head, with holes as its eyes, nose, mouth and ears, and sticking its neck into the cap of a writing brush, he would blow smoke through the cap and watch it coming out from the holes of the toy head. Ai Qing's artistic inclination, however, did not please his father, who saw it as degrading. He once expressed the opinion that Ai Qing should be sent to an Art and Crafts Institute for the Poor, but the child, having seen the artistic merits of the products of the institute, never considered it an insult. 15 / A congenial relationship was never established between father and son, and the latter was frequently beaten. There was one time when a bird dirtied his father's head, and Ai Qing was ordered to take a wooden bowl and ask for tea from seven families so that his father could 'rinse off his bad luck'. The boy refused. He was hit so hard on the head with the wooden bowl that he started bleeding immediately. Finally Ai Qing could bear it no longer. In

14. CT2

15. Ai Qing, 'Muji weishenmo xia yadan' 母雞為什麼下鴨蛋 (Why does a chicken lay duck's eggs), Xinhua yuebao 新華月報 no.23 (Nov.1980) pp.178-180.

his rage after one beating he wrote a note and put it in a drawer. On it was written one sentence: 'my bandit father beats me'. His father saw it, and surprisingly this act of rebellion brought an end to the beating. 16/

In September 1919 Ai Qing left Qiaoshan Primary School for Yude Primary School in the nearby Fu Village. It was a superior private education establishment. 17 / For Ai Qing it provided an additional bonus in the form of its art teacher, who was good at both painting and handicrafts, and could draw up stage designs for plays as well as produce quality calligraphic instruments. 18 / In Yude Primary School, one teacher took two classes at a time. When the teacher was instructing the other class, Ai Qing often made small toys from clay or wax, in stealth, or even drew portraits of the teacher in his exercise books. 19/

In 1919 came the May Fourth Movement. New ideas, such as the advocacy of science and democracy, found their way into primary school text books, and girls began to be released from feet-binding. 20/ Ai Qing spent five years in Yude School, graduating in July, 1924. He took the enrolment examination for the Seventh Provincial

16. Ai Qing, 'A talk with young poets on poetry'.

17. CT2

18. Ai Qing, 'Why does a chicken lay ducks' eggs'.

19. Yangs, 'He advances with light'.

20. Preface.

Secondary School in Jinhua, but could only hand in a blank page when he was asked to write an essay on drought. Never having had the experience he found himself incapable of writing on the topic, and as a result failed the examination. He made a second attempt in 1925, having spent the whole summer revising under the tuition of one of his father's former teachers, and then spent one term at the district primary school and one term at the primary school attached to Jinhua Teachers' Training College. This time he was accepted into the provincial secondary school.

The first essay topic he was given as a secondary school student was 'Zixiushi suibi' 自修室隨筆 (Notes in the Study). In an essay entitled 'yi ge shidai you yi ge shidai de wenxue' 一個時代有一個時代的文學 (Every age has its own literature) he argued against the study of writings in the wenyan style. The teacher's comment on this was: 'Partial understanding; the words of Hu Shi 胡適 and Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881-1936) should not be taken as golden rules.' As an adult Ai Qing came to realize the validity of this comment, but at that time his reaction was to cross it out. 21 / It was also during this time that he came into contact with the Marxist idea of class struggle through a mimeographed copy of Lishi weiwu lun 歷史唯物論 (Historical materialism) 22/ He recalled that his three years at secondary school gave him much

21. CT1

22. Preface.

exposure to anti-imperial and anti-feudal ideas, and he began to read magazines of the New Literature Movement.

The art teacher during his first year at secondary school was Zhang Shuqi 張書旗, who later taught at the fine arts department of Zhongyang Daxue 中央大學. Throughout his secondary school years Ai Qing did badly in science subjects. 23/ His best subject was fine arts and his works were included in every art exhibition held in school. 24/ He even took to going out of the classroom, unobserved, to practise landscape painting. 25/ During the summer vacation, when he was at home, he would go sketching in the countryside or at the Chanding 禪定 Temple about a mile away. 26/ By this time he had already entered a few paintings at open art exhibitions, and was quite a famous figure among his sister's classmates at the missionary school. Once, when he was leaving the school after a visit to his sister, two of her friends were daring enough to shout after him at the gate to 'bring some pictures next time'. But when he turned to look at them, they fled.

23. CT1

24. Ye Jing, loc. cit. p.64

25. Ai Qing, 'Why does a chicken lay ducks' eggs'.

26. CT2

27. Ai Qing, 'Why does a chicken lay ducks' eggs'.

The year 1927 saw the march of the National Revolutionary Army from the south, passing through Zhejiang on their way to overthrow Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 and reunite China. Roused by the political situation and his own sense of patriotism, Ai Qing wished to enrol at the Huangpu Military Academy 黃埔軍校. The idea, however, was not favoured by his father. He graduated from secondary school in July, 1928. In September the same year he was accepted into the National Xihu Academy of Fine Arts 國立西湖美術學院 (now the Hangzhou Academy of Fine Arts 杭州美術學院) majoring in painting. The academy was then newly founded, and Ai Qing was among the second group of students enrolled. 28/ The size of the class was small, numbering less than twenty. Oil painting and charcoal drawing were taught by Wang Yuezhi 王昱 who was from Taiwan 台灣. The instructor in Chinese painting, Pan Tianshou 潘天壽 (1898-1971), and the instructor in water colour, Sun Fuxi 孫福熙, were both renowned in their fields. Ai Qing would frequently go out in the morning, before breakfast, to do a few landscape paintings in water colour. 29/ However, he had not been in the academy for more than a term, when one incident happened which gave a new bearing to his future career. After looking at Ai Qing's paintings, the famous painter Lin Fengmian 林風眠, then twenty-eight years old and already the principal of the academy, said to him, 'There is little you can learn here. You should go abroad.'

28. CT2

29. 'Why does a chicken lay ducks' eggs'.

Encouraged by Lin's words, Ai Qing left, in the spring of 1929, for France. He was financially supported by his father, who was not at all willing to see the eldest son of the family straying away from home. Obtaining his consent was thus no easy matter, but Ai Qing nevertheless succeeded. Armed with eight hundred yuan, 30/ he departed from Shanghai in a French oceanliner in the company of seven others, including two classmates and two tutors from the Xihu Academy. 31/ The fare for the voyage was only a little over three hundred yuan, and he was left, on arrival, with about four hundred yuan to support himself. At first he lived in the house of a French bicycle manufacturer in the 'Rose village', more than ten miles from the centre of Paris, but soon moved into Paris itself. In Vaugirard he rented a small room in a 'Hotel Lisbon' owned by a Portugese, and began to lead the life a a poor student. 32/ It was a life entailing much material hardship, but Ai Qing recalled it as a time when he was 'spiritually free'. 33/ His father would send him some money, at very irregular intervals, and to supplement this, he began to work in a small art and craft factory. The factory was owned by Americans, but the foreman

30. Lo Hanchao in On Ai Qing records the sum as 1,000 yuan.

31. Conversation with Ai Qing. They were just travel companions and were not sent by the academy.

32. Ye Jing, loc.cit. p.65

33. Preface

was Vietnamese. 34/ Ai Qing's work involved tracing customers' signatures onto lighter and cigarette cases. It was the final touch before the product was finished and he received ten francs for each morning's work. Having to work to support himself, he could only paint in the afternoon or evenings. For this purpose he would go to a 'free studio' in Montparnasse, mostly practising figure sketching. He had little chance of studying oil painting, but the works of Monet, Manet, Renoir, Degas and Picasso made a deep impression on him, and he strongly rejected the Academicians, regarding them as feudal and conservative. 35/ He also made a pilgrimage to Arles specifically to see the paintings of Van Gogh. 36/ One of his few oil paintings, depicting people out of work, was exhibited at an 'independent salon' organized by Monet. 37/ In this exhibition he assumed the name Oka, which was also to serve as a pseudonym for some of his early poems. His other pseudonyms included A Ke 阿克, Na Yong 納雍, and Lin Bi 林壁, but O Jia, a transliteration of Oka, was most frequently used before 1933.

Although he had two or three friends in Paris, Ai Qing was on his own most of the time. Occasionally he would eat out in small restaurants, but as a rule he prepared his own

34. Conversation with Ai Qing.

35. 'Why does a chicken lay ducks' eggs'.

36. CT2

37. Preface and CT2

meals as it was much more economical. 38/ Sometimes he would go to banned films in the 'Lenin Hall' in the workers' area, but besides working and painting, much of his time was devoted to reading. He admitted that his mastery of the French language was far from complete, he nevertheless thought highly of his power of understanding. 39/ There was a Chinese student among his acquaintances who had brought with him quite a large number of Chinese translations of Russian literary works, including Dostoevsky's 'Poor People', Gogol's 'The Overcoat', Turgenev's 'Smoke', the works of Andreiev and Esenin, and also a play by Byron. When Ai Qing started reading it was to these translations which he turned. Later on he also bought some French translations of Russian poetry, such as Mayakovsky's 'Cloud in Trousers', the selected poems of Pushkin and the works of Esenin. The French poetry he read included an anthology of modern French poems and Apollinaire's 'Alcool'. Rimbaud (1854-1891) was his favourite French poet, but the one who had a lasting influence on him was the Flemish poet Vehaeren (1855-1916). 40/ Circumstances did not allow him a very systematic way of studying. He could just read books which were available to him and tried to make the most of them. 41/

38. Conversation with Ai Qing.

39. 'Why does a chicken lay dicks' eggs'.

40. Preface

41. Ibid

It was in Paris that he first attempted to write down, in his sketch book, flitting impressions, feelings, thoughts and ideas; to learn to trace, in words, the light, colour, shape and movement of beauty. 42/ These early exercises in versification were lost in later years.

Towards the end of 1931, Ai Qing's patriotism and sense of indignation was aroused by the Japanese invasion of Manchuria -- the September 18th Incident. Moreover, the French seemed to side with the Japanese, and Ai Qing often felt insulted while going about his daily business. He took part in the 'World League against Imperialism' on 16th January, 1932, after which he wrote a poem on the experience. 'Dongfang zhibu de huihe' 東方支部的會合 was his first complete poem, and was published in the July issue of Beidou 北斗 under the simpler title 'Huihe' 會合 (Conference) under the pseudonym Qia after his return to China.

Having spent almost four years in Paris, Ai Qing sailed from Marsailles for China on 28th January, 1932. The date coincided with the Shanghai Incident, a landmark in Japan's invasion of China. Ai Qing's return resulted directly from financial difficulties, for his father had sent an ultimatum threatening to stop all financial support. Since he was not in a position to be completely financially independent, there was little he could do except return home. Furthermore, French sympathy for the Japanese invasion of Mukden had 42. 'Why does a chicken lay ducks' eggs'

alienated this patriotic youth. The ship he travelled in reached the Suez Canal on 2nd March. 43/ In early April it arrived at Hong Kong. By this time the Nationalist government in China had signed the Treaty of Shanghai with the Japanese. After spending four days in Hong Kong, Ai Qing left for his home via Shanghai. On his journey from Paris back to China he had written three poems, which were all published subsequently. 44/

Ai Qing's stay at home was short; not even as much as a month. He found that his parents still cherished hopes that he would yet become a government official, or at least carry on the family business. This was certainly not his dream of the future. 45/ He returned to Shanghai in May, and on arrival, joined the Chinese League of Leftist Writers and Artists under the name Qia. He took part in the sixth and seventh executive committee meetings of the League discussing problems of organization and publicity. 46/ Chundi Art Club 春地畫會 was formed of some young artists and Ai Qing was a member. During this period he wrote also several articles on

43. A poem 'Sunlight in the distance' (Village) is thus dated. However, CT2 gives the date as 2nd February and also says that he reached Mekong River on 26th February.

44. The poems are 'When dawn wears white' 黎明穿上了白衣 (Village), 'Overthere' 那邊 (Da yen he), and 'Sunlight in the distance' (Village).

45. Robert Payne, 'Ai Qing and the trumpets', Journey to red China (Toronto, London: William Hienemann, 1947) pp.137-151.

46. CT2, Ye Jing and Yangs. Ai Qing said that he had forgotten this and that he was not an executive member of the league.

French paintings in Wenyi Xinwen 文藝新聞 (Art News) under the name Ojia, and also taught for several days in Xinhua Yida 新華藝大 as a substitute teacher. Life for the young artists was tough, and they shared whatever they had. 47/

It was during an exhibition held by the Chundi Art Club on 26th June, above the Shanghai YMCA, that Ai Qing met Lu Xun for the first and only time. Lu Xun had supported the exhibition by giving on loan his own collection of prints by the German artist Kollwitz. When he attended the exhibition Ai Qing was on duty, and recognizing Lu Xun's rather small signature on the visitors' book, proceeded to show him around the exhibition. The exhibits included oil paintings, cartoons, block prints and crayon drawings. Ai Qing himself had only contributed one purely abstract painting on a piece of note paper, yet Lu Xun made a point of asking whether it was an original or a copy, not knowing his young escort was in fact the artist. Ai Qing answered that it was an original, but subsequently he thought that Lu Xun would have asked for it had it been a copy. He often regretted, in later years, not having presented Lu Xun with the painting just because he was rather slow at guessing the older man's meaning at the time. The painting was given to Zhang Ning 張寧 after many years, and has been long lost. Before he left, Lu Xun made a donation of five yuan towards the rent of the exhibition hall. The receipt which Ai Qing gave him found its way, hardly observed, into the dust bin. 48/

47. 'Why does a chicken lay ducks' eggs'. 48. Ibid.

On the night of 12th July, when members of the art club were having classes in Esperanto at the club address at 84 Feng yu li 豐裕里, Po Sai Road 波賽路, they were suddenly besieged by the police of the French Concession. After a half-hour search, thirteen members, Ai Qing among them, were arrested for harbouring radical thoughts. The hearing took place at no.3 court of the high court of Jiangsu 江蘇 Province. Found guilty of 'propagating ideologies incongruous with the Three People's Principles' and 'violating the sixth and tenth items of the People's Emergency Penal Code', Ai Qing was sentenced to six years' imprisonment, and put into custody at the detention centre of the Shanghai Second Specialist Court. 49/ However, his sentence was 'carried forward' as a punishment for unrepentent behaviour in the detention centre and at the court room. 50/ His number in prison was P65504. 51/ Life for the inmates was very tough, especially when they were political prisoners. Luckily for Ai Qing, he was to serve his sentence in a prison in the French Concession which was run by the Chinese on a trial basis. Eager to make a good impression on the French, the prison authority often had to make peace with its inmates if there were serious disturbances. And the inmates, taking advantage of this unique situation, staged hunger strikes in protest at the poor conditions inside the prison. One of these hunger

49. CT2

50. CT1

51. CT2

strikes lasted three days, and the prisoners kept stamping their feet to demonstrate their dissatisfaction. The organizers of these strikes, Ai Qing among them, informed fellow inmates of the action they were to take by writing small notes which were passed to every inmate during meal times. This was possible as meals were served by convicts sentenced to death, who were of course willing to lend a hand. 52/

Food inside the prison was quite good. There were about a hundred grams of meat in every meal, and under the political and social circumstances of the time it was in fact quite remarkable. Tens of years later, Ai Qing still remembered, with particular relish, the delicious fried fillet of fish served in prison. 53/ But of course prison life had its grim aspects. The living condition, damp and dark, was unhealthy, and Ai Qing suffered from tuberculosis. Nevertheless, with the help of Li Youren 李文然, a friend from his Paris days, who brought him food and medicine, he recovered. 54/ Ai Qing, with his friends in prison, even set up study groups and had once written to Lu Xun to ask for a

52. Conversation with Ai Qing.

53. Ibid. The Yang brothers give a much more austere picture of prison life. This difference is revealing of Ai Qing's optimistic nature.

54. This illness is described in a poem written in prison, entitled 'Bing jian' 病監 (Ill in prison) published in Xiandai vol.4 no.5 (March, 1934) p.817

few books under the name of Jia 伽.55/ Towards the end of 1934, he had served one third of his sentence, and as was customary, was sent to a self-examination centre in Suzhou 蘇州. Here, prisoners were usually released after serving one term of six months. Ai Qing, still unrepentant, had to serve two terms. He was released in October, 1935. 56/

For Ai Qing, his imprisonment was probably the most important point in the development of his career. To paint in prison was impossible; his artistic life was thus truncated. The situation led him, quite naturally, onto poetry, which only required a pen and a bit of paper to put down, at any time, his thoughts and feelings. Before he went to prison, his first poem 'Conference' had already been published. It was lying on his table when Li Youren spotted it and sent it to Beidou, edited by Ding Ling 丁玲 (1904-1986). 57/ It was published in the July issue of the magazine. In prison, the number of poems he produced steadily increased, and the manuscripts were usually smuggled out of prison by visiting lawyers and friends. For instance, 'Dayen he', the first poem to earn him critical recognition and

55. Jiang Feng 江豐, 'Lu Xun xiansheng yu bayi yishe' 魯迅先生與八一藝社 (Mr. Lu Xun & First of August Art Club) Lun Xun yanliu zhuanli 魯迅研究專集 (Shanghai:Wenyi,1979) p.339

56. According to the Yang brothers, Ai Qing had served 3 terms of six months, which does not correspond with the time of his transfer and release.

57. Nie Hualing 聶華苓, 'Yilantang ban wu Ai Qing' 倚瀾堂畔晤艾青 (Meeting Ai Qing by Yilan Hall) The Seventies 1978.9. In this article Ai qing also said that he wrote to ask for remuneration but was told by the editor that the magazine respected poetry too much to pay for it. p.87

public acclaim, was taken out by a lawyer and given to Li Youren 58/, who sent it to Chunquang 春光 Magazine edited by Zhuan Qidong 莊啟東. 59/ 'Da yen he' is the first poem published under the psuedonym Ai Qing. The character Ai was chosen because he hated his own surname Jiang so much that he just took the grass radical and put a big cross beneath it. 60/ This name is also phonetically close to his name Haicheng.

At that time his poetic pursuits were known to fellow inmates, and subsequently also to prison authorities. It was thus necessary to discard his former psuedonym Ojia to avoid further suspicion and interference. 61/ Yet 'Da yen he' still found its way into the prison, and Ai Qing recalled in later yers how one of the convicts recited it in the Shanghai dialect, with tears streaming down his face. 62/ The none too pleasant environment of the prison had effected an irrevocable transformation -- Jiang Haicheng, the twenty-two year old youth sent here as a young radical artist, emerged from it the fully-fledged poet, Ai Qing.

After his release from prison, Ai Qing went back to his family. At home a marriage was arranged for him by his family. 58. Ibid.

59. Ai Qing, 'A talk with young poets on poetry'.

60. Guan No 關諾, 'Fang shiren Ai Qing' 訪詩人艾青 (A visit to the poet Ai Qing) Mirror Magazine 鏡報 1980.2. In this article it is also explained that 'Qing' is derived from December 12th, which was said to be Ai Qing's birthday. According to Ai Qing, this information was given by his friend Li Youren, and is wrong.

61. Ai Qing, 'Why does a chicken lay ducks' eggs'.

parents. The bride was a distant cousin of his, named Zhang Zhuru 張竹如. She was good natured, but had an old fashioned upbringing, and could barely read and write. Ai Qing, though not very willing, accepted her, and two children were born of this union. 63/ In later life, however, he never referred to this episode, probably because he considered it a weakness to have given in to his parents' arrangement. 64/

In the first half of 1936, through the help of his brother-in-law, Ai Qing obtained an appointment at the Wujing Teachers' Training College for Women 武進女子師範學校 in Changzhou 常州, Jiangsu Province. 65/ Chinese and Chinese paintings were the subjects he taught. He recalled that he was popular with the students and thought that this aroused the jealousy of his colleagues and the suspicion of the principal, who feared that he would spread revolutionary ideas in school. As a result he was dismissed at the beginning of the second term. 66/

Finding himself unemployed, Ai Qing returned to Shanghai where he tried to make a living out of poetry

62. Conversation with Ai Qing.

63. Conversation with Gao Ying.

64. In the poem 'My father' Ai Qing had mentioned a 'prearranged bliss' 安排好了的幸福 awaiting him at home after his release from prison. This probably refers to his first marriage.

65. CT1

66. CT2

writing. Like so many young writers of the time, he lived in a small back room with no window. His poetic pursuits led to his acquaintance with Hu Feng 胡風 (1904-1985) and Tian Jian (1916-) 67/. With the help of friends, Ai Qing's first collection of poetry, Da yan he, was published at his own expense. It included nine poems, and won him immediate recognition as a major poet in the League of Leftist Writers (though the League had officially dissolved, critics still considered him a member of the group) 68/.

For some time Ai Qing worked as literary editor at Tianxia Ribao 天下日報 owned by Chen Weihui 陳唯穢 69/, then on 6th July, 1937 (the eve of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident) he left Shanghai. In doing so, he joined the hundreds of thousands of refugees who migrated towards western China, and who were fortunate enough to escape the slaughter in Shanghai or witness the almost total destruction of the parts of the city still controlled by the Nationalist government. Ai Qing went first to Hangzhou and taught at Huilan Secondary School 蕙蘭中學, a private establishment. However, he did not even stay until the end of the first term, but went home that winter and spent some time with his family before leaving

67. CT1

68. There are three articles in the 'poetry chronicle' of Tianxia Monthly: By Zou Sinmay 邵詢美 vol.5 no.4 (Nov.1937) pp.401-402, by Ling Dai 凌黛 vol.7 no.5 (Dec.1938) p.494, and vol.9 no.5 (Dec.1939) p.496.

69. CT2

again for Wuhan 武漢. 70/ He arrived in March, 1938, by which time Wuhan had become a major target of Japanese invasion since the fall of Nanjing in December, 1937. On the 27th of March, one hundred writers and artists in Wuhan, including Mao Dun 茅盾 (1896-1981), Feng Naichao 馮乃超 and Ai Qing, formed the 'All China association of writers and artists for resistance'. 71/ Fleeing from the Japanese, Shansi was Ai Qing's next destination, and he set forth in early 1938 for Linfen in southern Shansi, where, within the military headquarters of the Second War Zone, the University of National Revolution was established under the sponsorship of Marshall Yan Xishan 閻錫山 (1883-1960). In January 1938, some of the teaching staff, together with six hundred students of the new university, went on a special train from Hankou 漢口 to Shansi with the old Marshal. 72/ Ai Qing became for some time a member of the university, but did not actively participate in university affairs. At that time northern Shansi was already under Japanese control, and Japanese armies came pouring southward, attempting to liquidate resistance in the Second War Zone. As the situation became tense, Ai Qing left Linfen for Sian, and joined the 'Anti-Japanese Artistic Group' as a group leader. 73/ In 1939 he journeyed further south, and

70. CT1

71. CT2

72. Anna Louise Strong, China fights for freedom (Lindsay Drummond Ltd. 1939) p.121.

73. CT1. The dates and events given in CT2 for 1939 is sometimes incorrect as dates and events of 1938 and 1939 are confused.

passing through Wuhan, took the route of Hengshan 衡山 and Hunan 湖南 and arrived at Guilin 桂林, where he found a job as editor of Nanfang 南方 (The South), literary magazine of the Guangxi Ribao 廣西日報. It was also in Guilin that he published his second collection of poems, entitled Beifang 北方 (The North), also at his own expense. The poems were all written during his itinerary 跋涉 through northern China. Ai Qing, on looking back, described this enforced period of travelling as a zenith in his whole creative career. 74/ The long poems 'To the sun' 向太陽, 'He died the second time' 他死在第二次 and 'The bugler' 吹號者 were all written during this period, and his essays on poetry were also finished in Guilin. 75/ Besides writing poems, Ai Qing had not entirely given up painting. When he had the chance he also did some cover design, and on his journey, had drawn some sketches of the desolate scenes along the Yellow River. A few of these were exhibited in Chongqing 重慶 in the National Art Exhibition after Ai Qing had gone to Yanan. 76/ The paintings were submitted by his brother-in-law. 77/ Ai Qing's sojourn in

74. 'Why does a chicken lay ducks' eggs'. The second zenith came after 1978 when he was again allowed to write after 20 years' enforced silence.

75. The time is recorded in the last page of On Poetry as winter, 1939.

76. 'Why does a chicken lay ducks' eggs'. Ai Qing also considered it better to design the covers of his own poetry collections. The covers of the various Renmin wenxue editions of his Selected Poems, for example, are designed by him. (Dong Xiao 冬曉, 'Ai Qing tan shi yu xie changbian xiaoshuo de jihua' 艾青談詩與寫長篇小說的計劃 (Ai Qing on poetry and his plans for a novel) Kaijuan 開卷 1979.2)

77. Conversation with Ai Qing.

Guilin also provided him with a chance of joining forces with Dai Wangshu ^{戴望舒} (1905-1950), who was in Hong Kong, as co-editors of Dingdian ^{頂點} (Peak), a poetry magazine. Unfortunately, due to the war situation, neither the collaboration nor the magazine lasted long. The winter of 1939 saw Ai Qing departing for Xinning, Hunan, where he taught for one term at Hengshan Village college of Education. But an important change had taken place in Ai Qing's private life before he left Guilin.

In 1938 or early 1939, Ai Qing had met a young girl called Gao Hao, ^{高皓} who lived with a paralysed mother. She was extremely shy, and could hardly suffer her hands to be touched. The relationship, if it can be called such, did not last mainly because of the wartime confusion. The girl married, out of gratitude and necessity, a secondary school teacher but was extremely unhappy and later lost her mind. Yet the impression she left on Ai Qing is immortalized in a recent poem 'On eyes' ^{關於眼睛} which is perhaps Ai Qing's only love poem. 78/

Shy Gao Hao was but a prelude to another woman who was to play a much more important part in Ai Qing's life. In Guilin, a young student Wei Ying ^{韋英} turned up at Ai Qing's door step. She had studied in a school in which Ai Qing had taught, though he had never actually taken her class. Find-

78. Conversation with Ai Qing. The poem is collected in 100 lyrics, ed. Gao Ying (HK: Tiandi ^{大地} 1981)

ing her former teacher also in Guilin, she paid frequent visits to him. This teacher-student relationship speedily developed into a love affair, and with it came a significant consequence. Ai Qing's wife, on learning about this affair, was so angry that she decided to break all ties with him. For a woman of her background it was a very bold step to take. She later remarried in the village, and the two children fathered by Ai Qing both died. Thus, when Ai Qing left Guilin for Xinning, he took with him Wei Ying, his new wife. 79/

After teaching for one term in Hengshan, and thoroughly disgusted with the new headmaster's pro-Nationalist attitude, Ai Qing went to the wartime capital, Chongqing, by boat, arriving in May, 1940. On his way to Chongqing he wrote 'The torch' 火把, another long poem, for which the editor of Zhongguo Wenhua 中華文化 paid him two hundred yuan. Once in Chongqing, he reported for duty at the Yucai School founded by Tao Xingzhi 陶行知 (1891-1946) and located in Beipei, just outside the city. 80/ In the school, he was head of the literature department. He also became editor of the magazine Wenyi zhendi 文藝陣地 (Literature & Art Front), while his poems, prose and literary criticism could be found in many newspapers and magazines in the wartime capital.

In Beipei, Ai Qing met Zhou Enlai (1898-1976) for the

79. Conversation with Gao Ying.

80. CT1

first time. The latter was at that time second in command in 'mass mobilization' in the Central Military Council, concentrating on civilian organization for the war 81/ and was generally addressed as 'Deputy chairman Zhou'. 82/ His visit to Beipei was for the purpose of making a report on the school, but he also took the opportunity to suggest to Ai Qing that Yanan was a more suitable place for the poet, as he could 'concentrate on writing without worries'. 83/ Since 1939 the relationship between the Nationalist government and the Communist Party had again become tense, and the United Front started to break down. By 1940, persons suspected of leftist tendencies were often under secret observation of central government spies. Ai Qing, having been considered radical since his Shanghai days, was among those under this threat. Moreover, Tao Xingzhi also received threatening letters. To avoid this unpleasant situation Ai Qing moved into the building of the Association of Writers in Chongqing. 84/ On 7th January, 1941 the Anhui Incident took place in which the communist New Fourth Army was attacked by the troops of the Nationalist government and one of its commanders was killed in battle. Thus started the third anti-communist campaign. All communist organizations in the Nationalist areas had to go underground and in Chongqing only the Xinhua Ribao and the

81. Strong, loc.cit.

82. Preface.

83. Ibid.

84. CT2

liasion office remained openly in operation. 85/ Ai Qing, previously under suspicion, had the uncomfortable feeling that he was followed everywhere by spies. 86/ The seriousness of the situation was forced upon him, and he decided to take Zhou Enlai's advise to escape to Yanan. In this he was helped by Zhou and a former student who became an officer in Yan Xishan's army. Zhou gave Ai Qing one thousand yuan to finance his journey, and told him that in case of discovery he should wire Guo Moruo, who held a post in the central government. But how, if he were really discovered, Ai Qing could have informed Guo, Zhou did not say, and it never occurred to Ai Qing to ask. 87/ There were altogether five fugitives, among whom four were writers. They were Ai Qing, Lo Feng 羅烽 (1909-), the couple An Min 安民 (1914-) (also called Yan Chen 嚴辰) and Lo Fei 黎斐. The fifth member was Zhang Ning, a painter. Ai Qing posed as a senior staff officer of the Suiyuan-Mongolian Self-government Office, with An Ming as his secretary, Zhang Ning a clerk, and Lo Feng an attendant. An Min's wife Lo Fei was disguised as Ai Qing's wife, 88/ while Wei Ying, pregnant at that time, had left for

85. Helen Forster Snow, The Chinese Communists, sketches and autobiographies of the old guard, Bks 1&2 (Connecticut: Greenwood Pub.Co. 1952)

86. CT1

87. Conversation with Ai Qing.

88. Details of the journey are in Lei Jia 雷加 'Sishi niandai Yanan wenyi huodong 2' 四十年代延安文藝活動 (Literary activities of the forties in Yanan) Xinwenxue shiliao iikan 新文學史料季刊 1981.3 p.206. Ai Qing complained that Lo Fei had subsequently denied having disguised as his wife, and relegated his assumed position from staff officer to secretary.

Yanan before this group. On their journey, they passed through forty-seven sentries. All went well until they arrived at the last one, when the soldiers there suspected that the wooden toothpicks they carried were some kind of secret code. Ai Qing was asked why the toothpicks were made of wood and not of silver, to which he replied that only the rich could afford silver ones. 89/

Nevertheless, they were let through and arrived at Yanan safely on 8th March. A welcome party was given in their honour by the Communist Party's chief secretary Zhang Wentian 張聞天 (1901-1976) and Ai Qing was assigned to live at the Yanan branch of the Association of Writers and Artists for Resistance (originally known as the Association of writers and artists) in Yangjia Ling 楊家嶺. 90/ In the fifth election of the Association, held in August, Ai Qing was elected a member of the executive committee. In November, he was elected a representative of the Shensi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region Council. 91/ Of this occasion, he was very pleased and quite proud. 92/ Shikan 詩刊, a poetry magazine, was founded in the same month with Ai Qing as editor in chief. He was, at the same time, chief editor of the poetry section of Gu Yu 穀雨, the largest circulating magazine in Yanan. 93/

89. Conversation with Ai Qing. 90. Lei Jia, loc.cit.

91. CT1

92. Robert Payne, loc.cit. p.143

93. Merle Goldman, Literary Dissent in Communist China (Harvard University Press, 1967) p.29

As far as his family is concerned, however, 1941 was a sad year., for in this summer his father died, and his mother's urgent persuasion failed to induce him to go home. Furthermore, when Japanese troops passed their village, their family houses were burnt to the ground. Ai Qing considered this a punishment on his family for having reared an anti-Japanese revolutionary, but it was more likely to have been one of many disasters in an occupied village. His mother, in deep shock and sorrow, sat mourning on the ruins for almost a week before she died. The house was later rebuilt by his brothers and sisters. Ai Qing, in Yanan, was not to learn of this until much later. 94/

With the coming of 1942 the situation in Yanan became somewhat unsettling for leaders of the Chinese Communist Party. Many newcomers to this communist strong hold had found it difficult to adapt to the local life style. Food was far from plentiful, and 'houses' were in fact only dug out holes of the loess mountain cliffs. Japanese troops, suffering heavy losses under the Communists' surprise Hundred Regiments Offensive, retaliated with its 'Three all policy' of burn all, kill all, destroy all. 95/ And the increasingly tight Nationalist blockade of Shen-Gan-Ning did not ameliorate the situation. Subsidies from the central government to the Eighth Route Army and the Border government were cut off in

94. Conversation with Ai Qing.

95. Mark Seldon, The Yanan way in revolutionary China (Harvard University Press, 1971) p.178

1941. 96/ Inflation became a serious problem in Yanan, and under these strigent circumstances, existing economic and political tensions were all intensified. A number of writers started to voice what they perceived as grievances in the Liberation Daily, the literary section of which was headed by Ding Ling. Besides Ding Ling, Ai Qing, Shao Jun 蕭軍 (1908-), and Wang Shiwei 王實味 also made contributions. Ai Qing's article was entitled 'Liaojie zuojia, zunzhong zuojia' 了解作家, 尊重作家 (Understand Writers, Respect Writers). Published on 11th March, this was in fact the only article which dealt exclusively with the problems writers faced in Yanan, while the others concentrated much more on social and political grievances. To the communist party leaders, this outbreak of controversy was a threat to the unity and morale of Yanan and had to be rectified. Mao Zedong invited Ai Qing to discuss the problems raised by articles on the Liberation Daily, and asked him what he thought should be done. 97/ Ai Qing recalled that at that time he did not realize the seriousness of the case, and suggested to Mao that perhaps they could hold a meeting. Sometime later he received a letter from Mao asking him to gather opinion opposing Mao's directives for literature and art. Ai Qing did not gather any opinion, but just put down his own ideas and suggestions. Mao again expressed a desire to discuss the issue with him, and in their subsequent conversation, raised the problems of

96. Ibid. p.179

97. Preface

the relationship between politics and literature, the question whether writers should expose or praise existing conditions. Following Mao's instructions Ai Qing corrected and amended his previous ideas, and finished an article entitled 'Duiyu muqian wenyi shang ji ge wenti de yijian' 對於目前文藝上幾個問題的意見 (My opinion on some current problems in art and literature) on 23 April. It was published on 15th May in the Liberation Daily, during the Yanan Forum* on Literature and Art. 98/ The Forum itself spanned a period of twelve days, from 2nd to 23rd May, and in it, Mao laid down the guidelines for art and literature. From then on, the goal of writers and artists should be to serve the revolutionary purpose, to eulogize Communism and expose its enemies; their works should be directed at workers, farmers and soldiers, acting as a vehicle for the spread and consolidation of advanced political ideologies. 99/ In one of the meetings, Zhu De 朱德 (1886-1976), commander-in-chief of the Eighth Route Army, singled out a quotation in Ai Qing's article to illustrate the new direction which art and literature should take. In 'Understand writers, respect writers' Ai Qing had concluded with two lines from Li Bai 李白 (701-762): 'I long not for wealth nor title, but for someone who appreciates my worth.'

100/ Zhu De pointed out succinctly

98. Ibid.

99. Mao Zedong, 'Yanan Forum on literature & art', Mao Zedong on literature & art (Beijing: Foreign language Press 1967)

100. First quoted by Ai Qing in On Poetry, p.123

that the 'someone' should now be no other than workers, farmers and soldiers. 101/

Both Ai Qing and Ding Ling came under some attack in the Forum for their views expressed in the Liberation Daily, for what they had asked from the party was a variety of viewpoints, and to the party it was a potential challenge to its authority. But they both emerged unscathed from the Zhengfeng 整风 (Rectification Campaign) which ensued probably due to two reasons. Firstly, they were willing to participate in the Forum and confess their mistakes. Ai Qing, for example, published his 'My opinion on some current problems in art and literature' during the Forum. Though in it he still advocated that administrators should try to understand and help writers and artists, he further demonstrated his willingness to reform with a severe criticism of Wang Shiwei on June 16th. 102/ Yet perhaps the most important reason why Wang Shiwei had to bear the burden of being struggled against and condemned in the first rectification campaign of the communist party while Ding Ling and Ai Qing remained in the party's favour was that while Wang was little known before the Forum, the latter two had national fame and were much respected. The Communist Party,

101. At that time Ai Qing applauded Zhu's words, but in 1980 he made the comment that writers should be understood by all people, and thus questioned the validity of Zhu's remark. Li Li 李黎, 'Beifang de chuihaozhe' 北方的吹号者 (The bugler of the north) The Seventies 1980.9. p.81

102. Goldman, loc.cit. p.45

at that time, could ill spare such personalities. 103/

Immediately after the Yanan Forum, Ai Qing proposed to go to the front,^{104/} but Mao Zedong had other plans for him. He was asked to stay in Yanan to study Marxism-Leninism, and was thus in fact detained there so that he could take part in the rectification campaign. 105/ He was appointed deputy leader of the 'yangge' 秧歌 folk dance group in the party school. 106/ and as a result wrote an essay entitled 'Lun yanggeju de xingshi' 論秧歌劇的形式 (On the form of yangge drama), later collected in Shi xinminzhu juyi de wenxue 新民主主義的文學 (Discussions on a literature on a new democratic basis). Bearing in mind the guidance of the Yanan Forum, Ai Qing tried to incorporate folk song styles into his writing. The first long poem to be written in this style is 'Wu Manyou' 吳滿有, written in February, 1943. The hero of the poem was a model peasant, and Ai Qing was not the only poet who eulogized him. In order to see Wu's reaction to this poem Ai Qing travelled to Wu's date garden and paid him two visits. 106/ In the spring of 1943 he journeyed to the 'Three borders' 三邊 in the company of Liu Jianzhang 劉健章, a

103. For a detailed discussion of the first rectification campaign see Goldman, Ibid.

104. Preface

105. CT2

106. In CT2 it is said that Ai Qing had lived there for some time, but in fact he only spent one or two days there. He speculated that his name was probably confused with Mao Zedong's son Anqing 岸青, who did live at Wu's date garden for a short period.

commune hero , and Gu Yuan 古元 , a block print artist. They studied local folk art, especially concentrating on decorative paper cuttings. Ai Qing collected quite a large number of these and they were exhibited in 1944 in the Shen-Gan-Ning Border education meeting. 107/ In Yanan, he also published an article entitled 'Di yi ri' 第一日 (The first day) discussing the art of Gu Yuan, Li Qun 力群 Jiao Xinhe 焦心河 and Liu Yan 劉岷. 108/

Later that year he headed a Shen-Gan-Ning Border literary and art group to the 359 brigade to salute and perform for the soldiers. 109/ The commander of the brigade was General Wang Zhen 王震 (1908-), who later played a significant role in Ai Qing's life.

Some time after the Yanan Forum, Ai Qing joined the Communist Party, 110/ after reputedly having said that he would join if he was 'necessary to the party'. 111/ Apparently he was. Not only was he accepted into the party,

107. Ai Qing, preface to Xibei jianzhi ji 西北剪紙集
(Collection of paper-cuttings of N.W.China) (n.p.1949)

108. Preface. Also mentioned in Ai Qing, 'Muban shang de shuqing shi' 木板上的抒情詩 (Lyrics on blocks) in Renmin Ribao 1980.6.9.

109. CT2

110. The exact date is unknown. In CT1 it is given as late as 1942 or 1943, in CT2 as 1945 and in Modern Chinese Poetry (University of Hong Kong, 1970) as 1944, while the Yang brothers also put forth 1943 in their preliminary biography. Even Ai Qing has forgotten the exact time.

111. 'Yan xing zhi jian' 言行之間 (Between words and deeds), Wenyi Bao 1957.9.15.

but he was also present at the meeting of representatives of model workers of the Border held on 30th November, 1944. At this meeting he was awarded a certificate of 'Model worker' by the central organization, and another certificate for having done 'model service to the people' by the central party school. 112/

In Yanan, Ai Qing also lectured at the literature department of the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts. Here he met one of his life long friends, Cai Qijiao 蔡其矯 (1918-), a poet eight years his junior, who had spent his childhood in Indonesia. In August, 1945, the eight-year war of resistance against the Japanese drew to an end. The Lu Xun Academy was divided into three sections -- Northern China, the North East, and Yanan, the first two being responsible for areas formerly occupied or threatened by Japanese troops. Ai Qing was appointed head of the North China section, named 'North China Literature & Art Troupe', which was assigned to Kalgan. 113/ The group set off from Lu Xun Academy at 10am on the Mid-Autumn Festival, 20th September, 1945. They travelled with over one hundred people, among whom fifty-six were members of the Troupe. For most part of the journey they had to go on foot, spending the night in houses of the local people in villages or towns they passed. It was a rough journey, and one of the women suffered a miscarriage.

112. CT1 & CT2

113. CT1

Together with two other pregnant women, she had to travel independently at a slower speed. The group had to cross the Yellow River and travel through Japanese occupied areas. Though the Japanese government had surrendered, many of its troops had not yet disarmed and were still controlling the communication network in Northern China. Thus, fighting often broke out between the Eighth Route Army and the Japanese. To safeguard the civilian travellers from Yanan, two regiments were sent to accompany them as they crossed the Japanese frontiers. They had to travel over the mountainous areas of Shensi and Chahar, and each member was only allowed a maximum of seven and a half kilograms of baggage. On 22nd October, when they passed through territory surrounded by the Japanese, they covered over forty miles in little more than a day, and Ai Qing was so exhausted that he found himself nodding in his walk. The weather did not help either, for in the mountains it was extremely cold, and for a few days it snowed. They passed Tongpu 同蒲 Railway, still in Japanese hands, and reached Hunyuan 渾原, a big town. From there they went to Tian Zhen 天鎮 and took a train to Kalgan on 8th November, arriving in the late evening. They had spent over fifty days on the road and traversed more than seven hundred miles. In large towns such as Sui De 綏德 and Hunyuan the Troupe would hold exhibitions and join forces with local artists to give a few public performances. But their major objective was to reach Kalgan as soon as possible. 114/

114. Details of this journey are in Zou Xiang Shengli 走向勝利 (March to victory) (Shanghai: Wenhua gongzuo she 文化工作社 1950)

The 'North China Literature & Art Troupe' was incorporated into the North China United University in 1946 and became its College of Literature & Art. Ai Qing was at first acting as head of the college and later became its deputy head, working with Sha Kefu 沙可夫 (1905-1961), who had been responsible for the N.C.U.U. since its establishment in 1939. 115/ Foreign observers and scholars whose interest in the Communist Party had grown during the war of resistance, now took the opportunity to visit Kalgan. Among those who met Ai Qing were J.K.Fairbank (1907-) and Robert Payne (1911-). 116/ The latter called on Ai Qing and his family in their home in the summer of 1946 and recorded the interview in his book A Journey to Red China. Ai Qing's house in Kalgan was built by the Japanese, and therefore entirely in the style of Japanese architecture, with sliding panels, tatamis, and a small wooden platform on which there was always a bowl of flowers, because, in Payne's words, Ai Qing preferred to have flowers all around him. 117/ Payne

115. Ai Qing, 'Jiefangqu de yishu jiaoyu' 解放區的藝術教育 (Art education in the liberated areas) Zhonghua Quanguo Wenxue Yishu Gongzuozhe Daibiao Dahui Jinién Wenii 中華全國文學藝術工作者代表大會紀念文集 (Commemorative collection on the all china conference of representative of writers and artists. (Beijing: Xinhua, 1950) p.125

116. Ai Qing, 'Meiguo guailai da ke wan' 美國歸來答客問 (Answering a visitor's questions after returning from U.S.A.) Dadi 大地 1981.3.

117. Payne, loc.cit.

118. Ibid. There is a mistake concerning Ai Qing's age in Payne's book. He recorded that in S.China he heard that the poet was about forty but was in fact only twenty-six. At this time Ai Qing was actually thirty-six years old. This perhaps reflects on the poet's youthful appearance.

also met Hui Ying and their children, whom he described as 'extraordinarily beautiful'. 118/

The administrative work Ai Qing was engaged in meant that he had to attend numerous and rather tedious meetings, 119/ It was during this period that he learnt to smoke, as cigarettes were provided free during the meetings. 120/ In time he became a chain smoker.

The North China United University did not stay long in Kalgan, for after the Japanese surrender, tension between the Nationalist government and the Communist Party had been mounting, and it led eventually to a full scale civil war. Kalgan, being too close to the Nationalist front, was abandoned, and the North China United University moved to central and southern Hebei 河北, where, for two years (1947 - 1948) its staff contributed their effort to the village land reform movement in the area around Fulu 阜鹿, Donglu 东鹿 and Zhuolu 涿鹿. Here the university was combined with the Northern University to form the North China University, and Ai Qing was deputy head of its third section, which was the combined arts faculty. Much of his work was again

119. Ai Qing frequently confessed that his heart was not in administration. This can be found in Payne's interview with him as well as articles in the August and September issues of Wenyi Bao (1957) when he was attacked for using this as an excuse for not producing good poetry.

120. Conversation with Ai Qing.

administration. 121/ A group of poems, 'Cuckoo' 布谷鳥, was written during this period. 122/

The civil war turned sharply against the Nationalist government in 1948, and in February Tianjin 天津 fell into the hands of the communist troops under the command of Lin Biao 林彪 (1907-1971). In the same month Beijing capitulated. Ai Qing moved into city with the Liberation Army. His first mission was to take over the 'Zhongyang meishu xueyuan' (Central Academy of Fine Arts) as a member of the 'Wenhua Jieguan Weiyuanhui' 文化接管委員會 (Cultural Take-over Committee) under the 'Junshi Guanzhi Weiyuanhui' (Military Control Committee) 123/. He became the military representative of the Central Academy of Fine Arts 124/ and his hope and enthusiasm for working as an artist, or at least in the field of fine arts, was rekindled. The chance of appreciating Qi Baishi's 齊白石 (1860-1957) paintings was especially gratifying to Ai Qing, who had been an ardent admirer of Qi's since he was eighteen. At the earliest opportunity he paid a visit to the painter, but his military uniform and blue arm band aroused Qi's suspicion, and it was only after he talked about the Hanzhou Academy of Fine Arts and its principal Lin Fengmian that Qi Baishi finally

121. CT2, also Ai Qing, 'Art education in the liberated areas', loc.cit. p.237

122. This was later included in his second volume of selected poems, Chuntian 春天 (Spring). CT1 &2, Preface.'

123. Ai Qing, 'Why does a chicken lay ducks' eggs', loc.cit.

124. CT2.

believed it was really just a friendly visit. 125/ From then on, a friendship was formed, and Ai Qing was twice presented with Qi's paintings by the painter himself. Furthermore, he began to collect Qi's works, and wrote poems and articles in praise of his art. 126/ He also claimed that it was under his encouragement that Qi's increased the price of his paintings from nine yuan to twelve yuan. 127/ Altogether it was a happy time for Ai Qing, who often joined in the sketch classes of the Academy, and even tried his hand at sculpture. However, after only one year he was transferred back to literary work.

For Ai Qing, 1950 was an extremely busy year. Besides working at the Academy, he took part in the preparation for the 'All China United Conference of Literature & Art' and the first 'National Representative Conference of Writers & Artists' as well as the first 'Political Consultation Conference of the People's Republic' acting as group leader to the adjudicators for national flag and national emblem designs. From 2nd July to 19th July he attended the first 'National Representative Conference of Writers and Artists' and was elected a committee member of the 'All China federation of writers and artists'. 128/ His name was put

124. CT2.

125. Ai Qing, 'Why does a chicken lay ducks' eggs', loc.cit.

126. Ibid.

127. Conversation with Ai Qing.

128. CT2.

down as one of the initiators of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association. 129/ Discussions at the 'United Conference of Art & Literature' commenced on 24th July, and in the beginning of August he was elected first director and first executive director of the poetry group' social section. 130/ He was, at the same time, elected national director and executive director of the Union of Literary Workers, which was later renamed the Union of Chinese Writers. 131/ Ai Qing was responsible for its editorial group. In September, the People's Republic of China held its first political consultation conference, and Ai Qing became an alternative member of the National Political Consultative Committee. 132/ Renmin Wenxue 人民文學 (People's Literature), the official publication of the Union of Chinese Writers, came into being in October, with Ai Qing as assistant editor-in-chief. Although Mao Dun was nominally the chief editor, Ai Qing was the one who did most of the actual work. 133/

By this time he was one of the most prominent writers in China. Thus it was natural that he was among the representatives who welcomed Soviet writers visiting China in

129. Renmin Ribao, 1950.7.17.

130. Renmin Ribao, 1950.8.3.

131. All China conference of representative of writers and artists p.581-582.

132. CT2

133. Lu Jian 呂劍, speech in the Union of Chinese Writers, Wenyi bao 1957.6.16. Also Goldman, loc.cit. p.174.

May, 1950, 134/ and was also a member of the delegation representing the Chinese Communist Party's Central Publicity Committee in a four month's visit to the Soviet Union in late July the same year. Before his visit to the USSR he undertook a lecture tour to publicize the 'Protect world peace campaign', visiting Shanghai, Hangzhou, Guangzhou 廣州, Wuhan and Sian. 135/ December brought to Ai Qing a meeting with East European writers, when he attended a conference with the Czechoslovakian cultural delegation. Together with Feng Zhi 馮至 (1905-) and Tian Jian, he explained to their guests the difference between old epics and the new narrative poems. 136/ In 1951, the 'Fight-America-Aid-Korea campaign' was launched, and one of the targets was to present to the Koreans a plane named after Lu Xun. In response to the appeal of the Union of Chinese Writers, Ai Qing donated ten thousand yuan in June. 137/ When the 'Korean People's Delegation of literature & art' arrived in July, Ai Qing was also invited to meet them. 138/

Among these social and public functions, the one which he valued with the greatest pleasure was a meeting with the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda in Beijing. 139/ At that time Ai

134. Renmin Ribao 1950.5.20.

135. CT2.

136. Renmin Ribao 1950.12.16.

137. Renmin Ribao 1951.6.4.

138. Renmin Ribao 1951.7.3.

139. CT2

Qing was living at the Yihe Yuan 頤和園 and a welcome party was organized in his residence in honour of Neruda 140/ whom he jokingly called 'the man with three ears' because the Chinese character used to represent Neruda's surname consists of three 'ear' radicals.

The reason for Ai Qing's sojourn at Yihe Yuan was a rapidly deteriorating relationship with his wife Wei Ying. 141/ Though there were already four children in the family, 142/ with the youngest girl being little more than a baby, their marriage was virtually breaking up. Even in the Yanan days, there had been frequent disagreements between the couple, for Wei Ying had an out-going and sociable personality, and Ai Qing was not a husband unprone to jealousy. 143/ Nor was he entirely free from any extra-marital interests in other women. In fact, because of allegedly promiscuous relations with women he had been put under close observation by the party, and when two years later he made similar mistakes, he was put under observation for two more years, with a suspended sentence of half a year of menial labour. 144/ For six months in 1951 he was sent to

140. Conversation with Ai Qing.

141. Ibid.

142. In fact Wei Ying had given birth to five children, but the eldest died in Yanan shortly after his birth because of the unhygienic conditions and lack of medical supplies. Conversation with Ai Qing.

143. Conversation with Gao Ying.

144. 'Li Youren, Ai Qing, Lo Feng, Bai Long fandang mianmu baolu' 李又然、艾青、羅峰、白朗反黨面目暴露 (The anti-party faces of Li Youren, Ai Qing, Lo Feng and Bai Long exposed.) Wenyi Bao 1957.9.8.

join in land reforms in Yongning District 永寧 of Guangxi 廣西 Province 145/ while in 1952, because of his 'freedomistic' attitude towards the party leadership, he was again sent to reform himself by studying in the villages. 146/ It was even alleged that while he was reforming himself in the villages, he became involved with two other women. 147/ These were all to be exposed in the Anti-rightist campaign a few years later, but as yet they did not affect Ai Qing's position in the party.

Ai Qing began to take steps towards divorce proceedings against his wife, who saw no reason why she should comply with his wish, and the case dragged on for several years. 148/ Meanwhile Ai Qing's time was taken up by his numerous public duties. Attending meetings and welcoming foreign guests became a way of life. The editorial board of Renmin Wenxue experienced some changes in March, 1952. Ding Ling became the assistant editor-in-chief while Ai Qing remained on the board as an editor until July, 1953, when he withdrew altogether. The reason he gave for his resignation was his wish to concentrate on creative writing. September and October 1953 saw the second Conference of the Federation of Chinese Writers and Artists, which Ai Qing attended in the

145. CT2 and Jiang Haitao's table of chronology.

146. Goldman, loc.cit. p.95.

147. 'Between words and deeds', Wenyi Bao 1957.9.15.

148. Conversation with Gao Ying.

double capacity of a member of the committee of the Federation as well as a director of the Union of Chinese Writers. After the Conference he was transferred to work in the Union as a resident writer. Meanwhile, the Union of Chinese Artists was formed, and he also became one of its directors. 149/ Despite his resignation from Renmin Wenxue, much of his time was still spent in attending meetings. In the spring of this year, however, he returned to Zhejiang with the purpose of collecting material on the anti-Japanese war fought in the eastern part of the province. 150/ His efforts resulted in 'The Hidden Gun' 藏槍記, his second long poem in the folk song style.

Back in Beijing, on the 14th of January, 1954, the first local elections were held. Ai Qing, together with Ding Ling and Zhou Libo 周立波 (1908-1979), belonged to the electorate of Dongdan Qu Dong Guanyinsi 東單區東觀音寺 151/. In early July in the same year, Ai Qing again left Beijing for Moscow. This time he was in a cultural delegation to Chile, to attend celebrations in honour of Pablo Neruda's fiftieth birthday. 152/ As the People's Republic was not yet recognized by many countries, there were difficulties in

149. CT2.

150. Ibid. & Jiang Haitao. In CT1 the time is given as the autumn of 1952.

151. Renmin Ribao 1954.1.25.

152. CT2.

obtaining visas for members of the delegation. 153/ The delegation set out from Moscow on 3rd July for a twenty day journey through Prague, Vienna, Geneva, Lisbon, Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires to Santiago. 154/ On 9th September, the delegation returned to Beijing. 155/ Haixia Shang (On the Cliffs) contains some of Ai Qing's poems written during this journey.

In October the same year, Ai Qing again departed from Beijing. This time his aim was to experience naval life in the Zhoushan Islands 舟山群島. A long poem 'Hei Man' 黑鯪 was written in November based on a legend he heard during his stay there. Returning to Beijing, Ai Qing continued with his official duties. On the Workers' Day (1st May) 1955, Ai Qing, with Tian Jian, Lao She and other writers, entertained an International Literary Delegation in the capital. 156/

Since 1954, the power struggle in literary and art circles had become more and more acute. Wenyi Bao was placed under the scrutiny of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee's propaganda department and the All China Federation of Literary & Art Circles, and was found to betray bourgeois tendencies 157/ with the result that Ding Ling,

153. A poem was written on this, entitled 'The story of obtaining visas' 辦簽證的故事 published in Wenyi Xuexi 文藝學習 Sept. 1956 pp.43-44.

154. CT2.

155. Renmin Wenxue 1954.9.11.

156. Ibid. 1955. 5.2.

157. New China News Agency. In SCMP 1957.8.6.

Chen Qixia 陳企霞 and their followers were supplanted by Zhou Yang's group. Ding and Chen were further accused of having rightist tendencies. The matter was again raised in 1955, and the Union of Chinese Writers concluded that Ding and Chen had wronged the party and the literary circle with their words and action. 158/ The case was not publicized at the time, but settled internally. This was made known to the public only during the Anti-Rightist campaign in 1957. To Ai Qing, such accusations were the result of sectarianism which had existed since the days of the League of Leftist Writers in Shanghai. Since he often professed his admiration for Lu Xun, it is not surprising that his sympathy was with the victims.

By this time, a storm, in the shape of the 'Hu Feng Incident', was ready to sweep the Chinese literary scene. Hu Feng, once the right hand man of Lu Xun and sworn enemy of Zhou Yang, was accused of being a Nationalist government secret agent. On 25th May an enlarged meeting was held jointly by the Federation of Chinese Writers and Artists and the Union of Chinese Writers, in which twenty-six members, Ai Qing among them, spoke against the anti-revolutionary activities of Hu Feng. 159/ It was perhaps this incident which gave some overseas observers the idea that Ai Qing

158. Ibid.

159. Newspaper cutting in the Files on 'Hu Feng Incident' in the Union Research Institute, Hong Kong. Name of newspaper and date of publication unknown.

belonged to Zhou Yang's group, 160/ but in fact he was never one who would willingly participate in party politics or interest himself in becoming a member of any particular fraction within the struggle for power in the literary circle. Actually it is quite remarkable that he had stood comparatively alone and aloof for so long without being pulled into either the camps of Ding Ling or Zhou Yang. But in this case, Ai Qing found it necessary to speak for self-preservation, because he was in some danger of being drawn into the incident. In a letter from Lu Dian 蘆甸 to Hu Feng dated 7th April, 1952, Lu said that he had seen a party document of 'Chen's report on Ai's words and deeds', and concluded that current criticism was concentrated on the then 'prominent figures'. 161/ Sha Ou 沙鷗, in a poem published in Wenyi Bao, directed a very obvious attack on Ai Qing, though without mentioning his name. 162/ The writer accused of 'softheartedness' can be identified as Ai Qing according to two things mentioned in the poem; that Hu Feng had helped him to fame by bringing him to the attention of the reading

160. Jin dakai 金達凱, 'Lun "Hu Feng wenti"' 論胡風問題 (On the Hu Feng question) Ziyou Zhanxian 自由戰線 vol.22 no.1, 1955.2.28.

161. Materials on Hu Feng's anti-party clique in Renmin Ribao 1955.5.24. Chen is probably Chen Yung 陳涌, one of Zhou Yang's assistants.

162. A poem entitled 'Wei shenmo tangyi paodan you tianwei' 為什麼糖衣炮彈有甜味 (Why are sugar-coated bombs sweet) Wenyi Bao 1955 no.12.

public 163/ and that when Hu Feng was exposed as an anti-revolutionary he had said that Hu should be 'firmly suppressed'. 164/ Sha Ou's attack, however, was unsuccessful. In Ai Qing's words, he did not share many of Hu Feng's ideas, and had particularly advised the latter not to criticize Guo Moruo, whom he considered had made significant contribution during the period of the United Front. 165/ In the struggle against Hu, Ai Qing also wrote an article 'Yi ge lishi de jiaoxun' 一個歷史的教訓 (A lesson from history), comparing the Hu Feng Incident to the first rectification campaign against Wang Shiwei 166/, and a poem 'Shenmo yazi' 什麼茅子 (What Shoots) refuting Hu's arguments. Zhou Yang even asked Ai Qing to encourage Hu Feng's wife to struggle against Hu; so for this time at least, Ai Qing was safe. This case, however, must have been a burden on his conscience, for almost thirty years later, he was still rather vague and defensive when the case of Hu Feng was mentioned. 168/

163. The first substantial critical essay on Ai Qing's poetry was written by Hu Feng on 20th Dec., 1936, entitled 'Chui ludi de ren' 吹蘆笛的人 (The flute player). Collected in Hu Feng, Miyun qi fengxi xiaoji 霧雲時期風霧小記 (Records of Exercises in Troubled Times) (Shanghai: Haiyan 海燕 1940) pp.137-149.

164. Ai Qing, 'Jienjue zhenya fangeming feitu' 堅決鎮壓反革命匪徒 (Firmly suppress anti-revolutionary bandits) Wenyi Bao 1955 no.11.

165. Conversation with Ai Qing.

166. Wenyi Bao 1955 no.15.

167. Zhongguo Qingnian (half-monthly) no.14, 1955.7.16.

168. Conversation with Ai Qing.

At this point, some important changes had also taken place in Ai Qing's private life. Having started divorce proceedings against his wife since 1950, he was finally granted his wish in May, 1955, after it was discovered that Wei Ying was having an affair with the foreman of a factory.

169/ In July, newly freed from his second marriage, Ai Qing met a young woman who was working at the Union of Chinese Writers and was conducting a survey on writers' loyalties.

170/ The woman, Gao Ying 高瑛, had just arrived at Beijing with her husband several months earlier. At that time she was only twenty-two years old, but she had married very young, at about seventeen or eighteen.

171/ When she met Ai Qing, she was already very dissatisfied with her marriage.

172/ A short time after they met, Ai Qing and Gao Ying fell in love, and she decided to divorce her husband. According to Ai Qing, in the beginning he was unaware of the fact that she was married and a mother of two children,

173/ but when he

169. Conversation with Gao Ying.

170. Shi Guang 石光, 'Xin shidai de jishengcao' 新時代的寄生草
(A parasitic plant of the new age) Zhongguo Qingnian
1957.12.16.

171. Conversation with Gao Ying.

172. Ibid. In 'A parasitic plant of the 'new age' an entirely different story is given. Gao Ying was said to have considered her husband a good match until she met Ai Qing, who dazzled her with his wealth, social and literary status. However, Gao Ying maintained that this article was written by Wei Ying's children, and from the intimate information given, it seems likely that Wei's children had at least provided the basic material if not actually written the article themselves. Thus, the article gives a different point of view but is not totally unbiased.

173. Conversation with Ai Qing.

learnt about this he was willing to support her children as well as compensate her husband. 174/. Yet the matter was not so easily settled, for her husband was not willing to divorce her nor let the matter rest. Encouraged by Liu Baiyu 劉白羽 (1916-), a writer not on very good terms with Ai Qing, he took legal action against Ai Qing for breaking up his family. 175/ In September, Gao Ying was transferred to the editorial department of Renmin Wenxue and she moved into a hostel. 176/ Threats of her husband's legal action did not stop her from seeing Ai Qing, and together they visited every scenic spot within the neighbourhood of Beijing. In the summer of 1956 Ai Qing spent half a month visiting Mongolia. On the evening of his return, he phoned Gao Ying and fibbed that he had a broken leg, so that she would not refuse to see him immediately. 177/ The continuous legal action Gao Ying's husband was seeking against Ai Qing proved extremely taxing on the poet, especially when his intention to marry Gao Ying was frustrated by her husband's refusal to divorce her. At last, to solve the problem, the court suggested that a suspended sentence should be passed on Ai Qing so that Gao's husband would give his consent to the divorce. The sentence was not to be publicized and the affair should settle quietly. All the parties concerned were finally persuaded to

174. 'A parasitic plant of the new age', loc.cit.

175. Conversation with Ai Qing.

176. Conversation with Gao Ying. Also in 'A parasitic plant'.

177. Conversation with Gao Ying.

accept this suggestion. Thus Ai Qing and Gao Ying were able to marry in early 1956. 178/

This love affair was perhaps badly timed, for an enlarged conference of the directors of the Union of Chinese Writers took place on 27th February to 6th March, during which Ai Qing was criticized. Ai Qing's own speech at the conference also partly admitted that he was not keen enough in his observation of certain social and political improvements. 179/ A reader's contribution to Wenyi Bao also focused attention on Ai Qing's inability to perceive and describe socialist advancements in China. 180/ These initial symptoms of disfavour did not particularly worry Ai Qing, for he still took part in official functions, and his second volume of selected poems, Spring, was published by Renmin Wenxue. However, the storm which was to wreck his so far secure position was fast approaching, and the troubles he had in private life were to be employed against him by his accusers.

Yet in early 1957 official duties still kept pouring in. In January the poetry magazine Shikan 詩刊 was founded with Ai Qing as one of the editors. Shouhuo 收穫 (Harvest), another literary magazine, also enlisted his help on its

178. Ibid.

179. 'Feiteng de shenghuo he shi' 沸騰的生活和詩 (Seething life & poetry) Wenyi Bao 1956, no.3.

180. Liu Yi 柳夷 'Ai qing weishenmo kan bu dao, xie bu chu' 艾青為

editorial board. As far as creative work was concerned, he had planned to write a long poem on the Hungarian Incident. But after finishing two sections he found that he did not have enough material for the whole poem, and it was abandoned. Instead, he went with Gao Ying to visit Shanghai and Hangzhou in March. 181/ In Shanghai he was collecting historical material for a long poem on the economic ^a aggression of the imperialist powers, and had in fact written one section entitled 'The Bund' 外灘, when he was unexpectedly called back to Beijing. A report entitled 'Tan Shi' 談詩 (A talk on poetry) was given at the Literary Study Institute in June, after which he travelled to Kuangming to welcome Pablo Neruda and accompanied him to Chongqing and Wuhan, before returning with him to Beijing. 182/

Once back in Beijing, Ai Qing was to discover that the political atmosphere was quickly changing. In May, 1956, the Communist Party had announced its policy of 'Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thoughts contend'. Ding Ling and Chen Qixia, who had been denounced by the Party in 1955, had hoped to reopen their case and overthrow the accusations against them. They considered the moment ripe when the 'hundred flowers' policy was announced. For Ai

什麼看不到, 寫不出? (Why can't Ai Qing see or write) Wenxi Bao 1956, no.10. In 1980 Ai Qing admitted openly for the first time that divorce and emotional problems hindered his creative work in the period. Xin wan Bao 1980.12.20.

181. Jiang Haitao, 'Ai Qing xiaozhuan' 艾青小傳 (A short biography on Ai Qing), Ai Qing zhuanji 艾青專集 (Special collection on Ai Qing) (Jiangsu:Renmin, 1982) p.7

182. CT2.

Qing, this new policy probably represented a breath of fresh air. Although he had to bow under criticism in February and March in the second directors' conference of the Union of Chinese Writers, this new policy seemed to provide a chance for him to express his true opinion. From May to August, he wrote four fables published in Renmin Ribao and Wenyi Yuebao 文藝月報. They were 'The dream of the gardener' 養花人的夢, 'The song of the cicada' 蟬的歌, 'The hunter who draws birds' 畫鳥的獵人, and 'What the idol says' 偶像的話. All four are political satires, with the first two aiming especially at the Party's literary policies. A poem 'Oriole' 黃鳥, close in ideas to 'The song of the cicada', had been written in 1953 but left unpublished, appeared in the August issue of Wenyi Yuebao. From this sudden outburst it is not too far fetched to conclude that Ai Qing had for some time been dissatisfied with existing conditions in literary circles. Bearing in mind the recent criticism directed against him in the Union of Chinese Writers, Ai Qing might have thought it a good chance to voice his opinion and thus justify his creative efforts which had been denounced in the conference of February to March. As early as 1939, Ai Qing had written, in On Poetry, that even when a poet is treated as an honoured guest by his country, he is still a prisoner under constant vigilance. 183/ But in the euphoria created by the 'Hundred Flowers' movement, he threw caution to the wind. Subsequent developments revealed that he, like Ding Ling and Chen Qixia, was over-optimistic in his interpretation of the

183. On poetry, p.137.

Party's literary policy. The latter two not only failed in their attempt to reopen their case, but were further exposed and denounced as the 'Ding-Chen clique' which had allegedly propagated anti-Party and rightist ideas among writers and artists. Ai Qing was asked by Zhou Yang to expose the secret anti-revolutionary activities of this clique and to join in the struggle against them, but Ai Qing, knowing no secrets about Ding Ling and Chen Qixia 184/ and no doubt sharing more of their views than Zhou's, declined. He was thus considered an accomplice of Ding and Chen, and his 'anti-Party activities' were widely exposed in August and September. His relationship with Ding Ling was described as 'very close'. 185/ In fact, according to Ai Qing, he and Ding Ling did not always share the same views on literature and politics. 186/ But Ai Qing made a fatal mistake in not only declining to join the persecutors against Ding-Chen, but actually expressed the view that within the Party, 'there is one group of people always who does the beating, and another group which always gets beaten.' 187/ Since he refused in this case to become a member of the first group, he was automatically assigned to the second group. In a series of enlarged meetings held in the Union of Chinese Writers he was

184. Conversation with Ai Qing.

185. 'Linghun wuwei de ren bu pei zuo renlei linghun de gongchengshi' 靈魂污穢的人不配做人類靈魂的工程師 (Those with an unclean soul is not worthy of being our souls' engineer) Renmin Ribao 1957.8.13.

186. Guan No, 'A visit to the poet Ai Qing', loc.cit.

187. 'Between words and deeds', loc. cit. Also Guan No, Ibid.

struggled against and made to re-examine himself. The most serious crime he was accused of was acting as go-between for the Ding-Chen Clique and the art circle, and of informing Yao Fangzao 姚方藻 and Mei Duo 梅朵, reporters of Wenhui Bao 文匯報, of details about how Ding and Chen were wronged by the Party. 188/ But attacks on him centred on two aspects -- his lack of enthusiasm and lack of praise for socialist China, and his relationship with women. His post-liberation poems were condemned as lacking in revolutionary spirit and betraying the feelings of a bourgeois rightist. As for his private life, the writer Ai Wu 艾蕪 (1904-) reported that Ai Qing had expressed the opinion that 'marrying one or two women in one's lifetime is really too few', and that 'being a party member entails too many restrictions; a non-party member can be far more romantic.' 189/ His previous suspended sentences, which were not meant to be publicized, were also used in the attack against him, and widely reported in newspapers and magazines, especially in the september issue of Wenyi Bao. Poets such as Tian Jian, Zang Kejia 臧克家 (1905-), Ke Yuan 柯原, Xu Chi 徐遲 (1914-), and Feng Zhi all contributed articles criticizing Ai Qing's poems and his attitude towards the

188. Renmin Ribao 1957.8.5. Also in Guangming Ribao same date.

189. 'Yao zuo gaoshang de linghun gongchengshi' 要做高尚的靈魂工程師 (We must be a good 'souls' engineer') Zhongguo Qingnian bao 中國青年報 1957.9.12.

Party. 190/ These, of course, only represented a small number of the people who felt a sudden repulsion towards Ai Qing. Indeed, some of them might not have borne too much animosity against the victim of their attack. Eversince its Yanan days, the Communist Party's rectification campaigns have always demanded that writers should show their loyalty by joining in the struggle against those who are denounced. Ai Qing himself, it must be remembered, had also participated in the campaigns against Wang Shiwei and Hu Feng. Moreover, he admitted that in cases such as these, the choice was really only between joining in the prosecution or the victims. There was hardly any neutral ground. 191/

Ai Qing's response to these attacks was simple but effective -- he ignored them. At that time he was in no position to argue with anyone who criticized him, for at a time such as the Anti-Rightist Campaign, to be criticized was like being sentenced. One could only confess one's crime;

190. Tain Jian, 'Ai Qing, hui guo tou lai ba' 艾青, 回過頭來罷 (Ai qing, turn back) Shikan 1957.10
Zang Kejia, 'Ai qing de jingzuo biao xian le xie shenmo' 艾青的近期作品表現了什麼 (What do Ai Qing's recent works reveal) Wenyi Xuexi 1957 no.10. Also 'Zai pipan de zhongdai yiyi' 再批判的重大意義 (The significance of renewed criticism) Guangming Ribao 1958.2.2.
Ke Yuan, 'Caiqi, diwei, yi ben shu' (a poem) 才氣, 地位, 一本書 (Talent, status, just one book) Shikan 1957.10.
Xu Chi, 'Ai qing neng bu neng wei shehui zhuyi gechang' 艾青能不能為社會主義歌唱 (Can Ai Qing sing for Socialism) Shikan 1957.9.
Feng Zhi, 'Bo Ai Qing "Liaojie zuojia, zunzhong zuojia"' 駁艾青「了解作家, 尊重作家」 (Refuting Ai Qing's "Understand writers, respect writers") Wenyi Bao 1958 no.2.

191. Conversation with Ai Qing.

there was no way even for an appeal. 192/ Many of the articles written by his colleagues against him did not come to his attention until 1979 or 1980, when he had been fully rehabilitated. 193/ At the same time, Gao Ying also tried to spare his feelings by making sure that such writings would not reach him. These included a rectification bulletin on the struggle against Ai Qing issued by the Union of Chinese Writers and circulated among its members. 194/ She also helped him in writing his confessions. 195/ Yet Gao Ying herself was also a target of attack, for in exposing her divorce and subsequent marriage to Ai Qing, both her reputation as well as Ai's would be damaged. 196/ Being a member of the Communist Youth League, she attended six meetings against her at the branches of the League, but finally decided to absent herself when they were considering their verdict on her. In November, 1957 she was expelled. 197/

192. Ai Qing, 'Xuexi Zhou Zongli Jianghua' ^{學習周總理講話}
(Learn from the speech of Premier Zhou) Wenyi Bao 1979
no.3, p.3.

193. Conversation with Ai Qing.

194. 'A parasitic plant of the new age', loc.cit. Also conversation with Gao Ying.

195. 'A parasitic plant of the new age', Ibid.

196. In 'A parasitic plant of the new age', Gao Ying is accused of maltreating Wei Ying's children, but since the children in question could have been the authors of the article, and Gao Ying maintained that Ai Qing's children were all under the care of servants (the boys were boarders at Yucai School), it is difficult, as is usual in these cases, to judge the rights and wrongs of the accusation.

197. Ibid.

Meanwhile, Ai Qing's confessions at the Union of Chinese Writers did not satisfy his prosecutors, who still considered him unwilling to repent. In fact he had reportedly said in a meeting of the poetry section, 'if I should be sent to prison, then send me to prison; if I should be expelled, then expel me.' 198/ In November he was dismissed from the editorial boards of both Shikan and Shouhuo, and by the end of the year was expelled from the Party. In February, 1958, he was formally denounced as a rightist and stripped of all official posts. Beijing was becoming difficult to bear for the condemned. Fortunately for Ai Qing, help was offered by General Wang Zhen, and in April, armed with the approval of Zhou Enlai, he set off for Heilongjiang 黑龙江 199/ with Gao Ying, a girl and a boy from her previous marriage, and a baby boy of their own.

For one and a half years they stayed there, with Ai Qing working as deputy administrator of forestry in a national farm in an area under development known collectively as Beidahuang 北大荒, literally meaning Northern Wasteland. The farms were not named, but just numbered, and the one in which they lived was 852. 200/ During his stay there, Ai Qing drew up a development plan for tree planting as a response to a tree planting campaign launched in February.

198. 'Shiren hu, zhuchong hu' 詩人乎, 蛀虫乎 (A poet, or a borer) Wenyi Bao no.23, p.6

199. Preface.

200. Conversation with Gao Ying.

201/ He also wrote two long poems, 'Traversing a thousand li of snow covered plain' 踏破荒原千里雪 and 'Sunrise on River Hamatong' 哈瑪通河上的朝霞 202/, but he could not publish anything at the time, and the manuscripts were lost later on. 203/

Life at Beidahuang was not too difficult for Ai Qing and his family, but as it was still a developing area, there was not much material comfort. Thus, in 1959, General Wang Zhen suggested that Ai Qing should take his family to Xinjiang, where he could still offer them his protection, and where living conditions would be much better. 204/ This offer was again gratefully accepted. In November they went to the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region where they were treated more like honoured guests than banished rightist. They enjoyed meals as good as those they had in Beijing, with four dishes and one soup, together with the choice of rice, steamed bread or noodles. 205/ In late August and early September, a truck driver in Urumqi was much in the news for having been on the road for 5000 kilometres without major repairs 206/ and Ai Qing was requested to write about this 201. Editorials and feature articles reported on this campaign throughout February, 1959.

202. CT2.

203. Preface.

204. Conversation with Gao Ying.

205. Conversation with Ai Qing.

206. There are many feature articles and interviews in the Xinjiang Ribao in August and September, 1959.

model driver. A reportage of ten thousand words was finished in the spring of 1960 and published by the Xinjiang Qingnian Publishing Co. 新疆青年出版社 under the new pseudonym Na Yong.

Ai Qing left Uygur in August for the new town Shihezi 石河子, where he joined the Eighth Farming Division of the Productivity & Construction Regiment under Wang Zhen's department of agriculture. 207/ Shihezi was a modern city, and for Ai Qing and his family life was peaceful. In 1961, the eldest son came to join them. 208/ November brought glad tidings, for the NCNA announced that Ai Qing was cleared of his charges as a rightist. It was published in the Renmin Ribao on 17th November, and Ai Qing was in the second group to be rehabilitated. However, his status remained practically the same. He still stayed in Xinjiang, and even in 1964 readers who tried to reach him were told by the Union of Chinese Writers that his charges had not been cleared, and their letters never reached him. 209/ Though chances of publishing his works were slim, Ai Qing did not stop writing. In fact he was asked to write a history of the reclamation team and their achievements, and later received the suggestion that he should develop it into a novel. The manuscript, about three to four hundred thousand words, is

207. CT2 and Jiang Haitao. In CT1 the month is given as October.

208. Conversation with Gao Ying.

209. Ai Qing, 'Learn from the speech of Premier Zhou' loc.cit. According to the Yangs, over 200 letters were redirected to him by Renmin Ribao.

still under revision with a temporary title 'The desert is receding' 沙漠在退卻. In the first six years in Xinjiang, only two of his poems were published: 'A young city' 年輕的城 in a magazine for internal circulation in the Eighth Farming Division, and 'From Nanni bay to Mosuo bay' 從南泥灣到莫索灣 in a Xinjiang literary magazine. The poems were published under the pseudonyms Lin Bi and Wan Ye 萬葉.

In 1962 Gao Ying gave birth to their second son. This means that Ai Qing had to support eight children; four from his second marriage, two from Gao Ying's previous marriage, and two of their own. However, only Wei Ying's eldest son, extremely talented in fine arts but quite hopeless in all academic subjects, had joined them in Xinjiang. The other three stayed with their mother in Beijing. Ai Qing had settled an annuity of 1,632 yuan on Wei Ying and their children, and after he was condemned as a rightist, had to put eight thousand yuan into a joint account with Wei Ying to guarantee that he would be able to pay the annuity. The money was 'frozen' and was not given back to Ai Qing until 1979.

210/ Since 1957, writers were given royalties, and the salary system was formally cancelled. 211/ Ai Qing went to Xinjiang with twenty thousand yuan, the royalties from five books. On arrival he donated five thousand towards the

210. Conversation with Gao Ying.

211. Lars Ragvold & Zhai Zhicheng 翟志成, 'Zhongguo dalu gaochou zhidu yanjiu' 中國大陸稿酬制度研究 (A study of the royalty system in mainland China) Mingbao monthly 明報月刊 1982.2-4.

purchase of machines for local developments, and the remaining sum lasted until 1963. Life became more difficult when money was running out, 212/ but they nevertheless managed to pay the annuity to Wei Ying regularly. 213/

The return of a peaceful life was blown to the winds when, with the coming of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, Ai Qing was again labelled an anti-party reactionary and a 'big rightist'. He was seriously criticized, and was not spared the humiliation of being exhibited on streets wearing tall hats, a fate shared by most prominent writers and artists. 214/ His youngest son Dan Dan ~~丹丹~~, barely four years old, would turn round every street corner in trepidation of running into such a procession, and if he did, would run home in torrents of tears crying 'My father is not a rightist!' 215/ All their possessions were to be confiscated, in order not to give the pleasure to his prosecutors, Ai Qing destroyed all his unpublished poems as well as collections of poetry, among which was an anthology of modern Chinese poetry in Romanized, containing twenty-one of his poems. A statue he brought back from France was also broken and buried underground. 216/ The manuscript of his

212. Conversation with Gao Ying.

213. Ibid.

214. Ai Qing, 'Learn from the speech of Premier Zhou'.

215. Conversation with Gao Ying.

216. Conversation with Ai Qing.

novel was confiscated, but returned to him after some time. Moreover, he was sentenced to 'reform through labour' in the Eighth company of the second battalion of the 114th regiment, 217/ also known as 'Little Siberia' because of its harsh conditions. 218/

Gao Ying felt that this treatment was too harsh to bear and decided to go to Beijing to appeal. While Ai Qing set off for 'Little Siberia' with the older children (Wei Ying's son who joined them in 1961 had left to become a red guard soon after the Cultural Revolution commenced), 219/ she took Dan Dan with her to Beijing. It was of course just a waste of money and effort, and she had to go back to her family in Shandong 山東 to borrow money so that she could return to Xinjiang. Violence was breaking out everywhere in China, and her journey proved to be extremely difficult. She was away from the family for nineteen months. 220/

The company Ai Qing was assigned to was situated more than twenty miles from the nearest town, and had minimal facilities. They set up home in a large hole dug in the ground, with a small opening serving both as entrance and for ventilation purposes. To enter, one had to climb down almost straight steps dug on the wall. The walls, too were not very

217. CT2.

218. Ai Qing, 'Learn from the speech of Premier Zhou'.

219. Conversation with Gao Ying.

220. Lo Hanchao, On Ai Qing, loc.cit. pp.252-253.

solid, and loose soil kept falling down. Gao Ying tried to make the place more tidy by plastering paper on the walls, but the sound of soil falling against the papers had an eerie effect, especially at night. 221/

At first Ai Qing's duty in the company was tending trees, but it was soon 'upgraded' to cleaning latrines. In the extreme cold weather of Xinjiang and with the crude facilities of the company this was not just sanitary work, but hard labour involving the use of spades, and a pair of sturdy gloves could not stand more than four or five day's wear and tear. The nature of Ai Qing's job also meant that Gao Ying had a tremendous amount of washing to do, for while his outer garments were invariably dirtied, his inner garments were always soaked with sweat from the physical exertion. 223/ In the evenings there were often meetings in which Ai Qing, a condemned rightist and anti-revolutionary, had to participate as a subject of struggle. For his hard labour he was awarded a monthly salary of fifteen yuan, and being a rightist, his food allowance was minimal. Besides, he was a heavy smoker, and even the cheapest cigarettes costed nine cents per pack. As a result, Ai Qing became incredibly emaciated, and the only comfort he could offer himself and his children was asking them to make believe that

221. Conversation with Gao Ying.

222. Conversation with Ai Qing.

223. Conversation with Gao Ying.

they were all born into such an environment, and must make the best of it. 224/ The only entertainment he had was reading scraps of old newspapers at night in the dimly lit 'house'.

The nearest town from the company was about twenty-five miles away, and Ai Qing had to go there every month for his fifteen yuan. Gao Ying's son from her first marriage, being the eldest boy in the family, would often volunteer to go in his place. If he was lucky, he could get a free ride on a truck for part of the journey, but it was not unusual to have to spend two days on the road because he had to walk all the way, in extremely severe weather. Once, the boy asked a schoolmate in town for a small hare so that Ai Qing and the family could have some meat. To keep it from the cold, he wrapped it inside his own clothes. But when he arrived at home the next day, the hare was frozen dead. 225/

Altogether Ai Qing and his family spent five and a half years in such strigent conditions. The hard labour at day and numerous humiliating meetings at night made these years the worst in Ai Qing's life. In September, 1971, there was a major political change in China. Lin Biao, heir-apparent to Mao Zedong, was killed in a plane crash and condemned as a traitor. Soon after this Zhou Enlai wrote to Ai Qing once and telephoned him three times, with the result that in the

224. Conversation with Ai Qing.

225. Conversation with Gao Ying.

winter of 1972, he was transferred back to Shihezi. 226/ The five and a half years at Little Siberia had severely damaged Ai Qing's health, especially his eyesight. After being examined in the hospital his left eye was discovered to have been completely blind from cataract for at least four years. 227/ The doctor at the hospital was a very capable one, but as Ai Qing was too famous a 'rightist', he dared not treat him. Instead he referred him for treatment in Beijing. 228/ Ai Qing's application for eye treatment was approved in the spring of 1973, and he was in Beijing for a period of four months. However, his eye did not respond to treatment and he returned to Xinjiang via Zhejiang, visiting his native village on the way. Two years later, in the spring of 1975, with the help of General Wang Zhen who had become Vice-Premier, he was again granted leave for further treatment in Beijing, and this time he stayed. His left eye remained almost completely blind, but his right eye was luckily unimpaired. To help protect his eyesight he started drinking a small glass of 'medicinal toad wine', a product of Yunnan^{雲南}, with every meal. 229/

In Beijing, Ai Qing originally had a house of his own, but it was confiscated after he was condemned as a rightist. Thus, when he returned from Xinjiang, he had nowhere to stay. 226. CT1 gives the time as spring, 1972.

227. CT1

228. Conversation with Ai Qing.

229. Ibid.

Bei Dao 北島, then a budding writer, lent them a small room where the whole family lived there for three years. 230/ In late July or early August of 1978, his house was finally given back to him. Although he was not able to persuade all the residents to leave, he regained five rooms for his family. 231/

After his return from Xinjiang, Ai Qing was virtually unemployed. On 30th April, 1978, he published his first poem in Wenhui Bao, thus breaking an enforced silence of twenty years. The poem is 'The Red Flag' 紅旗, which brought him immediate public attention. On 24th September it was formally announced by the Fa xin she 法新社 that the poet Ai Qing was again active. In October he went with a group of writers to visit the oil fields in Daqing 大慶 and Angang 鞍鋼. 232/ This was the first public function he attended after his return to Beijing, and it was followed by a poetry recital evening in Beijing on 25th November, in which his long poem 'On the Crest of the Waves' 在浪尖上 on the 'Tian anmen Incident' earned him tremendous public acclaim. However, a few stanzas of the poem were censored in a subsequent radio broadcast, and Ai Qing himself found it necessary to stress that he had not praised Zhou Enlai at the expense of Mao Zedong, thus revealing the still rather unsettled state of party politics as well as Ai Qing's

230. Nie Hualing, loc. cit.

231. Yan Huo 彦火, Zhongguo Xiandai Zuojia Fengmiao 中國現代作家風貌 (Contemporary Chinese Writers) (HK: Chaoming 昭明, 1980)

232. Ibid. and CT2.

caution. 233/ Another long poem, 'Eulogy of Light' 光的禮讚, was published in the January, 1979 issue of Renmin Wenxue, and February brought to him the appointment as leader to a group of poets, organized by Shikan she 詩刊社, visiting several sea ports. The group included more than twenty poets, mostly young or middle aged, with Gao Ying among them. They went to the Hainan Island 海南島, Zhanjiang 湛江, Guangzhou and Shanghai. Each wrote twenty to thirty short poems. 234/ The prose pieces written during this visit are collected into a small volume Hai lian hua 海戀花 (Blossoms of love for the sea). 235/

On returning to Beijing in March, Ai Qing was formally rehabilitated. He regained his party membership, his political reputation and his work grade and salary. 236/ As a top grade literary cadre he earned 330 yuan a month in 1981. 237/ Official duties again came pouring in. Shikan enlisted him on its editorial board, and in May, 1979 he visited West Germany, Austria and Italy as a representative of the 'Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Nations'. In the following month he was elected an additional member of the 'Chinese People's Political

233. Huai Bing 懷冰, 'Weirao "Zai langjian shang" de yichang douzheng' 圍繞在浪尖上的一場鬥爭 (A struggle around 'On top of the waves') Zhengming 爭鳴 1979.2.

234. CT2 and conversation with Ai Qing.

235. Published by Sicun Renmin Pub.Co., 1980.

236. CT2.

237. Conversation with Ai Qing.

Consultative Committee'. He was invited to spend the month of August in Harbin, and the Federation of Literary & Art Circles of Helongjiang held a 'Recital of Ai Qing's poetry' in honour of him. 238/ Renmin Wenxue publishing company released its new edition of Selected Poems of Ai Qing in September, 1979, and in 1980 the Foreign Language Press published the French translation of this volume. Four other volumes of poetry were published after this: Guilai de ge 歸來的歌 (Songs on my Return) in May 1980, Caise de shi 彩色的詩 (Colourful Poems), Shugingshi Yibai Shou 抒情詩一百首 (One Hundred Lyrics), Loye Ji 落葉集 (Fallen Leaves) and Xue Lian 雪蓮 (Snow Lotus).

Ai Qing's popularity within the literary circle was affirmed when, in November, 1979, he gained the largest number of votes in the election of the Fourth National Committee of the Federation of Chinese Literary and Art Circles, and was also elected a vice-chairman of the Union of Chinese Writers. 239/ In early 1980, he moved to live at a hotel (the Beiwei 北緯) with Gao Ying at government expense.

Within that year, he left China twice for overseas visits. On 10th June he set off for Paris, under the invitation of the Third University of Paris to attend an International Conference on Chinese Wartime Literature. The conference lasted from 16th to 19th, after which Ai Qing

238. CT2.

239. Ibid.

visited Italy again as a representative of the Union of Chinese Writers. 240/ He returned to Beijing on 7th July, but little more than a month passed before he had to prepare for a four-month visit to the United States. This visit resulted directly from a meeting with the organizers of the International Writing Programme at Iowa, who were the first foreigners to see Ai Qing in 1978 and bring news of him to the outside world. 241/ He left Beijing with Gao Ying on 24th August and spent three months in Iowa. In December he paid visits to several American universities before returning to Beijing via Hong Kong. During his short stay in Hong Kong he took part in a talk organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong and also met his former teacher Lin Fengmian at the Hong Kong Art Centre. 242/

In April 1982 Ai Qing attended a 10-day seminar of Asian writers held in Tokyo, and in May he was present at the celebration ceremony, held by the Association of Writers of Zhejiang Province, commemorating the half centenary of his poetic career. He then returned to his native village and and met 75-year-old Jiang Zhenyin 蒋正银, the second son of his wet nurse (the one whom he described as having been killed in a war). In January 1983, Ai Qing left China for Singapore to attend an international writing camp on Chinese

240. Ibid.

241. Nie Hualing, loc.cit.

242. Qin Song 秦松, 'Ai Qing haishi Ai Qing' 艾青还是艾青 (Ai Qing is still Ai Qing) Xin wanbao 1980.12.23.

In many respects Ai Qing's life after his second rehabilitation is very similar to that of the early fifties. Faced with a daily stream of foreign and local visitors, and frequently assigned to official visits within and outside China, Ai Qing should have found it as difficult as it was in the fifties to concentrate on creative work. Fortunately his creative impulse, having been suppressed so harshly and for so long, asserts itself with remarkable strength. In order that his writing would not be interrupted by daily visitors, he gets up at three or four o'clock in the morning to work until breakfast time. The large number of his poems published since 1979 bears witness to this diligent routine.

In October, 1983, as a response to the 'Anti-Spiritual Population Campaign' launched by Beijing to suppress freedomist attitudes of the post Gang of Four days, Ai Qing gave an opinion on nebulous poetry which seems to differ from his earlier avowed point of view. 244/ When nebulous poetry was at its ^ehey day, Ai Qing had often said, in private and in public, that clarity of meaning and intent should be a primary concern for poets. 245/ This is consistent with his

243. K.C.Low, On Poet Ai Qing (Singapore: Xi Leng Art Gallery, 1983)

244. 'Focus on China,' South China Morning Post 1983.10.28.

245. 'Ai Qing tan shi' 艾青談詩 (Ai Qing on poetry) Xin Wan Bao 1981.1.6.

'Ge jia shiren tan shi' 各家詩人談詩 (Poets on poetry) Beifang Wenxue 北方文學 1981.11

poetic ideal throughout his career. But in this particular comment he expressed the opinion that quite a number of these poems have strong literary merits and thus should not be condemned altogether. In speaking up for a style which he does not particularly favour, Ai Qing reveals a generous and perhaps daring spirit. One would say that he is not speaking for nebulous poetry, but for freedom of choice. However, this does not mean that his opinion^{of} the poet's mission has changed. He is still convinced that poetry should be for a wide public, and that stylistic and other experiments by younger poets in the past few years were largely unnecessary. Yet the fact that he qualified his disapproval with some form of recognition for nebulous poetry during a political campaign shows that he does not feel obliged to toe the party line. Ai Qing is, after all, still very much an individualist.

Most of Ai Qing's children seem to have inherited from him a literary or artistic talent. Of the two sons by Gao Ying, the elder is an art student studying in California and the younger, Ai Dan 艾丹, is a fledging poet. Two of his children by Wei Ying are also working in the field of fine arts and literature. Gao Ying, under his influence, has also published quite a number of poems since 1980.

Life is the most fertile soil on which art grows; ideas and feelings must take root underneath it.

-- On Poetry 1/

Ai Qing recalled that his initial attempts to capture transient emotions and fleeting impressions in the form of words rather than pictures were written down on canvas. 2/ Although these exercises at versification are long lost, many of his early works indeed reveal a not dissimilar effort at capturing impressions with the sensitivity of an artist. Three of Ai Qing's poems, 'When dawn wears white' 當黎明穿上了白衣, 'Over there' 那邊, and 'Sunlight in the distance' 陽光在遠處 3/ were written during his journey from Paris to Shanghai, and each reminds us of how much his early works have been influenced by his artistic training. The poems are inspired by surrounding scenery which draws from the poet an immediate emotional response. Though the emotions are strong, we are never allowed to lose sight of the fact that it is the scenery which inspired them. It is significant that Ai Qing started with recording his poetic attempts on canvas, for these poems are essentially impressionist sketches of the scenery around him. Colour plays an especially significant role, and reminds us constantly that

1. Shilun, p. 26

2. Preface, Ai Qing Shixuan (1981 ed.)

3. Published in Xiandai 現代 (Les Contemporains) under the name O Jia. 'Overthere' is collected in Dayanhe and the other two in Village.

Ai Qing set out to Europe with the aim of becoming a painter. Indeed, even on his return journey he had not changed his mind.

Colour is the dominant component in all three poems, and yet the effect achieved are extremely varied. In 'When dawn wears white', the colours used are cool, pastel, romantic, and somewhat muted, conveying a sense of natural harmony -- the purplish blue of the trees, the greenish grey of the hills seem to dissolve into each other, linked by the lustrous meadows in between. What is most striking here is the smoke:

on the meadow flows 草原上流動着
-- a fresh, milky smoke 一新鮮的乳液似的煙

The description is given texture as well as colour, and the smoke acts as a veil drawn over the otherwise too outspoken greenness of the meadows. The overall effect is very similar to the paintings of French impressionists whom Ai Qing admired so much during his stay in Paris. In 'Sunlight in the distance' an entirely different colour scheme is applied. Greyness envelopes the whole scene -- grey clouds, grey wind, grey sand -- this short poem is like a sketch in monochrome, emphasizing the one spot of gold in the distance. The colour gold is not explicitly mentioned, but definitely suggested in the effect of sunlight shining on desert sand. The third poem, 'Over there', is in conception not dissimilar to 'Sunlight in the distance', for its overall

picture is also dominated by one colour -- black, which sets off the shimmering lights in the distance. But unlike the previous poem, only very strong, bold colours have a place in this sketch -- flashing red and green in a setting a myriad lights against a background of complete darkness.

Another poem employing a similar colour scheme is 'Little black hands' 小黑手 4/:

A little gypsy
With a black face
And black hands

A little gypsy
Stood in front of the greengrocer's
He saw the red persimmons
He saw the yellow bananas

小吉普賽
有黑的臉
有黑的手

小吉普賽
站在水果鋪子的前面
看見紅的柿子
看見黃的香蕉

The form of objects described in these two poems are, however, very different. In 'Overthere' the shimmering lights are elusive, with no definite shape, while 'Little black hands' is like a study in geometric patterns. The roundness of the persimmons, the pleasing curve of the bananas and the outline of the child's hand all give a solid feeling of reality. The contrast here is thus not only between strong colours, but also between shapes of objects described.

4. First published in Re feng 勸風 Vol. 1, no.1 (1937.1.1)

In two of these poems, the visual impact is underlined by the word 'Look'. It conveys a kind of nervous ecstasy, a child-like naivete in 'When dawn wears white', as though the fading lights are a novelty. In 'Overthere' it suggests a sense a horror in the distance. The poet seems to be looking at the struggle of life as an outsider, thus giving the poem a mysterious and unearthly quality. Perhaps it is also worth noting that in both cases, the focus of attention is on the lights. And in fact with the exception of 'Little black hands', in these poems it is the light, be it natural or artificial, which is most vivid in the pictures we recreate in our minds.

Light is to be a prominent motif throughout Ai Qing's poetic career, and in his earliest poems he has already established its notable place. The image of lamp light in 'When dawn wears white' is very similar to his later use of the same image. Here, the light from street lamps is a remnant of the night, which will soon fade entirely out of sight. It heralds the motif of the struggle between light and darkness which is present in many of his later works.

'Conference' 會合, Ai Qing's earliest poem on record, 5/ already embodies the image of light in the form of fire:

5. Written in Paris, it was published under the name O Jia in Beidou 北斗 vol.2 no.2/3 (1932.7)

Lips are burning red and fly in their quick
movement,

Words like sparks spray from them.

鮮紅的咀唇片片地飛着，
言語像星火似的從那裡散出。

Their hearts are burning,

Their blood racing

他們的心燃燒着，
血在奔流....

Because of the same fire everyone's heart is burning
burning
burning

每個人的心都為同一的火焰燃燒着，
燃燒着，
燃燒着....

'Conference' is in fact also a very visual poem, and an
impressionistic one. What we are given are descriptions of
the different facial expressions of the members, of their
outfit and their action:

Long-haired, bespectacled, smoking,
Reading letters, reading newspapers

Thinking, troubled, excited

Silent

長髮的、戴眼鏡的、點捲烟的、

讀信的、看報章的....

思索的、苦惱着的、興奮的....

沉默着的....

But these details are enveloped in a whirl of movement and
noise, somewhat hysterical perhaps, yet effective in
conveying the poet's own excitement. They are more
indicative of the general atmosphere of the meeting than the
character of individual participants. In fact there is no
clear outline drawn of any single person. Ai Qing only
remembers these actions and expressions as part of the whole
picture, bound together by nothing but the prevailing noise
and excitement. The poem succeeds in burying their

individuality in the overwhelming presence of their common goal, and these fragments of movement and appearance brings to life the excited confusion of the meeting.

In 'Transparent night' 6/ a similar technique is used to create a similarly impressionist effect:

Spirits, lights, drunken faces
Dissipated laughter all in a huddle

酒、燈光、醉了的臉
放蕩的笑在一團 ...

The environment and people's movements are deliberately blurred, but particular items most suggestive of the atmosphere stand out in the chaos, thus establishing the desired effect.

'Transparent night' is also an exercise in the contrast of light and shadow. In section two of the poem, four stanzas begin with 'The oil lamp is like a wild fire' 油燈像野火一樣, and in each stanza a particular feature of the drunken men is described, as though as that moment the lamplight falls on this one feature, and it becomes the cynosure, the one brightly lit spot amidst a shadowy background. Attention is first focused on their faces, 'muddy coloured faces'

, then on the blood, thus shifting the focus to their blood stained arms and forehead, then on their

Flame-like muscles, and
-- hidden within --
The pain, anger, and power of hatred
火一般的肌肉, 以及 痛苦、憤怒和仇恨的力
——那裡的——

6. Dayanhe and Selected poems

After this the whole picture emerges, and we see, under the lamplight, the people to whom these arms, faces, foreheads and muscles belong:

Those active at night
Drunks
Tramps
Passing bandits
Cattle rustlers

夜的醒者
醉漢
浪客
過路的盜
偷牛的賊

The atmosphere in these few stanzas calls to mind vividly Dutch paintings of the Seventeenth Century, especially the works of Rembrandt and Rubens, in whose pictures the interior is so often dominated by a single source of light, and whatever is revealed or concealed in that light helps to emphasize the significance of the light source. In his overall conception of the poem *Ai Qing* also reveals the influence of his artistic knowledge, for it is a densely packed canvas of uproar and confusion.

If 'sight' plays an important part in *Ai Qing's* conception of a poem, so does 'sound'. In 'Conference' we can almost hear the participants shouting and crying together, hysterically and in great confusion, but in unison in their 'love of freedom and hatred of war' 虔愛着自由、恨戰爭. Smoke provides a link to the different noises in the first two lines of the poem by enveloping them in its all pervasiveness. Each noise is like a member of an orchestra concentrating on his own part with vehemence, but all contributing to the same theme of their common goal. In 'Overthere' the darkness is associated with a profound

silence, only broken by 'the sound of iron' coming from the myriad lights. This sound calls to mind the image of a city, with its machines and industrialization, but it also reminds one of a forge with its hammers and chains, thus symbolizing the physical exertion and struggle in life.

In 'Transparent night', what greets us first is the laughter of the drunken, walking nosily towards the 'slumbering village' 沉睡的村, and the token of their departure is again their laughter ringing in the air. The poem is further interspersed with their chorus: 'Wine, wine, wine / Give us a boost' 酒酒酒 / 我們要喝, and the change of scene to and away from the butchery is achieved by direct speech :

'Go
To the butchery, to
Drink beef broth'

走,
到牛殺場,去
喝牛肉湯

'While the stars are still quivering
Let's go'

趁着星星發抖
我們走

This emphasis on auditory effect, with the contrast between the dead silence of night and the clatter of the gang, gives an almost surreal quality to the poem.

Ai Qing's memories of foreign cities are also pervaded with different noises. Whether it is in 'Paris' or 'Marseilles' 7/ what attracts the poet is the dynamic power
7. Collected in Dayanhe and Selected poems, Selected works

of these cities: the constant action, change and bustle. Despite the fact that in 'Marsailles' Ai Qing portrays the seamy side of city life, and in 'Paris' its attractive attributes, the objects chosen to represent both cities are surprisingly similar. This is especially true of his descriptions of city noises.

The roads in Marsailles are bumpy, and the images duely suggest the squalid side of life in a city:

Look at the roads of the city
Swaying,
Trucks are swaying like drunkards.
The rough roads
Make the cars behave like country women
Scolding and cursing as they roll pass

看城市的街道
擺蕩着
貨車也象醉漢一樣顛仆，
不平的路
使車輛如村婦般
連咒帶罵的滾過

In Paris, Ai Qing is again fascinated by the traffic:

Look at rows and rows of trams
Vanishing
Towards the top of the long lines....
But rows and rows are coming again!

看一排排的電車
往長道的頂間
逝去
却又一排排的來了!

These two examples, both starting with the word 'Look', once again underline the importance of visual appeal in Ai Qing's poetic techniques. In 'Paris', the sense of immediacy is especially obvious, as the visual effect is supported by that

of sound:

Listen, electric bells
Fly past ringing ding ding ding ding

聽電鈴
叮叮叮叮叮地飛過

One can almost feel the gush of wind as the trams pass by.

In both poems there are sections devoted to the noises
pervading markets and shopping arcades, which are almost
parallels of each other:

The noise of markets
Like the applause of thousands of spectators in a
sportsground
Are broadcast
Pounding
From the other side of the street

市場的喧聲
像出自運動場上的千萬觀眾的喝采聲般
從街頭的那邊
衝擊的
播送而來 ...

-- Marsailles

Shopping bazaars standing hand in hand,
In the sunlight
In the lamplight
Forever reflecting on
Lightsome
Festive
Glorious murals
Like the colourful dances of Severini
Music from the radio : from the auction grounds
And the pounding
Immensely powerful
Clamour of labour --

摩手的大商場啊，
在陽光裏
電光裏
永遠的映照出
翩翩的
節日的

Severini 的 '斑斑舞蹈' 般
輝煌的畫幅 ...
從 Radio
和拍賣場上的奏樂
和沖擊的
巨大的力的
勞動的
叫器 —

-- Paris

Although, as in previous examples, Paris can boast of a beauty lacking in Marsailles, the similarity in Ai Qing's choice of descriptive details is still striking. The radio, actually present in 'Paris', is used as a metaphor in 'Marsailles', and the words 'pounding' and 'clamour' are common to both poems. The language of the oceanliners in 'Marsailles' is 'made of words of refined steel and iron ores' 是以鋼鐵和礦石的詞句造的, while the different noises in Paris culminate to form a 'poem of steel'. From these we can conclude that what stirs the poet's imagination in these big cities are essentially subjects of the same nature, but he endows each city with an individuality by the way in which he perceives and describes these subjects. The squalor and splendour of these French cities represent the qualities of city life which Ai Qing both admired and abhorred, and such conflicting emotions are to emerge again and again in his later works.

Ai Qing's relationship with Europe is a typical love-hate relationship:

Greed overflows from the corners of its eyes,
Contemptible bandit-like Europe!
Yet,
How deeply I love your Europe,
The Europe of Baudelaire and Rimbaud.

那在眼角裡充滿着貪婪，
卑污的盜賊的歐羅巴！
但是，
我熱愛着你的歐羅巴啊，
波德萊爾和蘭布的歐羅巴。

--The flute 8/

8. Collected in Dayanhe and Selected poems(55,79).

I hate you as much as I love you:

我恨你像愛你似的堅強：

-- Paris

Such feelings are easily understandable, for while he had found spiritual freedom and artistic inspiration in France, he was also harassed by racial discrimination and exploitation. In his eyes, the prosperity of these foreign lands is juxtaposed with the devastation western colonialism had inflicted on his own country. In condemning these western cities, Ai Qing thus gave vent not only to his personal frustration, but also to the anger of all oppressed people and nations. This idea receives detailed treatment in 'Paris' in which Ai Qing, as one of those who were attracted to the big city and who felt themselves victims of its exploitation, describes the experience of unfortunate thousands:

Oh, Paris!
For your lustrous smile
How many people
Have abandoned
Home and family who love them dearly, 9/
Lost in your suggestive glances;
Hundreds of thousands
Have exhausted their energy
Spent their sweat in labour,
To beg of you
To grant them a little sympathy
And a little love!
But
You --
Oh big metropolis
You are a creature
With a heart of iron!

9. According to Dayanhe. In Selected poems this line is changed to 'Their deeply beloved home and family' 深深的愛着的他們的家園 which suggests a patriotic feeling not present in the original.

啊，巴黎！
為了你的嫣然一笑
已使得多少人們
拋棄了
深深地愛着他們的家園，
迷失在你的曖昧的靑睜裡，
幾十萬人
都化盡了他們的精力
流乾了勞働的汗
去祈求你

能給他們以些須的同情
和些須的愛憐！
但是
你——
龐大的都會啊
卻是這樣的一個
鐵石心腸的生物！

In 'Marseilles', Ai Qing's political awareness and
condemnation of colonialism are even more overt:

Its gargantuan appetite
Will bring on the fertile lands of the Orient...
A disaster
Worse than a raid of locusts or drought --
Wider, deeper, and more unredeemable!
In the last half century
Several races had been made to smear blood and
shameful tears
On the pages of their history ...
And I -- this despondent young man,
Am one of the millions of millions
Among these races.

牠的饕餮的鯨吞
能使東方的富饒的土地
遭難得
比經了蝗蟲的打擊和旱災
還要廣大、深邃而不可救援！
半個世紀以來
已使得幾個民族在他們的史頁上
塗滿了污血和恥辱的淚...
而我——
這敗類的少年
就是那些民族當中
幾千萬裏的一員

Yet this revelation did not dampen the poet's
infatuation with these foreign cities. Though evil, the west
still has its attractions, for it represents power,
prosperity and progress. It may be built on an evil
foundation but its dynamic force nevertheless draws from Ai

Qing a strong, positive emotional response. He threatens to make a comeback, not to destroy the city, but to enjoy all that is now denied him:

When we overcome you
We will
Amuse you
Embrace you
Order you to laugh and sing
In our arms.

當克服了你時
我們將
娛樂你
擁抱著你
要你在我們的臂上
癡笑歌唱！

The poem ends with a potent exclamation:

Paris, you -- oh,
You wanton
Wanton
Seductively beautiful girl!

巴黎，你——噫，
這淫蕩的
淫蕩的
妖艷的姑娘！

Embracing all the poet's frustration, longing and disgust for the city and all that it represents.

'Marsailles' concludes on a similar note:

Marsailles!
When I was leaving
I cried out your name!
I also
Looked lingeringly at you;
My eyes
Knowing all your sins and secrets

馬賽！
當我臨走時
我高呼着你的名字！
而且我
以深深了解你的罪惡和秘密的眼，
依戀的
不忍捨去的看着你

This is perhaps even more revealing of Ai Qing's infatuation. Marsailles, as described, has few positive attributes. Paris is at least beautiful, though at the same time wicked;

Marsailles is 'the native land of bandits / A horrible city!' 盜匪的故鄉 / 可怕的城市! What is implied in this exclamation, however, is a deep sense of longing, of frustrated passion, and a desire to belong there. Like Faust, Ai Qing is faced with the power of evil and finds it irresistible. The love he has for these cities is not rational or logical, and is, as a result, even stronger and more compelling. Such mixed feelings for big cities is also to be found in his later poems, but the images in 'Marsailles' and 'Paris' are by far the most potent and striking.

Indeed Ai Qing describes his infatuation with these cities in terms of a love affair. On board the ship he looks at Marsailles's 'face' and 'huge arms extending out towards the ocean' 向海洋伸張着的巨臂, but it is in 'Paris' that the sexual connotation comes over mostly acutely. The whole poem is a sustained personification; Paris being described as a 'hysterical and beautiful prostitute' 你患了福斯的里亞的美麗的妓女:

All day long
You would unceasingly
Hammer at your breast with your hands
Strike! Strike!
Or crane your neck, looking towards the skies
Shouting!
Or droop your head despondently, eyelids locked
tight,
Absorbed in deep, dark contemplation,
Or loosen your long, golden tresses
Singing loud and clear,
Or else
Undo your scarlet dress
Revealing your luscious flesh,
Wilfully wanton ... You!

整天裡
你，無止息地
用手捶着自己的心肝
捶！捶！
或者伸着頸，直向高空
嘶喊！
或者垂頭喪氣，鎖上了眼簾
沉於陰暹的思索，
也沉於陰暹的思索，
激也或者散亂着金絲的長髮
激聲歌唱，

The magnetic power of your towering flames
Attracts from all over the world
Different peoples from different countries,
Braving danger
Rushing to you
To love you kiss you
Or hate you to the bone!

你火焰沖天所發出的磁力
吸引了全世界上
各個國度的各個種族的人們
具着冒險
奔向你
去愛你吻你
或者恨你到透骨！

If Paris is compared to an attractive prostitute, then
Marsailles, an industrial port, boasts a large number of
discarded mistresses:

Chimneys!
You women raped by capitalism!
From your head
Mournfully trails
Black smoke like the dishevelled hair of a
discarded mistress

煙囪！
你這為資本所奸淫了的女子！
頭頂上
憂鬱的流散着
棄婦之披髮般的黑色的煤煙

The image of prostitution is also present in this poem, and
surprisingly, in conjunction with that of the sun:

也或者
解散了緋紅的衣褲
赤裸着一片鮮美的肉
任性的浮蕩 你！

The sun at noon
Is an intoxicated eye,
Radiating its muddled anger
And muddled sorrow ...
It
Is like a whoremaster
Staring at
The tall chimneys
Which rise between rows and rows of factories .

午時的太陽
是中了酒毒的眼，
放射着混沌的憤怒，
和混沌的悲哀 ...

她
嫖客般
凝視着
廠房之排列與排列之間所伸出的
高高的煙囪。

The sun, in Ai Qing's later works, is seldom associated with such negative qualities. Here, his imagination is probably triggered by the haze and pollution of an industrial port. This image also calls to mind, with its dizzy quality, van Gogh's vision of the sun.

While one cannot say that Ai Qing's attitude towards foreign cities is ambiguous, it is certainly very complex. He often observes city life with the eyes of a country boy, and one is tempted to suggest that the overwhelming impact metropolitan life had on him was at least partly due to the comparatively monotonous rural existence he had led up to the time he left China. 10/ It must be a shock for anyone of

10. In The earth Ai Qing recalls this transition in the following words: 'I no longer lived in a medieval style city: the ceaseless noise of machines and crowds, made me forget my loneliness; life affected my thoughts and changed my sense of aesthetics. I began to understand the fruits of human civilization, and was able to use bold colours on my canvas.' From 'Yi Hangzhou' ^{憶杭州} (Memories of Hangzhou), The earth, p.34.

rural origin to arrive at a big city; in this case, it is also the capital of a foreign, aggressive country. Ai Qing's simultaneous resentment and infatuation is thus understandable.

In order to relate to this totally new experience, he often resorts to images which were familiar to him. Hence, the traffic in 'Marsailles' is compared to drunkards and country women. Similarly, city crowds are often associated with sea-faring or oceanic images:

The unceasing chain of pedestrians,
Hurriedly,
Staggeringly,
Throng past my dawdling footsteps ...
Their eyes are looking straight ahead
-- Like ships out at sea at night
Heading the way indicated by the lighthouse,

接連不斷的行人
匆忙的，
踉蹌的，
在我這遲緩的腳邊擁去 ...
他們的眼都一致的
觀望他們的前面
一如海洋上夜裏的船隻
朝向燈塔所指示的路

-- Marsailles

The flood of people
Rushes from the mainstreets
Into different alleys
And, from different alleys, double back
To form the flood,

群衆的洪流
從大街流來
分向各個小弄
又從各個小弄，折回
成為洪流，

-- Paris

This particular association is not only true of his poems on the French cities, but also recurs frequently in his later

city poems.

However, images of the sea are not only conjured up by the bustle of city life. At the other extreme, in poems describing the loneliness of prison nights, Ai Qing also makes use of oceanic metaphors:

My abode is like a cape with ever pounding waves
I listen to the seething wind as though it is my
own memories
My heart is an old battered boat
Wandering forever between the rising tides.

像棲息在海浪不絕的海角上
聽風嘯有如聽我自己的回想
心顛仆的陳年的破舊的船隻
永遠在海浪與海浪之間飄蕩

-- Prison nights 監房的夜 11/

Similarly, in 'Listen' 聆聽, 12/, the roaring power plant and the shores of fellow inmates also remind Ai Qing of a sailing ship. Thus the night in this poem is described through the metaphor of a ship. 13/

In representing such contrastive moods with images derived from the same source, Ai Qing is making use of the

11. Published in Chunguang 春光 Vol.1 No.1 (March, 1934). The first poem published under the name Ai Qing.
12. First published in Chunguang Vol.1 No.2 (April, 1934). Collected in Dayanhe.
13. Yet another example of this particular association is in 'Night (1)' 夜, written as late as July, 1940. Collected in Dawn):

The night is transparent again.
When I stand in front of the window
I seem to float
On board a silent sea.

夜又透明了。
當我起來站在窗口
我好像飄浮在
廣闊而寂靜的海上呵。

different aspects of his sea-faring experience. For a relatively inexperienced young man in his early twenties, the months he spent at sea travelling to and from France must have deeply impressed him, and thus become an integral part of his early poetry. The vast expanse of swelling waters, the rapid rise of tides and torrents suggested to Ai Qing a sense of power and excitement similar to the feelings generated by city crowds, while on the other hand, the sense of isolation and uncertainty inherent in any long sea voyage provide the ground for the metaphors of many of his poems written in prison.

Although Ai Qing was fascinated by life in Europe, he was also haunted by memories of his homeland. 'Song of a painter' 畫者的行吟 represents a merging of feeling both Chinese and European. The setting of the poem is Paris. Yet it begins with the poet's dream of his native villiage, particularly the piece of red cloth used by itinerant entertainers in China. This red cloth, however, is immediately associated with the ones used by Spanish metadors, thus introducing the danger and violence of a bull fight. For even in moments of tranquil pleasure and artistic enjoyment Ai Qing could not forget that as a Chinese, he was a citizen of an exploited and humiliated country:

-- I wish that in the realms of Colour
There will be no scornful laughter at nations and
races.

——但願在色彩的領域裡
不每有詆毀和種族的嘲笑

In spite of the excitement offered by a big city and the

consolation he could find in art, the general tone of the poem is still melancholic. He was constantly reminded that in this prosperous land he was a stranger, and even art is not a totally secure sanctuary from the humiliations inflicted by the aggression of foreigners. Ai Qing was weighed down by the burden of patriotism.

Indeed his response towards French cities seems full of contradictions, and injured national pride is just one of the causes of such conflicting reactions. On the one hand, the bustling city scenes excite him; on the other hand, the continuous din tires him out. Thus, in 'Song of a painter' his idyllic land is a rural scene, while in 'A visit to an old mansion' 古宅的造訪 14/, nostalgia pervades. The latter was in fact an escape into a 'medieval Paris'. This is one of Ai Qing's most sentimental poems. In it he describes a life of old world elegance, of literature, mythology and unspoken love. It is 'a dream left from the ancient days'; a far cry from the crowds, traffic and noise in 'Paris' and 'Marsailles'. Perhaps more than any other poem, 'A visit to an old mansion' gives us a glimpse of Ai Qing's longing for the cultural, artistic and romantic heritage of the west.

Ai Qing's sojourn in France has left its imprint on his poems, not only in his choice of subject matter, but also in the images he borrowed from the west. It is seldom mentioned

14. Published in Shige Yuebao 詩歌月報 Vol.1 No.3 (March, 1934).

in discussions of Ai Qing poetry that he had any particular interest in the Christian faith, and indeed he was never a religious man. However he admitted that he had read the Bible and was much impressed by the simple language which is used to great effect. It was in fact one of the formulating factors in his advocacy for the use of simple language in poetry. 15/ Of course, having stayed for three years in Europe, where for centuries halls of learning had been dominated by religion, Ai Qing could not help coming into contact with Christianity. Moreover, in the works of French poets such as Baudelaire and Appolinaire, whom Ai Qing read and admired, religious images and allusions abound. It is thus not surprising that they also play a significant part in Ai Qing's early works drawing on his experiences in France.

His interest in Christ seems particularly strong. While ill in prison he had written a whole poem on the death of Jesus -- 'The death of a Nazarene' 一個拿撒勒人的死 16/, while 'The stable' 馬槽 17/ was written on a Christmas day 'for the birth of a Nazarene'. But in fact Ai Qing's interpretation of Jesus's life and death shows that he was not a believer. Rather than portraying Christ as God, his view of Him was of a man born in shame, oppressed and

15. Conversation with Ai Qing.

16. First published in Shige yuebao 詩歌月報 Vol.1 No.3 (June, 1934). Collected in Dayanhe, Selected poems (55).

17. First published in Xinshi 新詩 Vol.1 No.5 (Feb., 1937). Collected in Wilderness and Selected poems (55).

his birth, but who upheld the truth and would sacrifice his life to do so. It reminds us of what he wrote in On poetry a few years later:

The earth is round, and moving, but the first man who said this was killed. Yet the earth is still round, and moving. This is Truth. 18/

Hu Feng 胡風, in the article 'A poet who plays the flute' 吹簫的詩人, also described 'The death of a Nazarene' as a salute to a man who sacrificed himself because of a belief in the ultimate victory of ideals. 19/ Ai Qing's description of Christ's death may be seen as a symbol of his own afflictions, for he too, was suffering in prison because he held ideas which were unacceptable and dangerous to the authorities. The poem is in a way a kind of self-assertion and solace to the poet who was ill and confronted with the possibility of death. But at the same time Jesus is also seen as the leader of the oppressed, and many of the things He said in the poem could very well be Ai Qing's own words on his suffering countrymen:

Kings will be condemned
The blind, the sick, and the poor
Shall find their own Kingdom of Heaven.

帝王將受譴責
盲者、病者、貧困的人們
將找到他們自己的天國。

Friends, please believe in me
Live according to my prophecy.
Tomorrow you'll see
That this extensive land

18. 'On poets' No.24, On poetry.

19. Hu Feng, Miyunci fengxi xiaoli 密雲期風習小記 (Essays in a stormy time), pp.137-149.

And all the happiness that belongs to life
Will from the hands of Caesar
Be returned
To the people who had irrigated it with their
blood and sweat!

朋友們，請信我
憑着我的預言生活去，
看明天
這片廣大的土地
和所有——一切屬於生命的幸福

將從凱撒手裡
歸還到那
以血汗灌溉過牠的人們的！

If we take away the specific reference to Caesar, this becomes
a valid address to Chinese farmers of the twentieth century.

Ai Qing's sympathy with the down-and-outs is not only
revealed in poems such as 'Transparent night', but also in his
essays on poetry:

Trust them --
Those who are crippled, blind, incapacitated ...
Those who are poor, in debt, beggars ...
Those who are prostitutes, thieves, bandits ...

信任他們 ——
那些跛行者、盲人、殘廢了的....
那些窮人、負債者、以及乞丐....
那些賣淫的、竊賊、盜匪....

20/

Always stay with the poor and the suffering,
understand the beauty of their soul ... In this
world they are the only reliable people. 21/

One cannot help noticing a biblical overture in this treatise
to poets. And in another section of On Poetry Ai Qing
actually associates poets directly with Christ:

20. 'On poets' No.7, On poetry.

21. Ibid. No.5.

Oh poets --

I only wish the people for whom you pray, the
public whom you bless, will not throw stones
at you in the end;

As for the anger of Pilate, the jealousy of the
chief priest and the elders, the scorn of the
Pharisee, what do they signify? 22/

It is therefore the human qualities of Christ -- the man who
sacrificed his life in order to propagate the truth he
believed in, the champion of the underdog -- which arouse in
Ai Qing a sense of empathy. In all the poems in which Ai Qing
employs the Christ imagery, it is the suffering of Christ,
especially the crucifixion, on which he concentrates:

People say, 'We are the Christs
Who embrace our own pain.
We, with red lips protruding
Sucking the pus and blood flowing from our hearts.

人們說：「我們都是擁抱着
我們的痛苦的基督。
我們伸着兩片紅唇，
吮吻我們心中流出的膿血。

23/

Aren't we all
In our own age
Nailed to the cross?
And this cross
Is no less painful than the one
Which nailed the Nazarene.
Our enemy's hands
Have put on us a crowd of thorns
The deep red drops of blood dripping
From our pricked pale foreheads
Have not written the last word on
Our pent up anger and grief. 24/

我們豈不是
都在自己的年代里
被釘上了十字架麼？

而這十字架
決不比拿撒勒人所釘的
較少痛苦

22. Ibid. No.9

23. Published in Xiandai 現代 Vol.4 No.5 under the name O
Jia.

24. Collected in Wilderness, Selected poems(55,79,F), and Ai
Qing.

敵人的手
給我們戴上剝棘的冠冕
從刺破了的慘白的前額
淋下滾滾的紅血點
也不常寫盡
我們胸中所有的悲憤啊！

The phrase 'the son of man', which is used in 'The death of the Nazarene', is also found in 'Spring' 25/. But in the latter referring to suffering men rather than Christ:

And oh this old earth

而這古老的土地啊

Is always like a hungry beast
Sucking the blood of young people
The blood of the stubborn sons of man

隨時都像一只飢渴的野獸
吮吮着年輕人的血液
頑強的人之子的血液

An examination of these images will show that every mention of Christ and the crucifixion is followed by the image of blood -- the draining of life. Although there is anger at this waste, expressed in 'Smile', and a kind of surrealist obsession in 'Ill in prison', it nevertheless also holds a promise, as in 'Spring'. Just as the blood of Christ washed away the sin of men and also became a symbol of his sacrifice, so the sufferings of the young Chinese will one day burst into glorious blossoms:

These blood stains, species of blood stains
In a mythical night
In a deep black night of the East
Break into numberless buds
Decorating the south so that spring is everywhere

People ask: Where does spring come from?
I answer: From the graves in the countryside.

25. ~~Written in April, 1937.~~ Collected in Wilderness, Selected poems (155-79), 100 lyrics, Ai Qing.

這些血跡，斑斑的血跡
在神話般的夜里
在東方的深黑的夜里
爆開了無數的蓓蕾
點綴得江南處處是春了

人問：春從何處來？
我說：來自郊外的墓窟。

A similar idea is behind Ai Qing's conception of the birth of Christ:

From the woman giving birth, blood
Sprayed on a stable which has never saw flowers
The most beautiful blossoms

產婦的血
在永不開花的馬槽裏
散下了最艷麗的花朵

-- The stable

This motif reveals a basic resilience and optimism in the face of danger and humiliation. Ai Qing does not believe in Christ, the son of God, but he has infinite respect and empathy for Jesus, the wronged but unbending man.

Besides the story of Christ, in Ai Qing's early works there are also other images of strong foreign flavour. The description of Appolinaire in 'The flute' 蘆笛, for example, verges on the romantically decadent:

For you are
In my eyes
Really a story afloat in Montmatre,
That long,
Fascinating,
Scarlet story coming
From the trembling derouged lips of Marguerite.

因為你
在我的眼裡
真是一節流傳在蒙馬特的故事，
那冗長的，
迷人的，
由瑪格麗特的褪了脂粉的唇邊
吐出的薑色的故事。

'Ill in prison', written during a high fever, is an interesting and quite unique example of an attempt to extract beauty from an environment and a subject which are essentially ugly, morbid, and terrifying. This poem could not possibly have grown from Chinese roots. There is an almost eerie quality in some of the associations:

Oh my greenhouse of tuberculosis.
Bandages are lotus flowers,
With a latent inebriating scent;

...

Oh my greenhouse of tuberculosis;
There, in a temperature of 105°
From the lilac-like lobes of my lungs,
I emit red flowers of tragic beauty.

我肺結核的暖花房呀。
繡紗布為芙蓉花，
而蘊有醉人的氣息；
...

我肺結核的暖花房呀；
那裡，在 105° 的溫度上，
從紫丁香般的肺葉，
我吐出了悽絕的紅花。

Yet another image of disease is deliberately revolting, and we cannot help thinking that Ai Qing's sense of aesthetics sometimes verges on the grotesque:

We, with red lips protruding,
Suck the pus and blood flowing from our hearts.

我們伸着兩片紅唇，
吮吻我們心中流出的膿血。

In fact the whole poem is filled with symbols of death: the 'iron gates' dividing the cell and the outside world are also a boundary between life and death; the dew which represents to the poet the last rites; and the black cat, a messenger of death. The imaginative gaps between stanzas in this poem is probably the widest in all Ai Qing's poetry. Rather than following a logical or expected order, ideas and images are loosely associated, suggesting the poet's delirious state

because of high fever. This is certainly different from the longer poems of the same period and also from his later works in which ideas and images tend to be much more coherent and direct. What holds the images together in 'Ill in prison' is the general theme of death running through every stanza, and more remarkably, the sense of exaggeration and self-mockery suggested in some of the images. It shows that under such trying circumstances, Ai Qing still retained his sense of humour. The 'inebriating scent' may very well have been nauseating; and to compare a face flushed with fever to the grandeur of the clouds of Pompei, and his mouth to a volcano certainly reveals an attitude of mockery towards his own illness. On the whole, this poem, quite unique among Ai Qing's works, demonstrates the range he was capable of, and indeed experimented with, in the early stage of his career.

Belonging to this category of experiments in a different poetic style are six poems, also published in Xiandai, under the collective title 'Dawn and five other poems' 黎明外五章 26/. The individual titles of each poem, perhaps with the exception of 'Dawn' 黎明, are significant in this collection in that they all represent the basic idea on which the poems are formulated. In a way these short poems can be regarded as exercises in which one single image or one single phrase is made to sustain the whole poem. One such example is 'The lamp' 燈 :

26. Published in Xiandai Vol.5 No.2 (Jun., 1934).

I wish I could go to the end of the earth
 To stand underneath that lamp --
 But the end is further away than my wish!
 Though shafts of light have eliminated the
 distance to a nonexistent degree;
 But what will enable my trembling fingers
 To touch softly
 The luminous forehead of the lamp?

盼望着能到天邊
 去那盞燈的下面——
 而天是比盼望更遠的！
 雖然光的箭，已把距離
 消滅到烏有了的程度；

但怎麼能使我的顫指
 輕輕的撫觸一下
 那盞燈輝煌的前額呢？

Here it is the sight of a street lamp, a symbol of freedom and hope, which stirs the thoughts of the poets. These thoughts are then transformed into a series of images. However, under close analysis there seems to be some inconsistency in Ai Qing's choice of metaphor, especially regarding the lamp. As the lamp light is compared to arrows, it is rather difficult for reader to accept the personification of the lamp in the last line. But this does show that Ai Qing based the impact of his images not only on visual or auditory appeal, but also on a tactile level, so that in his poems there is always a sense of immediacy and reality. The word 'eliminate', used together with 'nonexistent', also seems redundant. Although the images work very well each on its own, the relationship between them is a little strained. It seems that Ai Qing, in concentrating on the impact of a single metaphor, had temporarily lost sight of the whole picture.

However, another poem in the same group, 'The road' 路 is an excellent illustration of the smooth transition of thoughts through the power of association. It also begins

with the presence of a street lamp, but here it is the darkness outside the range of the lamplight which inspires Ai Qing in his choice of ideas and images:

Walking past the street lamp
The road is dark again

In the darkness, I'm used to hearing
Footsteps walking next to memory

Six years of tediousness have made pedestrians on
this road
Cover a distance a thousand times longer than this

Those who walked next to me?
They have scattered in forgotten lands

Walking past the street lamp
The road is dark again ...

走過了路燈的
又是黑暗的路

黑暗裡，聽慣了
和回想並肩的腳步

六年的冗長使這條路的步行者
走過了比這路更長千倍的

曾是並肩的人呢？
總已分散在遺忘的國土

走過了路燈的
又是黑暗的路

The atmosphere in this poem is extremely well conveyed, and the reliance on auditory rather than visual impact is remarkable. It is as though vision is temporarily blocked out by the darkness and we are made unusually aware of the sound of footsteps, which arouse in the poet's mind thoughts of the past. This flowing stream of thought is carried on in the repetition of phrases in consecutive stanzas, drawing attention to the association between ideas, as well as in the use of rhyme. The 'darkness' in the first stanza leads the poet onto the 'footsteps' in the second, which in turn call on the 'pedestrians' in the third stanza, and 'those who walked

next to' the poet in the fourth. This smoothness is supported by the use of end rhymes in all except the third stanza: lù 路 bù 步, and tǔ 土.

Three other poems in this group, 'Bubbles' 泡影, 'Vastness' 遼闊, and 'Pulses' 搏動 are also written in a similar vein, with the whole poem built on ideas suggested by one single image. However, there is one interesting point common to three of these six poem, namely 'Vastness', 'Pulses' and 'The road', which is worth noting. In these poems the last stanzas all echo the first. It is the same technique used in 'Dayanhe' 大堰河 27/ and also in many of Ai Qing's later poems. It shows that although these poems are different in style from most of his subsequent works, structurally and technically there are common features between them.

In the midst of religious references and European subject matter, one poem written in prison stands out alone in its directness and purity in feelings which are essentially Chinese. It was also the poem to win Ai Qing the widest public and critical acclaim. 'Dayanhe' was in fact written very early in his career, only shortly after his imprisonment, and comes before 'The death of the Nazarene', 'Paris', 'Marsailles', and even the group 'Dawn and five other poems'. Written in memory of his wet-nurse, the poem is also autobiographical. Woven into the poem is a series of mental pictures -- what Ai Qing recalled of the the experience of his

wet-nurse, her family, and himself. The insistent repetition of grammatic structure is probably inspired by Whitman, whom Ai Qing admired after reading translations of some poems from Leaves of grass. 28/ The detailed description of Dayanhe's work is almost naturalistic. A series of images is put forth through syntactic repetition, with the variety in line length and the placing of the caesura counteracting the possible monotony which could result from such piling up of descriptive details. Another possible hazard in such massive description and grammatic repetition is that readers might easily lose track of the initial ideas which begin a stanza. This is avoided, in 'Dayanhe', by repeating the first line or first sentence at the end of the stanza. It also gives the poem a kind of smoothness in its slightly undulating effect, not unlike a lullaby. Thus the individual mental pictures blend into each other, following the rhythm of this undulating movement, and create a general atmosphere of love between the poet and his wet-nurse against a detailed background of life in rural China. It is obvious that the poet has presented the subject of this poem with loving care, and yet, though the technique is the same, certain details tend to be more effectively handled than others. It seems that Ai Qing is happier in depicting action and movement than in portraying immobile scenery. A comparison between lines taken from the

27. First published in Chunguang Vol.1 No.3 (Mar., 1933).
Collected in Dayanhe, Selected poems(55,79,F), Ai Qing.

28. Feng Weicai 馮偉才, 'Shidai de shiren yu shiren de shidai' 時代的詩人與詩人的時代 (The poet and his time),
Xin wan bao 新晚報 1981.2.24.

third, fourth and sixth stanzas of the poem will illustrate this point:

Your grass-covered, snow-laden grave,
Your shut-up old house with withered weeds on the roof,

Your ten-square-foot plot, mortgaged,
你的被雪壓着的草蓋的墳墓
你的關閉了的故居蒼頭的枯死的瓦非
你的被典押了的一丈平方的園地 (3rd)

After you had started the kitchen fire,
After you had brushed off the ashes on your apron,
After you had tested that the rice is cooked,

在你搭好了竈火之後，
在你拍去了圍裙上的炭灰之後，
在你嘗到飯已煮熟了之後， (4th)

I looked at the sister in my mother's arms; a stranger to me,

I sat on the painted and heated brick bed,
I ate white rice that had been milled thrice,

我看着母親懷裡的不熟悉的妹妹，
我生在油漆過的塗了火鉢的炕籠，
我吃着研了三番的白米的飯 (6th)

The 'non-action' scenes are comparatively unsmooth probably because of syntactic overloading. Ai Qing has perhaps overstretched the flexibility between nouns and adjectives, for in the third stanza each subject is preceded by a long adjectival clause, which in turn usually consists of two or three phrases. Such accumulation of details results in a state of 'congestion', and it is difficult to establish immediately the relationship between different phrases in a line. To make matters worse, the subordinating de (的) is also over used. It appears as many as four times in line three of the third stanza (which in itself only consists of sixteen

syllables), and three times in all the remaining lines in this stanza, thus contributing to the confusion. 29/ With the description of action the case becomes much simpler. In spite of the objects and relatives which are still important, the action focuses our attention and gives the line a kind of perspective.

The technique of repetition in 'Dayanhe' may have been borrowed from Whitman, but the subject matter, the theme and the feelings expressed in it are quintessentially Chinese. In fact it was the first of Ai Qing's poems about the daily hardships in the life of his countrymen. This subject was to become the basis of inspiration for many of his best poems in the years to come. He may have experimented with other styles and forms in the intervening time, but ultimately he was to return to this directness of appeal based on personal experience and a deep love for rural China.

Indeed, the poems Ai Qing wrote during his short stay in Shanghai after being released from prison illustrate a firm step towards this kind of style and subject matter. Despite the harshness of prison life, Ai Qing, in poems such as 'The flute' and 'The death of a Nazarene', already convey a strong faith and optimism in the future. In the poems written after his release this faith is strengthened by a robustness. Under the pseudonym Ke A 柯阿, he wrote his first long narrative

29. This seems to be a characteristic in many of Ai Qing's early works. A typical example is 'The flute'.

poem -- 'The nine hundred' 九百個 30/. The setting is historical; in the late Qin 秦. The story of Chen Sheng 陳勝 and Wu Guang 吳廣 leading a revolt against tyranny is, up to this point, Ai Qing's most direct attack against an oppressive regime. It shows that prison life, instead of reforming him, had only strengthened his dissatisfaction. The poem appeals to the reader through a contrast between the conscripts hardship and the intemperance of the army officers. In the political and social climate of China at that time, this poem is little less than an incitation to revolt. In his view of the country's fate Ai Qing was optimistic. He advocated positive action; but even present sufferings were, in his mind, conducive to future happiness.

Both 'Smile' and 'Life' 生命 31/ express again the idea of suffering for the sake of posterity:

In the days I'm awaiting
I shall still use my sorrowful ashen whiteness
To complement
The vibrant new-born red

在期待著的日子
也將要用自己的悲慘的灰白
去襯映出
新生的躍動的鮮紅

(Life)

I only wish one day
People will think of us
As they think of our ancient
Ancesters who fought with wild beasts,
And a smile will appear on their faces,
A smile serene and contented --
This may be too cheerful,
But I am willing
To lay down my life for such a smile!

31. Collected in Wilderness, Selected poems (55,79), 100 lyrics, Ai Qing.

卻只願有一天
人們想起我們
像想起遠古的那些
和巨獸搏鬥過來的祖先，
臉上會浮起一片

字謐而舒展的笑——
雖然那是太輕鬆了，
但我卻甘願
為那笑而捐軀！

Ai Qing's longing for a better future also led him to develop an important motif which plays a significant role throughout his creative career, and especially in his pre-liberation poems. Dawn and the sun become a symbol of hope, a brighter tomorrow not only for the poet, but for all China.

Both the sun and dawn are part of the larger imagery of light which occurred even in his earliest poems. In those early works, however, light usually takes the form of a lamp or a fire, and sunlight is mentioned only once, in 'Overthere'. In the spring of 1937, Ai Qing wrote his first poem on the major source of light on earth -- 'The sun' 太陽.

32/ The experience described in the poem is a kind of awakening, a resurrection, which was in line with Ai Qing's personal circumstances at that time, as he had just been released from prison, and must have felt a new vitality in himself not unlike rebirth. On the other hand, the poem is also a prophetic assertion of the political and social awakening of his countrymen. This idea of resurrection and rebirth is present in the beginning and the end of the poem:

From ancient graveyards
From dark ages
From the other side of the death stream of
humanity

32. Collected in Wilderness, Selected poems, Selected works, 100 lyrics, Ai Qing

Shaking mountains in their deep slumber
Flying over sand dunes like a wheel of fire
The sun is rolling towards me ...

從遠古的墓塋
從黑暗的年代
從人類死亡之流的那邊
震驚沉睡的山脈
若火輪飛旋於沙丘之上

太陽向我滾來.....

On a personal note, the sun is a symbol of hope in a new life for the poet, but it also represents a new era, the era heralded in 'The flute', with its 'flesh searing flames'. The image of the sun 'rolling towards me' has a stunning power, a terrifying presence. But this awe-inspiring phenomenon is also a giver of life. The response it arouses is ecstatic, the activities various:

With all-penetrating light
It gives breath to life
Making tall trees and dense branches dance towards
it
Making rivers rush to it with wild songs

When it comes, I can hear
Hibernating animals turning underground
Crowds speaking loudly in the squares
Cities from afar
Beckoning it with electricity and steel.

它以難遮掩的光芒
使生命呼吸
使高樹繁枝向它舞蹈
使河流帶著狂歌奔向它

當它來時，我聽見
冬蟄的虫蛹轉動于地下
群眾在曠場上高聲說話
城市從遠方
用電力與鋼鐵召喚它。

Here Ai Qing speaks with the enthusiasm and faith of a prophet.

'Dawn' 黎明 33/, written about five weeks before he left Shanghai, is Ai Qing's first poem to elaborate on this particular manifestation of light and hope. Though dawn is intrinsically related to the rising sun, Ai Qing's treatment of this poem is nevertheless different from 'The sun'. Instead of the fiery images used in the earlier poem, 'Dawn' is on a much quieter note, though by no means less intense in feeling. A large part of the poem, in fact, follows a chronological pattern, with the second stanza describing the village life he led as a youth, the third stanza bringing up the contrast of his Parisian days, and the fifth set in the period when he was in prison. The second stanza is by far the most idyllic verse Ai Qing has yet written in this period of his career:

How I miss
 The wonderful times when, carrying a basket,
 I walked with friends on the ridges of fields
 Under the awning, picking peas --
 I always went into the thickest bushes
 And let the dew soak through my straw shoes,
 And mud splash all over my trouser legs;
 Such is the consolation offered me by nature
 I shall jump with wild ecstasy.

我懷念那：
 同着伙伴提了籃籃
 到田埂上的豆棚下
 採擷豆莢的美好的時刻——
 我常進到最密的草叢中去，
 讓露水濕透了我的草鞋，
 泥漿也濺滿我的褲管

這是自然給我的撫慰
 我將狂歡而跳躍....

This sense of nostalgia is to be found in quite a number of his later poems on village life. But perhaps the most

33. Collected in Wilderness, Selected poems (55,79), Selected works, 100 lyrics, Ai Qing.

memorable stanza in this poem is the fourth, in which the poet dwells with detailed intensity on the pain of expectation. Instead of the dynamic force in 'The sun', here he concentrates on his own feelings in what seems to be moment of endless longing. The suffering is not only mental, but causes actual physical pain:

My hands pressing the fast heartbeats in my warm breast . . .

But with pain burning in my mouth

用手按住溫熱的胸膛的急迫的心跳

卻只以燃燒着痛苦的嘴

A striking and almost violent picture is conveyed in

Wishing that a thread of whiteness will break

Through the steely darkness of sky and earth

希望在鐵黑的天與之間
會裂出一絲白線

It is not only the contrast of colour but the very physicality of the word 'break' which brings home a distinctive impact.

Relief comes in the last stanza. The image of the baby carries a sense of spontaneity and naivete, as though all bonds and shackles are broken, and we are reminded of the freedom Ai Qing had newly gained, as well as his faith in a bright future for China. The comparison of himself to a baby is again linked to the theme of rebirth:

Like a baby tired from crying of hunger and thirst
Seeing his mother loosening her garments to nurse
him

Smiles breaking through tears

Heart grateful

I shall be crying

Shall be singing

And run to your warm bosom.

我像久已飢渴哭泣得
看見母親為他解開裹住乳房的衣襟
淚眼迸出微笑
心兒感激着
我將帶着呼喚

帶着歌唱
投奔到你溫煦的懷裏

It is interesting to note the wide gap in tone and atmosphere between this poem and another, written in prison, under the same title. 34/ The earlier work is dominated by passiveness and enforced resignation:

Dreams, had fallen with the stars from the sky
The shivering heart no longer has courage to take
flight

夢，已隨天邊的星墜了
瑟縮的心不再有鼓翼的勇氣

The poem written out of prison does not only suggest a much more positive attitude towards life, but also shows new vitality in the choice of images and vocabulary.

An image common to both 'The sun' and 'Dawn' is fire, in which light and warmth are inextricably linked. The 'coat of fire' 火的外衣 in 'Dawn' is perhaps less than threatening, but the 'wheel of fire' and 'breast torn by hands of fire' inflicts actual pain and fear. It is this explosive quality of fire which Ai Qing explores in 'Conversation with coal' 煤的對話. 35/ The overall restraint of this short poem underlines the tension of the concluding line:

Please give me fire, give me fire!

請給我以火，給我以火！

which heralds a forth coming explosion. As far as poetic technique is concerned, it vividly demonstrates the power of economy and understatement, which is not often connected with

34. 'Dawn' in 'Dawn and five other poems', loc.cit.

35. Collected in Wilderness, Selected poems, Selected works, 100 lyrics, Ai Qing.

Ai Qing's detailed and exuberant style in this period of his career. The fire in this poem, however, is only an agent. It is the coal, the silent masses, which is at the basis of the long awaited explosion. Although in 'Marsailles' the vision of a 'fire of happiness' illuminates the heart of the people, in this stage of Ai Qing's career one cannot help associating the image of fire in his poetry primarily with an expectation of revolution. It is first suggested in the metaphor of the 'flesh searing flames' in 'The flute'; flames which will add force and power to the poet's songs. Then came 'Conversation with coal' in which, under a calm exterior, the poet is agitating for eruption. In 'Smile', the poet's bones, found by posterity, 'had burnt in the seething flames of the Twentieth century' 是曾經在二十世紀的烈焰燃燒過的。 The image of fire applies both on a general and a personal level. It is apparent that poems written towards the end of his stay in Shanghai tend to present us with more forceful and potent versions of this image. The poet, for Ai Qing, is a Promethean figure. 36/ Thus it is not surprising that he should find fire a constant source of inspiration and a symbol of his prophetic voice.

The years 1932 to early 1937 were crucial to Ai Qing's career. Almost two thirds of this time had been spent in prison, where his experiences were limited within its four walls. Ai Qing was forced to turn inwards, or to look back

36. 'On poets' No.2, On poetry.

at the past for poetic inspiration. As a result he was able to explore previous experiences as well as experiment with different poetic styles. More than half of the poems he wrote in prison dealt with foreign subject matters, or at least had a strong foreign flavour. The poems written during this period are all based on personal experiences, and ideas sometimes verge on the slightly abstract, as in 'Dawn and five other poems'. Wen Yiduo had once jokingly commented on Ai Qing's tendency towards romanticism and self-centredness by asking why shouldn't he roll towards the sun instead of the sun rolling towards him. 37/ Wen's suggestion, if adopted, would no doubt produce a bizarre picture. But it does shed light on the individualistic quality of Ai Qing's poems. Whether they are lyrical, pictorial, or prophetic exclamations, what is most obvious in these poems is the consciousness of the poet as an individual. The spirit of defiant individualism is never more obvious than in 'The flute':

37. Wen Yiduo, 'Ai Qing he Tian Jian' ^{艾青和田間} (Ai Qing & Tian Jian), 'Shige yu yinyue' ^{詩歌與音樂} (Poetry & music) No.2. Lianhe wanbao 1946.6.22. Collected in 'Speeches', Wen Yiduo Quanjii ^{聞一多全集} (Complete works of Wen Yiduo) pp.236-238. Incidentally, in his recent long poem 'Eulogy of light' Ai Qing ends the poem with the lines: 'Let us set off from earth, /Soar towards the sun'.

People laugh at my stance,
Because it is my stance!
People are unaccustomed to my songs,
Because they are my songs!

人們嘲笑我的姿態，
因為那是我的姿態呀！
人們聽不慣我的歌，
因為那是我的歌呀！

The language of Ai Qing's poetry at this period is also interesting. Occasional classical overtones are combined with foreign words, allusions and syntax. 'Ill in prison' and 'Dawn and five other poems' are examples of how, in experimenting with different styles, Ai Qing's use of language sometimes become a little contrived, while even in part of 'Dayanhe' the syntax is still over-strained. As late as 'The sun' there are phrases such as 'the death stream of humanity', which is still far from the 'beauty of prose in poetry' he was later to advocate in his essays on poetry. But his patriotism and anti-capitalist feelings, his sympathy for the poor and down-and-outs, and the thematic images which he was to develop, in following years, in a powerful and personal manner, ^{are} already there. Indeed, after his release from prison, there is a marked step towards a more robust and optimistic style which points to his future development. This perhaps suggests that the confined and isolated existence he led in prison are to a great extent responsible for the occasional pessimism and obscurity in some of his early poems.

Ai Qing's imprisonment, together with a short stay in Shanghai after his release, can be regarded as a period of consolidation and experiments. It gave him a chance to absorb his experiences in a western country and to confirm his belief in drastic social and political changes, as well as his ultimate faith in a bright future. What he learnt in these five years would bear fruit during the time of enforced travelling which exposed him to the realities of wartime China, and especially to the sorrow and poverty of the north, which was to gain pride of place in his affection.

Why are my eyes always filled with tears
It is because my love for this land is
profound

-- 'I love this land' 1/

To many readers of Chinese poetry, Ai Qing is first and foremost a war poet, not only because a large number of his most famous poems were written during the Anti-Japanese war, but also because it was during this period that his works became generally known to a wide public. Before this, 'Dayan' had brought him to the notice of readers and critics, but it was the war time poems which consolidated his position as a major poetic force of the thirties. Yet it is perhaps not entirely accurate to label him a 'war poet', for although he had written a large number of poems during the war of resistance, he had very little direct contact with the actual fighting, and in fact it was from flight of the Japanese that he traversed the vast areas of northern and western China. This enforced itinerary proved most fruitful, for it opened before him a new vista of poetic potentials. To a young poet who first started practising his craft in France and then in the isolation of a prison cell, and has therefore so far written primarily on subject which are foreign or personal, the plight of his own people under foreign aggression, unveiled daily before his eyes, naturally compelled him to find expression in poetry. In Ai Qing's own words, he was moved by a sense of sorrow for the nation, an indignation and

1. Collected in North, Selected poems, Selected works, 100 lyrics, Ai Qing.

anger, and a love for the land. 2/

On examining the poems in Beifang 北方 (The north), a collection of poems written when he was travelling around northern China, one finds it quite remarkable that the word 'war' should appear so infrequently in his works. On leaving Shanghai, he had written two poems, 'The earth resurrected' 復活的地 and 'He has risen' 他起來了, to celebrate China's resolution to fight against Japanese aggression. And yet since he arrived at the north, it was the subjects immediately in front of him which struck his imagination. The optimism and faith in the warrior image expressed in the above mentioned poems, the idea that the poet should 'brush away his past melancholy' 3/ are no longer present, and in their place comes his feeling of utter powerlessness in front of the sufferings of a people:

China,
Will my weak poems written
In a lampless night
Give you a little warmth?

中國
我的在沒有燈光的晚上
所寫的無力的詩句
能給你些許的溫暖麼?

-- 'Snow falls on the Chinese land'

4/

The poems in Beifang are a series of sketches of the people's poverty and desolation. Not all of them contain references to the war, though the influx of refugees must have cast a

2. Preface, North.

3. 'The earth resurrected'. Collected in North, Selected poems, Selected works, 100 lyrics, Ai Qing.

4. First published in July 七月 Vol.2 No.1(1938.1.16).
Collected Ibid.

shadow on the already grim life of the northerners. Yet what Ai Qing saw beneath the poverty and despair was the resilience of an ancient race:

Its expanse of barren land
Has given us a simple language
And a generous stance
I believe this language and stance
Strong and sturdy, shall survive on this land
Never to perish

它的廣大而瘦瘠的土地
帶給我們以淳樸的言語
與寬闊的姿態，
我相信這言語與姿態
堅強地生存在大地上
永遠不會滅亡

-- 'The north' 5/

His faith in the future was still unshaken, but it is expressed in much less ecstatic terms, with his eyes firmly on the reality facing the plighted nation.

What captured Ai Qing's imagination was the landscape of the north -- the greyish yellow sand blown from the desert, the dried streams with traces of cart wheels on them, the withered woods and low houses beneath a grey sky, and the Yellow River roaring past, with a few solitary travellers and forbearing donkeys making their difficult journeys. These are the images Ai Qing depicted in the poem 'The north'. Moreover, most of these images had also inspired other poems in this collection. In these shorter works, Ai Qing presents his readers with a series of sketches of the essence of life in northern China as he witnessed it. The pictorial quality of these poems are most striking, and reminds us of his

5. First published in July Vol.2 No.4(1938.3.1). Collected Ibid.

earliest works. What distinguishes these poems from their predecessors, however, is their 'Chineseness' both in subject matter and feeling. Another difference is that while a multitude of colours play an important part in his early works, the Beifang collection is almost monochromatic. The pictures are painted with a background of yellow grey, which sets the depressing mood. This colour scheme is established in 'The north':

-- a dull, greyish yellow
Covered in a layer of impenetrable sandy mist

一片暗淡的灰黃
蒙上一層揭不開的沙霧

Villages, hillsides, river banks
Ruins and overgrown graves
All wear a dusty mantle of melancholy

村莊呀,山坡呀,河岸呀
頹垣與荒塚呀
都披上了土色的憂鬱

Withered woods
And low houses
Scattered, grimly
Under the dull grey sky

枯死的林木
與低矮的住房
稀疏地,陰鬱地
散佈在灰暗的天幕下

Green, the colour representing life, is only mentioned as something lacking in the vast expanse of land. Such a miserable landscape is again presented to us in 'The wilderness' 曠野 6/ with essentially the same hues from his palette. Just as sand from the desert winds dominates the

6. Collected in Wilderness, Selected poems (55,79), Selected works.

landscape in 'The north', 'The wilderness' is enveloped in fog, thus making the already dull colours ever more muted:

A gradually fading
Greyish yellow, winding path,
And on both sides of the path
Black and dried up fields ...

一條漸漸模糊的
灰黃而曲折的道路
和道路兩旁的
烏暗而枯干的田圃 ...

(stanza 1)

In the vast ashen whiteness is revealed
A piece of muddy yellow, dark ochre
Mixed with scorched brown ...

在廣大的灰白裏呈露出的
到處是一片土黃，暗赭，
與焦茶的顏色的混合。阿 ...

(stanza 2)

In the murky white light are
A few pale brown curves of
Untidy ridges

不透明的白光裏
彎曲着幾條淡褐色的
不整齊的塊岸

(stanza 3)

The 'greyish yellow path' appears again in stanzas four and six, and the only lively colour in the poem is the 'scattered green' of some carrots and vegetables. But even these are covered in frost; while the once lustrous water weeds and lotus leaves have all sunk to the bottom of the pond. They are only evoked as a contrast to the lifeless landscape before the poet's eyes.

In 'Hillside town' 山城 71, even the hills cannot

7. Collected in Dawn.

provide any sense of relief to the hopelessness associated with such dull colours:

Dull green hills, grey blue hills,
Surround this blackened, dark red little town
暗綠的山，灰青色的山，
環住這烏黑的，暗赭色的小城

(stanza 1)

Nor is the prevailing sense of misery conveyed in the choice of colour limited to descriptions of nature. 'Army train' 火車 is a poem in which every detail exhibits the same unremittingly shabby and miserable colours. Nature is seen in the same terms as in the above poems:

There is no sun in the sky, the greyness is so
complete that
No flaw is visible
天上沒有太陽，灰得沒有什麼地方
露出了破綻
Hills in a mixture of earthen red, mud yellow,
scorched brown and deep ochre
雜着土紅，土黃，焦茶以及暗赭的山圈

The 'black engine' and 'black carriages' of the train contrasts with the white smoke it emits, while the soldiers inside are all in yellow and grey:

Every carriage show some faces wearing grey hats
每節上露出一些戴灰帽子的臉
The white paper of cigarett shows his face a
darker brown
香煙的白紙使得他的臉色更加褐暗
On the muddy yellow faces under grey hats
Are the same dark shadow
那些灰的帽子遮着的土黃的臉額上
都有一片一樣濃的陰影
那些灰的帽子遮着的土黃的臉額上
都有一片一樣濃的陰影

8. First publ 都有一片一樣濃的陰影 (1940.4.25).
Collected in WILDERNESS; SELECTED POEMS (1977).

People and objects blend into nature in an atmosphere of general despondency.

While the contrast of colour in 'Army train' is between white and a dark shadow, in a few other poems, some written on a happier note, the contrast is between light and darkness. The light, in such cases, is almost exclusively associated with fire:

In the dark, sparks from a candle
Reddens his honest face

在黑暗裏，松燭的火花
燿紅了他的誠樸的臉

-- Hillside town

In the pitch black forest,
It shines with a dizzy red light ...

她在黑黝黑的樹木下面，
閃耀着眩眼的紅光 ...

In front of the white smoke in the forest
In the glow of the bonfire
Are the shady shapes
Of a few farming men and women carrying their
harvest home.

在白煙的樹木裡
在篝火的照耀裡
映着幾個農夫和農婦
背負着收穫物晚歸的暗影 -- 'A bonfire' 篝火 9/

The light from torches, against a pitch black background, creates a sense of mystery and even terror in 'Frog catchers' 捉蛙者 10/ :

9. Collected in North, Dawn, Village.

10. First published in 'Wenyi Zhendi' 文藝陣地 Vol.7 No.2 (1942.9.30). Collected in Dawn, Village, Selected poems (55).

In such a pitch black night
So many torches are waving
Far and near, countless;
Every field is shimmering with light

在如此黑暗的夜
搖晃了這麼多的火
遠處近處，數不清的
使得整個田野都閃爍着光輝

In these poems it is again the visual appeal which captures the readers' imagination, and gives the impression that Ai Qing perceives and describes his surroundings with the sensitivity of an impressionist artist, relying heavily on the use of colour and the contrast of light and shade in his composition.

But even these dull colours do not always dominate the scene in Beifang. It is in fact the 'character sketches' which are most impressive and represent a new dimension in Ai Qing's poetic development. An excellent example is 'Beggars' 乞馬 11/ in which he avoids general descriptions and portrays the 'beggars by concentrating on certain characteristics and striking features. The poem is given a location:

In the north
Beggars wander on both sides of the Yellow River
Wander on both sides of the railway tracks

在北方
乞丐徘徊在黃河的兩岸
徘徊在鐵路的兩旁

and then quickly zooms in to the most representative details in these people -- their voices, their eyes, and their

11. First published in July Vol.2 No.6 (1938.4.1). Collected in North, Selected poems, Selected works, 100 lyrics, Ai Qing.

eternally out-stretched hands. This technique closely resembles what art students sometimes do in studying master pieces of painting --a particular detail or part of the canvas is isolated and enlarged for the purpose. In this case, what Ai Qing has done is to focus on the selected details with such intensity that they represent the very essence of the beggar's miserable existence. The third stanza, describing the eyes of the beggars, is especially effective:

In the north
Beggars stare at you
With stubborn eyes
Watching you eating anything
And how you pick your teeth with your fingernails

在北方
乞丐用固執的眼
凝視著你
看看你在吃任何東西
和你用指甲削牙齒的樣子

In using the second person pronoun, Ai Qing cleverly draws readers into experiencing the fierce eagerness and longing of these famished people, and the sense of uneasiness which their persistent stare could incur. However, it is the scrutiny down to the very last detail -- picking teeth with fingernails -- which gives this stanza its extraordinary poignancy. It shows too Ai Qing's unusual ability in exploiting the poetic potential of a seemingly ugly gesture. A similar technique is used in 'The darning woman' 補衣婦 12/ The poem opens with the darning woman sitting by the dusty road, almost a lifeless figure, 'silently thinking about her home / her home destroyed

12. First published in Wenxi 文藝 (Shanghai) bimonthly Vol.1 No.2. Collected in North and Selected poems.

by shell-fire' 只無聲地想着她的家 / 她的被炮火燬掉的家，
but it is her child's eyes,

the poor eyes
Staring at the empty basket
可憐的眼
瞪着空了的籃子
which draws us to the here and now of her plight. In this
poem, the child is only represented by its eyes, first crying,
then staring, which serves as an effective contrast to the
darning woman who remains motionless, thinking of her past.
Similarly, in 'Army train', the pathos of the soldier comes
to life in a very simple and succinct detail:

the old soldier
Dug a five cent paper note from the breast pocket
Of his worn out uniform to buy a seed cake.
He bites and chews, alone, his eyes
Never leave the eggs in the pedlar's basket

那身老的士兵
從破了的制服的胸前的口袋裡
挖出了一張五分的紙票買了一個燒餅
他寂寞地咀嚼着，兩眼
沒有離開那小販籃子裏的雞蛋；

Indeed, the eyes and hands are visually the most
expressive instruments in conveying human emotions, and these,
together with speech, are what Ai Qing relied on in his
sketches of characters. 'Beggars' best illustrates this
point, with one stanza devoted to each of these details. This
technique even applies to his use of personification, notably
in 'Snow falls on Chinese land' 雪落在中國的±地上 13/ :

The wind
Like a grief stricken old woman
Follows the traveller at his heels
And stretching her icy claws
Tugs at his clothes,

13. First published in July Vol.2 No.1 (1938.1.16). Collected
in North, Selected poems, Selected works, 100 lyrics, Ai
Qing.

Her words are as old as the land
Ranting, never ceasing ...

風
像一個太悲哀的苦婦，
緊緊地跟隨着
伸出寒冷的指爪
拉扯着行人的衣襟，
用着像土地一樣古老的話
一刻也不停地絮叨着

The famished land
Stretches out to an overcast sky
Two entreating
Shivering arms.

饑飢的大地
朝向陰暗的天空
伸出乞援的
顫抖着的雨臂。

In 'New year's eve' 除夕 14/ , it is the the image of the
eyes which is used:

Dried up ponds
-- like blind eyes of the earth

枯涸的池沼
——像大地盲了的眼

In the use of pictorial appeal and impressionist effect
these poems call to mind the works of the Flemish poet Emile
Vehaeren, who was much admired by Ai Qing. It is interesting
to note that in Vehaeren's time art and literature were
closely linked, and writers developed a passionate love of
colour. 15/ Vehaeren himself had published critiques of art
and regularly visited studios of artists. 16/ Many of his

14. First published in Xinhua ribao 1939.2.3. Collected in He died, Selected poems (55,81,F), Selected works.

15. P.M. Jones, Emile Vehaeren: A study in the development of his art and ideas (Cardiff: University of Wales press, London: Humphrey Milford, 1926) p.24

16. Ibid.

poems can be described as a sort of poetic impressionism. In 'Les meules qui brûlent', for example, the infernal glow of the burning hayricks against a black sky is very similar in effect to the three poems by Ai Qing in which the light of fire is set against a pitch black background:

Et voici, clairs, de la boue et de l'or,
Dans le ciel noir qui s'empanache

Elle est immense -- et comme un trousseau rouge
Qu'on agite de sulfureux serpents,

-- Les meules qui brûlent 17/

Although 'Les meules qui brûlent' has a kind of force and grandeur which is absent in Ai Qing's poems discussed above, which deal with the tranquility of village life, the similarity in the two poets' use of contrast in light and colour is quite striking. It is difficult to say whether Ai Qing had Vehaeren's works in mind when he was composing his own verses on rural scenes. His own training as an artist and his knowledge of impressionist paintings may have exerted as much, if not a greater influence. But the pictorial similarity points definitely to a close affinity in perception and imagination.

Not only in the use of impressionist techniques does Ai Qing resemble Vehaeren. An even closer likeness is their view of village and city life, and the relationship between the

17. The following translation is by Amy Lowell, in Six French poets (N.Y.: Macmillan, 1915) p.338

'and now, bright, of mud and gold. it veers in a plume
over the black sky.'

'It is enormous -- like a red, shaken bundle of sulphurous
serpents.'

two. Although the big cities of France had fascinated Ai Qing as a young man, he never dreamt of cities as Utopia. As he avowed in 'Dayanhe', he had a deep love of the earth, and for the people cultivating it. From the sympathy and loving care with which he described village scenes and people, one can almost conclude that however much he had travelled, he remained at heart a country boy. The sight of crops and harvest seems to inspire in him the joy of life. It is a joy very different from the ecstatic elation associated with the images of the sun; a feeling more lyrical than exclamatory, and it embodies a soothing tranquility that is the essence of rural life at its best. This sense of joy is quietly resplendent in the short poem 'Sorghum' 高粱 18/ :

I still remember : the dew lying on
Those green leaves -- translucent and round:
Those green leaves were broad, long and far apart,
Cladding upright stems.

A trickle of water flowed through the rocks,
Black moss on the rocks all came alive --
I do still remember : when I was walking past,
I seemed to hear the sorghum singing a song
of joy ...

我還記得：露水伏在
那些綠葉上 透明而圓潤；
那些綠葉寬長而稀疏的，
他們披在挺直的幹子上。

我還記得的，我從那裏走過
好像聽見高粱唱着快樂之歌

很細很細的流水從岩石上流過，
岩石上的黑色的蘚苔都復活了！

Just the memory of the ripening crops is enough to put him in a happy mood. In the long poem 'He died the second time' 他死在第二次 19/ the happiest section of the poem is again

18. Collected in Dawn, Village.

19. Collected in He died, Selected poems

associated with rural scenes:

Today, treading on
The soft soil of the ridges
He senses an inexplicable joy
He took off his shoes
And dips his feet into the shallow ditch
And splashes water with his hands

...
What a day this is !
That he should be so foolishly happy
Not even a New Year's Day had seen him so happy

今天,他的腳踏在
田埂的溫軟的泥土上
使他感到莫名的歡喜
他脫下鞋子
把腳浸到淺水溝裏
又用手拍弄着流水

這是什麼日子呀
他竟這樣愚蠢而快樂
年節裡也沒有這樣快樂呀-- Section 6, 'The fields'

This section provides a much needed relief to the depressing and somewhat oppressive atmosphere of the poem. The soldier had gone out to the fields in search of something; even he himself does not know what it is. But through his joy Ai Qing shows us what he has found -- a gratification of his love for the Chinese land.

Yet the Chinese village is no idyllic hideout for Ai Qing. He was fully aware of the poverty and misfortune of its inhabitants : 'The beautiful scenery is a contrast to the sordid life' 明麗的風光和污穢的生活形成了對照, he observes in 'A poem dedicated to the village'. 20/ What binds him to it is an emotional tie: 'It lives in my heart,

20. First published in Liberation daily 1942.12.11. Collected in Village and Selected poems.

like a mother living in her son's heart' 21/. However much he admired the energy of city life, the village has his primal affection. As he says in 'The wilderness -- another poem':

Why hide the fact --
I am ultimately a son of the wilderness.

何必隱瞞呢——
我始終是曠野的兒子。

In the wake of urbanization and industrialization, Ai Qing found that his fascination with city life clashed with his love of the rural world. As Vehaeren before him discovered, the cities were growing prosperous at the expense of villages. 'Vers le futur' is one of the poems collected in Les Campagnes Hallucinees which dwells on the destiny of the rural world:

La ruine s'installe et souffle aux quatre coins
D'où s'acharnent les vents, sur la plaine finie,
tandis que la cité lui soutire de loin
Ce qui lui rest encore d'ardeur dan l'agonie.
...
Referont-ils, avec l'ancien et bon soleil,
Avec le vent, la pluie et les bêtes serviles,
En des heures de sursaut libre et de réveil,
Un monde enfin sauvé de l'emprise des villes? 22/

To Ai Qing this was also a major concern of his poems written in this period. 'The floating bridge' 浮橋 23/

21. Ibid.

22. Penguin book of French verse Vol.3 (C19th), ed. Anthony Hartley (Penguin, 1957) p.287
'Ruins sit down and blow to the four corners hence the winds rage, over the desolate plain, while from afar the city draws away from it what still remains of passion in its agony.'
'Will they create again the old kind sun, with the wind, the rain, and menial animals, at hours of free uprising and awakening a world saved at last from the grip of the towns?'

23. First published in July Vol.5 No.3 (1940.5). Collected in Dawn, Selected poems(55)

juxtaposes the images of cities and villages, and shows how the former exploits the latter in its ruthless expansion. The floating bridge is a passive instrument in this exploitation, 'linking wealth and poverty', serving as a tube through which the cities suck up the natural resources of villages:

Farmers
Walk on the floating bridge
They heave daily
Under the weight of baskets of the harvest of
their labour on their shoulders
When they return in the evening
These have only been exchanged for a few paper
packets of sundry goods
-- Oh the silent disappointment and sense of
emptiness

農人們
在浮橋上走着
他們每天喘吁
挑了滿籃辛勞的收穫
等到黃昏回來時
只換得了幾包紙包的雜物
——無言的失望與空虛啊

In 'Village' 村莊 24/ this picture of individual loss gives place to a collective image of resources draining on a much larger scale:

Even fools know that those big cities are a bunch
of vampires --
They are swallowing : iron and steel, timber,
food, fuel
And the health of thousands and millions of
labourers,
Millions of villages from millions of roads
transport their nutrients to them

連傻子也知道那些大城市是一群吸血鬼
牠們吞蝕着：鋼鐵，木材，食糧，燃料
和成千成萬的勞動者的健康；
千萬個村莊從千萬條路向牠們輸送給養 (stanza 2)

24. Collected in Village, Selected poems (55, 79, 81). The poem is written on 27.12.1941, and chronologically should be discussed in Chapter 4; but because of its similarity in theme and subject matter to the poems under discussion, it is included in this chapter.

In this poem the narrator has forsaken his roots in pursuit of city life, and thus followed in the wake of Verhaeren's peasants who sold everything they had to travel on long white roads to the cities; roads which are described as 'white tentacles for the swallowing city'. 25/ One notices that the last line of stanza two of Ai Qing's 'Village' gives a picture similar to Verhaeren's metaphor.

The relationship between roads and cities is further explored in 'Streets' 街, 26/ in which roads are seen not only as the instruments of exploitation, but also as victims of aggression, forcibly occupied by the cities in their ceaseless expansion:

Streets originally were path too --
Originally they too had been deserted

...

But cities are expanding
Insatiably expanding
Occupying one path after another

街原來也是路——
原來也是荒僻的
但城市擴大着
無厭止的擴大着
把路一條又一條的佔據了

(Stanzas 1 & 2)

In 'Highway' 公路 27/, the antennae of cities seem to arouse an entirely different sentiment in Ai Qing. Walking on

25. Lowell, loc.cit., p.26.

26. Collected in Dawn.

27. First published in July Vol.6 Nos. 1/2 (1940.12).
Collected in Dawn, Village, Selected poems.

a highway he had a sense of elation, a feeling that he was 'standing on top of the world'. However, this poem is interesting in that while it is meant as a tribute to technological progress, it actually confirms at the same time Ai Qing's emotional tie to nature. It is almost symbolic that in the poem he starts his journey from a 'humble, small village', and that the vehicles he came across on the road should be in the order of mules and horses, trucks, and last of all, cars. It can almost be seen as a journey towards mechanical progress and affluence. Ai Qing was moved to contemplate on the construction of the road:

To strike with strong hands and heavy hammers
And blast rocks with high explosives
At the edge of cliffs ten thousand feet deep;
Stones and mud and cement
And the sweat of thousands and millions of
labourers
Consolidated into a highway thousands of miles long.

用堅強的手與沉重的鐵錘所劈擊
又用爆烈的炸藥轟開了岩石
在萬丈高的崖壁的邊沿
以石塊與泥土與水門訂
和成千成萬的勞動者的汗
凝固成了萬里長的道路

(Stanza 8)

Yet ultimately what filled the poet's heart with joy was not the grandeur of the construction, but the beauty of nature; the 'air and sunlight / And the ocean-like wilderness spreading beneath the mountains' which 'brushed away daily trifles / And the troubles of life'. In fact the second to fourth stanzas of the poem are devoted to the description of natural scenery, of which the road is just an unobstrusive

element:

The winding road
Clings to the contours of the mountains
In smooth curves extending upwards

綿長修飾路
沿着山的形體
彎曲地，伏貼地向上伸引

(Stanza 3)

It is an idealistic vision of progress blending harmoniously with nature, of the freedom associated with the high road and the 'rivers, hills, paths and hamlets' he could survey from the mountains. But such harmony is not easily attainable, and however pleasing the vision, it is but an exception in the general struggle between the two worlds.

In fact Ai Qing's idea of the city and its people has not changed much since his Paris days. Even the image he used to describe cities and city life all recur in his poems written during these early war years. In the poem 'City dwellers' 城市人 28/ the image of prostitutes reminds us of his earlier poem 'Paris':

Oh I recognize you
Lustful, seductive
Coquettish and shrewish
Living in carnal desire and intemperance
With lustrous silk
Wrapping round soft bodies
And lustful eyes twinkling at strangers
You amuse yourselves in the tricks of love
And amuse others under the mockery of money

我認得你們啊
淫蕩的，妖冶的
賣弄風情的潑辣的
生活在肉慾與放縱裏的
以耀眼的綢緞
裹住了綿軟的身體

28. Collected in Dawn.

情慾的眼向陌生者閃光
 你們在愛情的哄騙裏娛樂自己
 又在金錢的嘲弄裏給人娛樂 (Stanzas 8 & 9)

The portrayal of the men is so typified that it lacks individuality and does not have the sense of reality of its female counterpart. It indeed verges on a caricature from strip cartoons:

You, with your hands stuck in your pockets,
 Cigarettes hanging at the corners of your mouths,
 Hats slanting on your foreheads,
 Walking on the pavement.

你們手插在褲袋裏
 嘴角啣着一段紙煙
 帽子歪戴着
 走在行人道上

(Stanza 3)

It is almost as though Ai Qing, totally disgusted with the men, was yet partially fascinated by the women.

Besides the greed and exploitation, however, Ai Qing did see another side to urbanization. He may despise those who grew rich ruthlessly, but his sympathy was with the masses -- 'soldiers wearing dirty uniforms', 'old people with hands resting on their grandchildren's shoulders / Little ones hanging onto their mothers' hands', 29/ workers carrying heavy loads, policemen, pedlars, street cleaner, and housewives 30/ -- for him they represent the energy and life

29. Stanza 4, 'The Square' 廣場. First published in Kuangzhan wenyi Vol.6 No.3. Collected in Dawn.

30. Section 2 ('On the streets' 街上), 'To the sun' 向太陽. First published in July Vol.3 No.2 (1938.8.16). Published in book form as Xiang taiyang 向太陽 (To the sun) shortly afterwards. Also collected in Selected poems and Selected works.

of big cities. It seems that in the city Ai Qing is particularly moved by crowds, a kind of collective force which he finds irresistible. Most of his poems portraying rural characters show a careful observation of details, but in the 'city poems' people are described collectively, with few individual characteristics. Perhaps the reason for this is that although he frequently emphasized his affinity with the peasants, in describing them he often assumed the role of an observer, albeit a very sympathetic one. On the other hand, the large crowds in cities seems capable of obliterating his own sense of individuality:

This is a horrible miracle: when now I remember
I am no longer myself, but a number
And the number is gradually metamorphosing,
enlarging
-- until, stunned, I convulse

When I am still my heart is trampled by countless
feet
When I move my heart is like a chaotic crossroad.
I am sitting here, countless crowds are on the
streets
Suddenly I see myself as a dust particle swept up
in them ...

這是可怕的奇蹟。當我此刻想起了
我已不復是自己，而是一個數字
這個數字慢慢地蛻變着，龐大着
直到使我愕然而癱倒

我靜着時我的心被無數的腳踏過
我蠢動時我的心像一個開亂的十字街口
我坐在這裡，街上是無數的人群
突然我看見自己像塵埃樣滾在他們裏面

Ai Qing believed firmly in progress; he also believed that progress could only be achieved through collective force, which is perhaps why crowds in a city always arouse a sense of excitement in him, whether it was in France or in China. Nevertheless, the experience of merging into large crowds is

frequently disconcerting. Thus in Ai Qing's descriptions, one also detects the poet's awe and fear.

Like Vexhaeren, Ai Qing's faith in industrial progress made it possible for him to discern a sense of beauty in city life. But what draws his attention seems over and over again to be the same subjects -- wide streets, the noise of traffic and of crowds, electricity, and images of the ocean and the sun. For him, the engine, especially the train engine, is a symbol of progress. In 'No mass' 沒有彌撒 31/, the train is described as 'the steed of this century', something which the nature poet Esenin feared and described as 'a stranger in iron', but which he, a disciple of scientific progress, would gladly ride. The heavy load which the workers in 'The square' is carrying, 'huge and black' and 'cast in iron', is also compared to a train engine. 32/ Except for this image of the train, it is possible to trace all the images Ai Qing used in praise of cities back to the two earliest city poems -- 'Marseilles' and 'Paris'. His response is in fact remarkably consistent:

The square is full of life
It is like the ocean
Stirring up waves each new day;
With crowds pushing towards it
And those scattering from it;
With rotating wheels of vehicles
And masses of intermeshing power lines
It emits infinite energy;
With electricity and gas

31. Collected in Dawn, Village and Selected poems.

32. Stanza 5. 'The square'.

And the breath and blood of crowds
And a warm flame, the undying flame of life
It is agitating, exciting, clamouring
In the centre of this big city.

廣場是富有生命的一
牠常像海洋一樣，
為每個白日而興波；
牠以向牠擠緊而來的
和由牠那裡分散出來的人群，
和轉運着輪子的車輛，
和網織着的繁密的電線，
散發着永遠不能中止的力量；
又用電力與煤氣
與人群的呼吸與血液
與融融的火，生之不滅的火，
牠激動着，興奮着，呼叫着，
在這大都市的中心。 -- The square (last stanza)

Electric waves ring on the wires, ring in the
still air

電波在電線上鳴響，在靜空中鳴響

A drop of water often makes me stare half day in
astonishment
In front of me would suddenly appear a mighty
river

一滴水常使我用驚嘆的眼凝視半天
我的前面突然會湧現浩淼的大江

-- The crowd (Stanzas 1 & 2)

But right now
In the city where I breathe
Is spraying the scent of gas
The scent of asphalt.
The city with a mixture of scents
Displays its torso of metal
Its torso of ores
Its torso of light and glint.
Expansively
The city accepts the caress of dawn
In my eyes the sunrise
Is more beautiful than any other sunrise

但此刻
在我所呼吸的城市
噴發着煤油的氣息
柏油的氣息
混雜的氣息的城市
敞開着金屬的胴體
礦石的胴體
電光火石的胴體

寬闊地
承受黎明的變換的城市
我看見日出
比所有的日出更美麗

-- 'Towards the sun' section 4 'Sunrise'

He walks on the wide and straight city streets at
night

He walks on the city streets in which he revel
Around him the clamouring noise, the noise of
crowds

The noise of cars, the noise of horns and whistles
Are squeezing against him, pushing him, exciting
him,

As he walks on those smooth pavements
Under those dazzling lights
On those glossy asphalt roads
Beside those files of latest cars
In front of those sumptuously dressed women
Oh how down at heel he looks

他走在夜的城市的寬直的大街上
他走在使他感到陶醉的城市的街道上
四周喧騰的聲音，人群的聲音
車輛的聲音，喇叭和警笛的聲音
在堅硬地擁擠着他，推動着他，刺激着他，
在那些平坦的行人道上
在那些眩目的電光下
在那些滑溜的柏油路上
在那些新式汽車的行列的旁邊
在那些穿着豔服的女人面前
他顯得多麼醜陋啊

-- He died the second time
section 5 'Gestures'

These exciting and exhausting elements are the most
representative of Ai Qing's view of city life. The most
succinct example is perhaps 'Streets', in which the city takes
over road after road by introducing crowded houses, shops,
electric poles and power lines, the footsteps of numerous
citizens, ceaseless clamour, and cars with their forever
rotating wheels.

For Ai Qing, there is an established link between ideas and subjects and the images used in presenting them. Energy and power are always conveyed through images of electricity, metal and gas, while the presence of crowds and traffic are often announced through the noise and clamour. Crowds are also frequently compared to the ocean, or to waves and rivers, and it is worth noting that in Ai Qing's poetry images of the sun are commonly associated with those of the ocean. 33/ These images are to Ai Qing symbols of vitality, sources of energy, and possess a grandeur and expansive beauty which he wants to endow on the cities.

The use of noise, traffic and crowded scenes in the city poems of this period, although still effective, does not always retain the freshness of impact and sense of novelty as in 'Paris' and 'Marseilles'. A possible way of explaining this is that the images in question have been a little conceptualized through constant use, and are not always as fully developed as they are in the earlier works. However, as an expression of Ai Qing's faith in industrial progress, and a celebration of the advent of an age of steel and electricity, they have a unique place in modern Chinese poetry. Like Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892-1982), Ai Qing's use of free verse and

33. This is not only true of the city poems, but also applies to the poems with the sun as a thematic image. Examples are the 'death stream of humanity' and the idea of death by the river in 'The sun', the association between sunrise and the different oceans on which he had sailed, 'with the ocean-like verse of Whitman inspired by the sun in the long poem 'To the sun'. In 'The flute' the image of the furnace is also associated with ocean waves at the end of the poem.

his robustness reminds one of Whitman, but his view of city life differs considerably from Guo. While Guo concentrates on class consciousness and the exploitation of the poor in most of his poems on city life, Ai Qing's response is more ambiguous and as a result richer in its diversity. Many of his poems celebrate the power and prosperity of city life, but he also resents the way urbanization has encroached on the life of the poor peasants. In his belief in industrial progress and his love of the rural world Ai Qing is caught in a dilemma which lies behind most of his city poems written during this period.

To prove that industrialization can be acceptable, and that cities do not always kill the joy of life, Ai Qing would resort to the use of images of nature, whether as an antithesis or a complement to his ideas about city life. This actually reveals how important nature is to him, despite the fact that he did not see himself as a nature poet. 34/ In 'No mass' he tries to convince his readers that industrialization will not change the face of nature:

Our new moon
Will still knock at our windows:
The Pole star in the north
Will also greet us every morning.

Aren't the neighbouring ponds
As beautiful as before?
And in the copses
Birds are still acclaiming the sun --

34. 'No mass' begins with the lines 'Am I the last of the nature poets? / No!'

我們的新月
依然會扣開我們的窗門：

北方的
也依然會扣開我們的窗門：
北方的大熊星
也依然會在早晨向我們請安，

同比連的池沼
豈不是和往昔一樣美麗麼？

同比連的池沼
豈不是和往昔一樣美麗麼？

而在灌木林裡
群鳥依然在歡呼着太陽——

while in 'The square', he states that he prefers the square to
the sky:

The square is huge --
It seems merely to belong to the realm of the sky
Yet compared to the silky sky
I'd rather prefer
This hard and rough
Square of metal

廣場是巨大的——
她好像僅只屬於天的慵員
而比起那柔軟的綢質的天，
我寧願歡喜
這堅硬而粗糙的
礦質的廣場。

(stanza 2)

Ai Qing may sing the praise of city life, but one cannot help feeling that it is only as a result of his faith in industrial and technological progress, that in his conviction he saw it as a kind of mission to celebrate what could lead his country to a brighter future. The conflict between villages and cities still remained, and he was fully aware of it. He could not offer a solution, except for the idealistic picture in 'The village':

When will that village of mine build its own small factories,
And through their spotless windows one will see the dark green fir trees,
And the tuneful humming of machines will mix with the songs of insects in autumn?

什麼時候我的那個村莊也建造起小小的工廠，
從明潔的窗子可以看見鬱綠的杉木林，
機輪的齊勻的鳴響混在秋出的歌聲一起？

Instead of draining resources and labour from rural areas, the

young man in the poem visualizes the day when small scale industries will be set up in rural areas. But it was a dream unfulfilled, and Ai Qing was left with his affection divided between the two. While his city poems are as a rule more ecstatic, more exciting and more forceful, they also seem to demand a greater effort from him. Even the more melancholy of his poems on rural life, on the other hand, can boast of a soothing tranquility and quiet charm.

The early war years was a most prolific period in Ai Qing's career. Not only did he publish a large number of poems describing scenes and people he came across in his long journey, and finish his essays on poetry, but he also wrote four long poems between 1938 and 1940. These long works are perhaps the clues to why Ai Qing is commonly held to be a war poet.

Written in April, 1938, 'Towards the sun' reveals an optimism and exuberance unusual in his early war year works. Thematically it is almost a sequel to his earlier poem 'The sun', written approximately one year earlier, when he was newly released from prison. The poem begins with a quotation from 'The sun', which establishes the idea of awakening in the first section. In this respect it follows the same vein as 'The earth resurrected' and 'He has risen', written in 1937 when he left Shanghai, and is free from the melancholy associated with most of the poems about northern China. That

such an upsurge of optimism should be aroused by city life is significant -- it shows once again how responsive Ai Qing is to the energy and power inherent in city crowds. He contrasts the restless bustle of the city with the desolate countryside:

I --
Am one
Who has come from distant mountain regions
Virgin mountain regions
To this city where millions
Are working with their hands
Are shouting with their mouths
Are walking with their feet
-- a traveller

我——
是一個
從遙遠的土地
從未開墾的山地
到這幾千萬人
用他們的手勞作着
用他們的嘴呼喚着
用他們的腳走着的城市來的
旅客

His awakening is both literal and symbolic, and the sight of dawn also rejuvenates his hope. In this poem the narration alternates between past and present. In the former melancholy and sorrow colours reminiscences of the countryside:

Yesterday
I had run madly
On a plain under dark and downcast skies
Where the sun did not shine
To the peak of the mountain
And prostrating myself on purple rocks
Hot tears streaming
I cried for our century

昨天
我曾狂奔在
陰暗而低沈的天幕下的
沒有太陽的原野
到山巔上去
伏倒在紫色的岩石上
流着溫熱的眼淚
哭泣我們的世紀

-- section 3 'Yesterday'

while in the city, the street scenes seem to hearten him. This is also apparent in the contrast of colour between the descriptions of city life and those of the countryside. In the streets what Ai Qing notices is the 'white-sleeved' policeman, the pedlar carrying 'baskets of green', the street sweeper wearing a 'red vest', and the young housewife with a healthy 'brown complexion' -- colours which are all bright and lively, as opposed to the 'high, grey walls' and 'purple rocks' 35/ conjured up with memories of the countryside. Not only are the activities of the city a source of jubilation, even its landscape and smell excites the poet. These features of city life are again symbolic of progress: 'those mountains built of cement and steel', and forests consisting of 'hundreds of chimneys/ Thousands of electric poles/ Millions of roofs', and the smell of gas, asphalt, metal and electricity. As in his other city poems, what captures his imagination here is the massive number and variety.

The sight of the rising sun is for Ai Qing a supreme source of artistic inspiration. In section 5 of this poem he

35. The colour purple in Ai Qing's poems is usually associated with pain and sorrow. Other examples besides 'To the sun' include:

- 'To your purple soul under the yellow earth'
呈給你黃土下紫色的靈魂 (Dayanhe)
- 'Time was frozen in the purple pools of blood'
歲月紫色的血泊中凝結 ('Elegy to Romain Roland' 悼羅曼羅蘭 . First published in Liberation Daily 解放日報 1945.1.29. Collected in Selected poems (55) and Selected works)
- 'Blooming on purple rocks' 開在紫色的岩石上 ('Little blue flower' 小藍花 . First published in Beijing Daily. Collected in Cliff).

illustrates his eulogy by referring to the works of Whitman, Van Gogh and Isadora Duncan. In fact Ai Qing's description of the sun is frequently evocative of Van Gogh's paintings:

The sun is a golden red sphere
It is a shining sphere
It is an expanding sphere

太陽是金紅色的圓體
是發光的圓體
是擴大着的圓體

-- section 5 'Song of the sun'

Flying over the sand duns like a wheel of fire
The sun is rolling towards me

若火輪飛旋於沙壘之上
太陽向我滾來 ...

-- The sun

You mint days into numerous golden wheels
Flying on ancient wastelands ...

你把日子鑄成無數金輪
飛旋在古老的荒原上 ...

-- For the sun 36/

This similarity is quite evident as Van Gogh's brushes and palette are also described by Ai Qing as 'burning', while Ai Qing's images of the sun are often luminous or fiery wheels soaring above a predominantly yellow background. As Ai Qing had made a point of visiting Arles to see van Gogh's paintings, this resemblance is probably not a mere coincidence.

36. Besides the colour, the sound of the sun's approach, usually suggested in the action of rolling or rotating, is also evocative of the fierce and violent images of Van Gogh's paintings. An example similar to 'The sun' and 'For the sun' is 'Era' 時代, written in 1941:

I see a shining object
Like the sun it heartens us;
From the sky it brings mighty thunder,
Roaring like a storm
Rolling and crashing towards us ...

'Under the sun' 在太陽下, the longest section in 'To the sun', describes the activities of the city which not only reflects that China is at war, but also shows Ai Qing's optimistic outlook. In his eyes, everyone -- even a wounded soldier -- is smiling, because it is a common belief that 'this day has brought us / The most reliable message / Of a bright future'. All the activities Ai Qing has singled out are dedicated to supporting and preparing for battle. This section is also of special interest as it is the first instance when Ai Qing incorporates a sort of chanting into his poems. The groups in the streets -- young women, workers and soldiers -- introduce themselves through the medium of stylized verse. As there is a uniform rhythm to these songs and chanting, they stand out from the narrative, which is in free verse. The song of the young women is in five-syllable lines, effectively interrupted by a parenthesis not unlike a stage direction in a play:

(The singing comes to a halt; they are asking for donations from passers-by)

(歌聲中斷了, 她們在向行人募捐)

This prevents the regularity of the metre from becoming too insistent and also gives an immediacy and visual appeal to the scene. In the workers' chanting, it is the sound of their heaving which breaks the five-syllable lines. But this also acts as a turning point in the narration, which comes to the immediate present -- the effect of war on the workers and their hope for a better future:

Only when the war is won
Shall we be well-fed and warmly clothed

一天勝利了
生活才飽暖

In both instances rhyming is used towards the end of a section: 'fāng' 方 and 'táng' 堂 in the women's song, and 'chuan' 穿 and 'nuan' 暖 in the workers' heaving. Although rhyming is not consistently used in the rest of these two sections, the ending couplets create a sense of completion.

In the march of the soldiers, the sense of regularity is largely dependent on syntactic repetition. Out of a total of twenty lines, only four do not follow a particular repetitive pattern. These four lines serve as watersheds between the past, present and future. The remaining sixteen lines are in couplets, triplets and, in one case, quartet. Syntactic parallels dictate that the caesura comes after a particular syllable within a repetitive pattern. The lines elucidating the soldiers' plight best illustrates this point:

Our huts are burnt down
Our animals are all devoured
Our parents are slaughtered
Our wives and daughters are raped
We have lost our sickles and hoes
We can only take up bullets and guns
我們的茅屋被燒掉
我們的牲口被吃光
我們的父母被殺死
我們的妻子被強姦
我們沒有了鐮刀與鋤頭
只有背上了子彈與槍砲

In all six lines the caesura comes after the fifth syllable; but in the last two lines the rhythm is more forceful because of the balance achieved within the five syllables following the caesura. Compared with the verse of the workers and the young women, the longer lines in the soldiers' march creates a

more forceful and solemn impact which emphasizes their determination. However, one must also point out that Ai Qing's description of these groups cannot boast of much originality. This is especially the case in the verse of the workers. In this poem such generalization is acceptable in that it stresses the collective will, and also because they are relatively short, so that the rhythmic regularity does not extend to monotony.

In contrast with section 7, the free verse and particularly long lines of 'Today' 今天 defines an individual and ecstatic spirit. Repetition is also used, but the length of lines is so varied that it merely provides a focus to the different scenes and action:

I love the sound of the long and distant bugle call
in the countryside at dawn
I love being pushed in a busy crowd
I love the sound of gongs and trumpets along the
streets
I love circus performances
我歡喜清晨郊外的軍號的悠遠的聲音
我歡喜擁擠在忙亂的人叢裡
我歡喜從街頭敲打過去的鑼鼓的聲音
我歡喜馬戲班的演技

In such a moment of bliss and ecstasy, the conclusion comes as a surprise, for it is on a Keatsian note:

I even wish to die in this moment of glorious
encounter
我甚至想在這光明的際會中死去

This has been criticized as representative of Ai Qing's 'romantic inclinations'. 37/ It is certainly unexpected

37. Wen Yiduo, 'Ai Qing & Tianjian', 'Speeches', Complete works, p.236.

because the robustness and elation expressed throughout the poem do not prepare one for such a turn at the end. Yet this is not the only poem using the light motif in which thoughts of death are suddenly manifested at the end of the poem. In the last stanza of 'The sun', there is also an image of violent death preceeding rebirth:

Thus my heart
Is torn by hands of fire
My rotten soul
Discarded by the river

於是我的心胸
被火焰之手撕開
陳腐的靈魂
擱棄在河畔

And in a later poem, 'Era', the feelings expressed is even closer to 'To the sun':

I even want to lie on the ground
And let its feet trample on my breast like a
horseshoe

甚至想仰臥在地面上
讓它的腳像馬蹄一樣踩過我的胸膛

Even the quieter sentiments of 'For the sun' cannot keep death from his thoughts:

Makes me live fervently, suffering for ideals
Until Death takes my life away.

使我熱情地生活，為理想而痛苦，
直到我的生命被死亡帶走。

This preoccupation with death does tend to suggest that there is a romantic wish for self-sacrifice or transcendent death when Ai Qing is swayed by strong emotions.

Two of the long poems written in this period, namely 'The bugler' 吹號者 38/ and 'He died the second time' 他死在第二次， are both about people who participate in the

38. First published in Wenyi zhendi Vol.3 No.2 (1939.5.16).
Collected in He died, Selected poems, Selected works

actual fighting and sacrificed their own lives in defense of their country. Both can be described as character sketches, but on entirely different levels.

In Ai Qing's mind, 'The bugler', by virtue of his duty, is representative of the poet. He is the announcer of dawn; with his marching tunes he leads fellow soldiers in battle. In the first and second sections of the poem Ai Qing concentrates on one of the bugler's daily routines -- waking up, and blowing the morning call. Through the loving care with which Ai Qing portrays the bugler's eager expectation of dawn and the subsequent description of the sunrise, this simple routine is transformed into a highly symbolic moment. The sense of affinity between the poet and the soldier is such that through the latter, Ai Qing is actually expressing his own longing for day break, which, in Ai Qing's vocabulary, is always a symbol of hope and light:

Outside it is still pitch black;
Dawn has not arrived.
What woke him
Was his own over-eager
Longing for dawn

門外依然是一片黝黑
黎明沒有到來，
那惊醒他的
是他自己對於黎明的
過於殷切的期望

Ai Qing describes the bugler's ⁿmundane daily routines with an uncluttered simplicity which gives it a sense of 'joy and dedication. Blowing the bugle is not only the hero's duty, but the very centre of his existence. The image of the bugle

shining in the dim light, with its 'healthy glow' and 'scarlet tassel', reminds one of the rising sun.

Yet the individual and prophetic quality of the bugler is only to be appreciated in the quiet solitude of early morning. When the crowd is awoken he merges into the collective force:

So, he left the slope,
And disappeared among the
Countless grey files.

於是，他離開了山坡，
又把自己消失在那
無數的灰色的行列中去。

In sections three and four of the poem, the narrative takes on the first person plural, emphasizing this unity of collective will. In this respect, Ai Qing seems to be illustrating what he advocated in On poetry: 'The ultimate goal of groups is not to cancel will-power, but to expand it boundlessly' 39/. As Ai Qing perceived it, the bugler stands out in his single-mindedness as a representative of the spirit of his age.

In this poem, it is often the rhythm which helps to convey the sense of excitement and the power of the collective will. By using repetition and alternating long and short lines in the description of the world's awakening, Ai Qing creates an atmosphere of intense activities and animation:

The woods awakened
Sending forth intermittent clamour of birds
The rivers awakened
Calling on horses to drink their fill
The village awakened
Farming women hurry by the river banks

39. 'On poets' 詩人論 No.30. On poetry p.126.

The squares awakened
 Crowds dressed in grey
 Came out of shacks ruddy in the dawn,
 Pressing together and lining up ...

林子醒了
 傳出一陣陣鳥雀的喧吵
 河流醒了
 召引着馬群去飲水，
 村野醒了
 農婦急忙從堤岸上走過

曠場醒了
 穿着灰布衣服的人群
 從披著晨曦的破屋中出來，
 擁擠着又排列着 ...

In the next section a similar technique is used to describe the road on which the soldiers are marching. The phrase 'that road' is repeated four times, each qualified by a long descriptive line. The rhythm confirms the statement that the road seems to 'extend towards the boundless sky'. Even when the phrase 'that road' is replaced by 'And now', the rhythm remains unchanged, illustrating the sense of determination shared by the soldiers. The excitement of battle described in section 5 is again dependent on the rhythmic effect created through repetition:

In the sound of charge and battlecries that shook
 the earth
 In the never-flinching footsteps marching in
 unison
 In the crowds rushing forward like raging torrents
 In the sound of continuous dense bombing

在震撼天地的沖殺聲裡
 在決不回頭的—致的步伐裡
 在狂流般奔湧的人群裡
 在緊密的連續的爆炸聲裡

The series of long adjectival qualifiers build up an atmosphere of fervent excitement and densely packed action. Yet what is even more impressive is Ai Qing's manipulation of a short, staccatto rhythm evocative of the bugler's battle tune rising

distinctly above the general throng:

Our bugler,
Inspired by his life force,
Was running, and blowing the
Short, urgent, roused
Bugle call to charge which would never cease until
he died.

我們的吹號者
以生命所給予他的鼓舞，
一面奔跑，一面吹出了那
短促的、急迫的、激昂的，
在死亡之前決不終止的沖鋒號。

And in the earlier sections of the poem, the short lines focus our attention as we sense a sudden rhythmic contrast. The sound of the bugle as described is not only an imitation of the battle call, but also suggests that the bugler is out of breath from running as well as from the excitement. Following two staccatto, almost abrupt lines, the last line sweeps along with a lengthy adjectival qualifier, suggesting in a masterful stroke an unstoppable will and energy both determined and defiant. This sudden change of rhythm is also apparent in the death of the bugler:

Suddenly he fell
No one had seen it when he fell
He fell on the land which
until the last minute he deeply loved

他寂然地倒下去
沒有一個人曾看見他倒下去，
他倒在那直到最後一刻
都深深地愛着的土地上

In repeating the word 'fell' in three consecutive lines, and each time lengthening the grammatic construction, which, except for the last one, constitute independent lines, Ai Qing

draws out the rhythm to create a slow-motion effect.

The ending of the poem is a brilliant use of a technique that is pure cinema. By focusing on the bugle, a motionless object which acts as a mirror, he shows us the continuing action reflected on the polished surface. The glimmer of sunlight is not only a symbol of hope, but also a tribute to the bugler's undying spirit. The economy and control of this poem is remarkable, and it is achieved by a merge of the two aspects of the bugler (aspects also shared by the poet) -- the prophet and the soldier. Thus, the bugler's significance is largely symbolic.

The soldier in 'He died the second time', on the other hand, is given a partially psychological portrayal. The narrative point of view shifts in every section, alternating between the soldier's surroundings, his perception and actions, and his thoughts and feelings. The opening scene is impressive in its quiet, cinematic description. The first two stanzas give one a gradually widening picture. First we see the soldier's face as a close up, then the stretcher on which he is lying (medium shot), then his two fellow soldiers carrying him (long shot), and finally the atmosphere and the setting -- cold wind, low clouds, and the soldiers walking rapidly and noiselessly through the winter woods (wide angle). Stanza four is an even more succinct example of this technique. The camera is first focused on the wounded arm (close up), then the blood dripping from it (medium), and as

the stretcher moves away, the camera follows slowly on the same track (medium to long shot). This process is reversed in stanza five, which shows first the solemn files of soldiers (long shot) before focusing on their footsteps (medium), and finally onto the spots of blood being wiped away (close up). The atmosphere is tense and potent, more significant for its total dependence on visual impact. Except for the last stanza, which suggests the sound of marching footsteps, all is quiet. In comparison section 2, 'The hospital' 醫院, seems vague, probably because, unlike the previous section, it is on the whole plain narrative with very few images. It is worth noting that in this poem Ai Qing is much more successful in the use of the pictorial and behaviouristic approach than in psychological descriptions. This is proven in 'Hands' 手, in which he paints a simple but effective impressionist picture. There is a contrast between health and disease, cleanliness and filth, and innocence and experience, all conveyed in the white uniform of the nurse attending to the pus and blood on the soldier's wound, and her delicate white hands contrasting with the rough hands of the peasant turned soldier. Yet the image which lingers in one's mind is the glimmer of gold on her fingers. Its suggestiveness and subtlety are quite unusual in Ai Qing's war poems -- a feeling of loss, or rather, the soldier's vision of the kind of bliss that will never be his. Ai Qing's portrayal of the soldier in this poem has not always met with critical approval. It is often said that there is too much of the introspective intellectual for it to be a convincing likeness of a man of

action, a soldier who was but a simple peasant. 40/ Nowhere is this meditative strand more apparent than in 'A thought' 一念 . There is even an ambiguity in the narrative view point. Throughout the poem the distinction between 'he' (the poet's narration) and 'we' or 'I' is quite sharp , but in 'A thought' the one who is philosophizing could have either been the poet or the soldier . It begins with a Hamlet-like rhetoric:

Has he ever learned
What death is?
-- To live, to die,
Even insects and flowers
Change in the metamorphosis of life ...

他會不知道
死是什麼東西？
— 活着，死去，
虫與花草
也在生命的蛻變中蛻化着 ...

It has been argued that such rhetoric is inconsistent with a simple farmer's thoughts, and even Ai Qing has admitted that the long duration in which this poem is written might have led to such inconsistency. 41/ However, this does lead one to a

40. From the political point of view, Feng Zhi 馮至 and Xiao Xue 曉雪 criticized Ai Qing's inability to create a positive character out of soldiers and farmers. The former also pointed out that the construction of this poem is loose, while the latter noted that the subjective lyricism in the poem is not consistent with the characterization. Feng Zhi, 'Lun Ai Qing de shi' 論艾青的詩 (On Ai Qing's poetry) Wenxue yanjiu 文學研究 1958 No.1, p.16
Xiao Xue, Shenghuo de muge 生活的牧歌 (Songs of life) (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1957)
Julia Lin, in Modern Chinese poetry: an introduction, is of the opinion that the stereotyped poeticizing of patriotic exhortation in the latter half of the poem is trite and flaccid. (University of Washington Press, 1972) p.181.

41. Preface, Selected poems (55).

complexity in the soldier's character not often discussed. It first appears in 'Healing' as a sense of uneasiness at the thought of having to return to the battlefield:

Only this moment does he realize
That he is a soldier
A soldier who must be wounded in action
And when his wounds are healed must rejoin the
action
He was thinking and walking
With footsteps which looked so stiff

只有此刻他才覺得
自己是一個兵士
一個兵士必須在戰爭中受傷
傷好了必須再去參加戰爭
他想着又走着
步伐顯得多麼不自然啊

This hesitation about returning to the fighting is not consistent with his thoughts on the sick bed:

We are lying here, with memories of the battle
field in our heart
Memories fonder than those of the villages in
which we grew up
Oh we are glad to
Charge forward in gun fire

我們躺着，心中懷念着戰場
比懷念自己生長的村莊更親切
我們依然歡喜在
烽火中奔馬也前進啊

However, it gives a new dimension to his character -- that of an individual facing a very human dilemma -- the fear of death versus his duty as a soldier. This sense of individuality is further enhanced in sections five and six. Whether describing him as walking shyly or proudly through the city streets, or wandering happily in the fields, the technique is behaviourist, and much more suggestive than any direct description of the

soldier's state of mind. Through these descriptions the reader shares the soldier's enthusiasm and experience, but is at the same time given the benefit of the outsider:

He saw a field
He saw a farmer
He saw a plough-ox
Oh everything is still the same
Oh everywhere it is still the same

他看見了水田
他看見了一個農夫
他看見了耕牛
一切都一樣啊
到處都一樣啊

What endears us to the soldier with a touch of pathos is the revelation that he is insignificant, that his dilemma and his fate may be overwhelmingly important to him, but others do not even notice his existence:

Bathed in the neon light
His face shyly turned red
For fear that those people
Had guessed his secret --
But actually they had not even noticed him

他的浴在霓虹光的臉
卻又羞愧地紅起來了
為的是怕那些人們
已猜到他心中的秘密——
其實人家並不會注意到他啊

-- section 5 'Stance'

To the busy farmer he smiled
Even he did not know why he smiled
And the farmer did not see him smile

他向那正在忙碌的農夫笑
他自己也不曉得為什麼笑
農夫也沒有看見他的笑

-- section 6 'The fields'

The renunciation of the individual longing for freedom and the

submission to the collective will take place in 'A glance' —
游目 . The sight of a disabled soldier begging gives the hero
the revelation that there could be a worse fate than death.
With a subdued sense of injustice suggested in the
juxtaposition of laughing, well-off youths on carriages and
the disabled beggar as a background, the soldier convinces
himself of his duty and his fate. This attempt at self-
persuasion is further emphasized in 'A change' 替換 by the
repetition of the word 'should':

this is what it should be
A soldier, before the war
Of liberating his country is over
Will take these two uniforms as the colours of his
life
And such colours should vigorously
Fly on the trampled earth of his motherland ...

這是應該的
一個士兵，在自己的
祖國解放的戰爭還未結束之前
這兩種制服是他生命的旗幟
這樣的旗幟應該激勵地
飄動在被踐踏的祖國的土地上 ...

In this context, the insistent marching rhythm created by the
use of repetition and parallelism in 'Send off' 歡送 ,
which Julia Lin finds trite, can be seen as an attempt at
self-obliteration:

We think of nothing except glory
We think of nothing except the pursuit of glory
We think of nothing except dying gladly in the
pursuit of glory

我們的心除了光榮不再想起什麼
我們除了追跡光榮不再想起什麼
我們除了為追跡光榮而欣然赴死不再想起什麼 ...

In the next section we are persuaded that this death is
justified -- it is the law of nature; it is for the good of

future generations:

-- so, what is wrong
If we die for this?

——那末 我們為這而死
又有什麼不應該呢？

With rhetoric and battle cries in the repetition of 'Oh charge, oh be brave', he suppresses the individual's fear of death and embraces the collective will to die a soldier's death:

What is worthy of our fear--
When we already know that it is glorious to die in battle?

什麼東西值得我們害怕呢 ——
當我們已經知道為戰鬥而死是光榮的？

On another level, however, one could say that the fear, though suppressed, is still very much alive. He therefore finds it necessary to reiterate, in an attempt not unlike self-hypnotism, his wish for self-sacrifice. There is an admirable simplicity in the way Ai Qing describes the soldier's death; so quick that it almost seems unreal:

He could not think of anything
-- his mother is dead
And he had not been intimate with any woman

他不能想起什麼
——母親死了
又沒有他曾親昵過的女人

-- He has fallen

Although Ai Qing says there are 'tears of gladness' in his eyes, what remains in one's mind is this simple summary of his life. In comparison to such effective spareness and control of feeling, the rather clichéd image of the window representing the soldier's eyes seems out of place, especially as it is preceded by a complicated adverbial qualifier: 'the

window from which he could see the world' 從那裡可以看着世界的窗子。 But Ai Qing does not leave us with the consolation that the soldier has died a death of his own choice. Even the conviction that he should die to liberate his country, and that when he died he was lying on the earth of his beloved native soil, were implanted in him:

-- Because people
Those people who knew more than he did
Had told him so --

—因為人們
那些比他懂得更多的人們
曾經如此告訴過他—

The ending confirms the obliteration of the individual. The soldier's tomb, one among countless tombs, is left unmarked. There is a helplessness and a sense of waste which seems to qualify his vigorous attempts to convince himself of his duty.

In the preface to his Selected poems (55), written in 1950, Ai Qing says that when he writes about soldiers and farmers, the characters often betray intellectual qualities, and are therefore conceptualized. 42/ This was probably said with 'He died the second time' in mind. Critics may argue that much of the introspective reflection in this poem is more typical of an educated man than a farmer, but even if Ai Qing thinks that he has failed to give us an exact likeness of a soldier, it can hardly be denied that he has drawn an interesting portrait of the struggle of a man. It is true that this poem is not as economical and precise as 'The 42. Ibid.

bugler', with which it is often compared. Yet one cannot help feeling that in presenting us the diverse facets of the soldier's situation, Ai Qing has given his hero richness and depth of character. He becomes not just a symbol, but also an individual. The main reason why this poem has been much criticized is, I think, the application of political ideology in literary criticism. Since the soldier is not unequivocally courageous, critics of this school tend to cast doubts on the merit of the whole poem.

Another long poem which is also basically a character sketch is 'Torches' 火把 .43/ It is the longest and most dramatic narrative poem of this period. The torch is part of the light motif which includes dawn, the sun, and fire. In this poem it is the guiding light in the heroine's journey towards social and political awareness. There are two dominant symbols in 'Torches': the first is the torch, a source of light breaking through darkness; the second is the figure of Tangni's brother, representative of self-sacrifice for an ideal and a common course. Technically this poem is a bold experiment, as the awakening of Tangni is entirely conveyed through conversations and soliloquies. Except for two four-lined stanzas, one at the end of section thirteen as a parenthesis and one in section eighteen, the poet stays very much in the background.

43. First published in book form by Wenhua Shenghuo she. 文化生活社, 1941. Collected in Selected poems (55, 79, 81).

The character of Tangni, a middle class girl of nineteen, comes vividly to life in the first section, 'Invitation' 邀. Her concern for appearance and slight belief in superstition suggests a superficiality. This is reinforced by the hasty and random tone of her conversation, set in contrast to her friend Li Yin's 李茵 advice and quiet, sometimes slightly mocking, replies. On the other hand, the books in her room point to a social and political conscience, but they are lying together incongruously with her cosmetics. These books, and her brother's portrait, are hints at the imminent change Tangni is about to go through. What gives her character a positive appeal is her sense of novelty and child-like delight at the scene of the mass meeting:

So many people So many people!
As though they've been blown out by some hurricane
Where do so many people come from?
In this city Where do they come from?

這末多人 這末多人!
好像被什麼旋風刮出來的
哪兒來的這末多人?
這城市 哪兒來的
這末多人!

As though they have arranged to meet in the
streets tonight
To line up in a file and see how long the file
will be
To shout together and see how loud the shout will
be

好像他們都約好今晚在街上聚會
一起像他們都約好今晚在什麼處
一起起來排成隊 看排起來響

Like a child she marvels excitedly at the crowds around her, and through her this sense of excitement is conveyed to the reader. Yet at the meeting place it is still the silk bow, the shining shoes and the clothes of her friends which

capture her immediate attention. Her reference to the drowned soldier simply as a bad omen, and her disparaging view of the workers and fear of them remind us that she is moved more by a sense of novelty than by a commitment to a general course. This is most evident as she gossips to her friends about the love letter written by a fat student (section 3). But from the start of the meeting even her personal emotions are left aside, and she acts as a camera through which scenes and events are recorded. An especially interesting instance is the narration of the play in section 7. The effect of this section closely resembles a commentary on a silent movie. As the march draws to an end Tangni's excitement wanes, and in its stead comes agitation for having lost sight of her lover. The long conversation which follows, divided into four sections entitled 'Advice' and 'Repent', is the turning point in Tangni's life. We learn briefly of the background of the two girls, and from the experience of Li Yin, Tangni achieves a new sense of awareness. To prevent the long conversation from obliterating the background, Ai Qing has inserted seven parentheses into these four sections, in the form of stage directions. The basic form of these parentheses is 'A few people/ Holding torches / Walk past in front of them', which is repeated four times, while in the last two instances there are the addition of 'singing' and 'singing lustily', as though urging Tangni onto her new road.

Since this poem is written entirely in a conversational form, the language is necessarily simple and colloquial, and

imagery cannot be elaborate. Even in describing the speech in section four, each image is limited to one or two lines. The atmosphere of the poem depends heavily on the use of repetition. This is present throughout the poem, though much less obvious in and after the long conversation of 'Advice' and 'Repent'. This is because in this poem repetition usually suggests agitation, and therefore does not tally with the comparatively calm and rational tone of the latter part of the poem.

Repetition is used when the heroine is either excited or perturbed. An example from section 2 'On the streets' 街上 is the recurrence of the adverb 'so' (這末 or 那末) which suggests a sense of naïve incredulity, while the repetition of short phrases gives the impression that Tangni is breathless and also lost for words:

Oh Look there Still more Still more
They have started running All have started
running

啊 看那邊 還要多 還要多
他們跑起來了 都跑起來了

As the meeting commences, the rhythm also changes from the short, abrupt questions and exclamations to longer and more balanced lines. The syntactically parallel couplets add a note of ceremony to the occasion:

His voice gradually rises
His feelings gradually becomes fervent
His heart is as big as a square
His words glow like a lamp
Countless crowds are standing before him
Countless ears are catching his words

他的聲音慢慢抬高
他的感情慢慢激昂
他的心像曠場一樣寬闊
他的話像燈光一樣發亮
無數的人群站在他的面前
無數的耳朵捕捉他的語言

This is also true of the description of the marches in section six. Although the repetitive patterns are more varied, basically they all start with 'illuminate our ...' or 'let us ...', and the lines on the whole remain long to sustain the force inherent in the marching crowd. The narration of the play in section seven, 'Publicity carriage' 宣傳卡車, is unusual in that over half of the lines begin with the word 'that' (那 or 那個). It adds a colloquial flavour to the narrative, while at the same time forms a pattern which binds the action together.

As the marching crowd disperses, personal feelings again surface, and Tangri becomes agitated:

Where are you? Where are you?
This place is so big where should I look for you?
There are so many people how can I see you?
There is so much noise how can I call out to you?

你在哪裡？你在哪裡？
這末大的地方哪兒去找你呢？
這末多的人怎能看到你呢？
這末雜亂的聲音怎能叫你呢？

These questions, coming in rapid succession, suggests a sinking of heart. She becomes intensely perturbed when she sees Keming 克明 walking with another woman, and this is again apparent in the rhythm:

Who is she? The one wearing a grass green dress
 Who is that woman? The one with hair as short as a
 horse mane
 Who is that woman? The woman who is talking loudly
 And laughing loudly who is she?
 The one who sways her hips while walking
 Who is that woman? The one who throws out her
 chest
 Who is that woman?

那是誰？那穿了草綠色的裙裝的
 女子是誰？那頭髮短得像馬鬃的
 女子是誰？那大聲地說着話的
 又大聲地笑着的女子是誰？
 那走路時搖擺着身體的
 女子是誰？那高高的挺起胸部的
 女子是誰？

The use of run-on lines, most unusual in Ai Qing's poems, emphasizes the word 'woman' and gives an impression that the question is broken and abrupt although it is preceded by a long qualifier. The sense of urgency is built up by the broken, telegram-like speech of the woman in question:

Now -- Our
 Work -- expanding
 Subjective weakness --
 Being overcome ...

目前——我們的
 工作——開展
 主觀上的弱點——
 正在克服...

'Torches' is a remarkable poem. Ai Qing sensitively depicts individual feelings set against a background of a mass movement, illustrating his own belief that the individual will should be subordinated to the demands of the age. But what is most striking is how he manipulates the conversational tone, and with one single technique of repetition, succeeds in portraying an individual's agitated spirit while conveying through it the overwhelming strength of collective force.

Although Ai Qing was an admirer of Verhaeren and Whitman, and an advocate of free verse and 'the prose beauty in poetry', it does not mean that he set no 'rules' for himself in his writing. It is true that he has dispensed with rhyme and a regular metre, 44/ but many of his best poems written during these early war years are based on certain structural patterns to which he adhered unswayingly. The use of repetition and parallel construction, already experimented with successfully in 'Dayanhe', became his favourite poetic technique. A typical example of the basic use of repetition is in 'Streets', in which the repetition of both vocabulary and syntax helps to build up a rhythm expressive of the ruthless and speedy annexation of roads by urbanization:

Occupying with crowded houses
 Occupying with shops
 Occupying with electric poles and power lines
 Occupying with the footsteps of numerous citizens
 and never ending clamour
 Occupying with numerous vehicles speeding past
 and their forever rotating wheels
 Occupying with expedition with tension with
 racket
 With the glare of electricity and gas
 and a sudden sense of terror

用毗連的住房來佔據
 用商店來佔據
 用電桿和電線來佔據
 用眾多的市民的腳步
 和無止息的喧聲來佔據
 用眾多的疾馳的車輛
 和牠們的輾轉不息的輪子來佔據
 用速度 用緊張 用轟鬧
 用電光與煤氣的照射
 和突如其來的恐怖來佔據

44. 'Shi de sanwen mei' 詩的散文美 (The prose beauty of poetry), On poetry pp.89-90. It is quite obvious that in poems of this period, Ai Qing has discarded the more contrived style he experimented with in 'Ill in prison' and 'Dawn & five other poems'.

The effect here is of troops marching into an annexed area, and the word 'occupy' coming at the end of each line is like a seal of ownership, harshly enforced, and growing more and more unrelenting with the insistent rhythm. Possible monotony is avoided by the variation in the length of each line and the placing of the caesura in the longer lines. It is interesting to note how he alternates between long and short lines, especially at the end of the poem, so that the rhythm achieves a suffocating urgency.

Another poem, 'Desolation' 荒凉 45/ , is constructed entirely on the basis of repetition:

Over there the hills have no trees
Over there the earth has no grass
Over there the rivers have no water
Over there people have no tears

那邊的山上沒有樹
那邊的地上沒有草
那邊的河裡沒有水
那邊的人沒有眼淚

Like 'Streets', the use of repetition here creates a accumulative effect, with one detail substantiated by another, painting an overall picture of grimness. The rhythm in this poem, however, is very regular, with the same number of syllables in each line, and the caesura coming after the fifth syllable in the first three lines. Emphasis is given to the concluding line as the caesura comes one syllable earlier, thus leaving a well balanced phrase of four syllables to the

45. First published in Wenyi zhendi Vol.7 No.2 (1942.9.30).
Collected in Dawn.

end of line. Our attention is captured not only because of the sudden change of rhythm, but also because of the perfect balance hammering home an almost fatalistic hollowness. 46/

'Farmers' 農夫 47/ is a poem conceived on a single idea -- the farmers' unseverable bond to the earth. To emphasise this Ai Qing repeats the word 'earth' in almost every line. However, one cannot help feeling that here the technique is carried to excess, for one's attention is often distracted from the farmers into contemplating on Ai Qing's conception of the earth. This is especially true of stanza two:

You are as melancholy as the earth
You hold your silence like the earth
Your stupidity, stubbornness, and untamed nature
Are even more like the earth

你們陰鬱如土地
不說話也像土地
你們的愚蠢，固執與不馴服
更像土地呵

Moreover, the earth is overloaded with too many roles in this poem. It represents the appearance of the farmers (their

46. This short poem has been quoted by the Chinese violinist Ma Sicong 馬思聰 in an article written soon after his escape from China in the winter of 1947. In his article the poem is given an anti-communist reading. Though Ma's use of the quotation is effective, the interpretation suggested is definitely misleading, for this poem was written in August, 1940 in Chongqing, during which time Ai Qing's feelings were positively pro-communist. In a conversation in summer, 1981, he described this poem as a simple record of what he saw, and denied that it carried any political connotation.

Ma's article 'Kunan de yuezhang' 苦難的樂章 (Song of suffering) is partly quoted in Yin Xueman 尹雪曼, Zhongguo wenxue shi 中國文學史 (A history of Chinese literature)

47. Collected in North.

smell and complexion), their character, as well as the land they farm. As a result, the first two ideas are not very well developed and the picture of the farmers become vague. Ironically it is the straight forward statements of the last stanza which gives a depth of feeling to the poem:

When you live you reclaim from the earth, plough
the earth
In death you along with your pain are buried in
the earth
And it is only you
Who can truly love the earth

你們活着開墾土地，耕犁土地，
死了帶着痛苦埋在土地裡，
也只有你們
才能真正愛着土地

Another poem which employs a similar technique, but much less obtrusively, is 'Winter woods' 48/. Here the recurrent phrase is also the title of the poem:

I like walking through winter woods --
Winter woods on which the sun does not shine
Winter woods blown by a dry wind
Winter woods with a sky likely to snow

Lovely is the colourless winter
Lovely is the winter without any bird's clamour
Bliss is walking alone in the winter woods

我歡喜走過冬日的林子 —
沒有陽光的冬日的林子
乾燥的風吹着的冬日的林子
天像要下雪的冬日的林子
沒有色澤的冬日是可愛的
沒有鳥的喧噪的冬日是可愛的
冬日的林子裏一個人走着是幸福的

For two reasons, this poems succeeds where 'Farmers' failed. Firstly the images conveyed in each line are concrete, giving us clear mental pictures of the surroundings of the woods, 48. Collected in Dawn.

thus suggesting the mood and atmosphere. Secondly, the very subtle variation in the repetition as well as syntax in the first two lines of stanza two -- the partial repetition of 'winter' without the 'woods', and the use of the additional predicate 'lovely is' -- prevents too strong an insistence of the set phrase, which may lead not only to monotonous rhythm, but one which contradicts the quiet solitude the poet tries to convey.

The repetition of words, phrases or syntax throughout a poem, however, is only feasible in fairly short verse. In longer works it only binds together a section of the poem. An effective example is the description of city streets in 'He died the second time' quoted earlier in this chapter. 'The time is come' 時候到了 49/ is another poem in which both repetition of syntax and set phrases are used:

Each day we are overcome with fatigue,
What for?
Each day we sigh in despair,
What for?
Each day we look at one another through tears,
What for?

我們每天被疲倦壓倒，
為的是什麼呢？
我們每天嘆息在絕望裡，
為的是什麼呢？
我們每天都相對流淚，
為的是什麼呢？

Here the piling up of suffering is an emotional appeal to the Japanese commoner.

49. Collected in Dawn.

A technique often used in conjunction with repetition, but also independently, is parallel construction, which, in many cases, forms the structural pattern of whole poems. This combination, at its best, allow the poet to build up emotions on the basis of a few terse lines. In 'Winter ponds' 冬天的池沼 50/ the sustained metaphor of an old man is presented through structurally parallel lines and the recurrence of the subject at the beginning of each image:

Winter ponds,
Lonely as an old man's heart --
A heart which has experienced the bitterness of
 life;
Winter ponds,
Dry as an old man's eyes --
Eyes which have lost their lustre in the grind of
 labour;
Winter ponds,
Wasted as an old man's hair --
The thin and grey hair like grass under frost;
Winter ponds
Melancholy as a sad old man --
An old man stooped beneath a leaden sky.

冬天的池沼
寂寞得像老人的心
飽歷了人世的辛酸的心

冬天的池沼
陰郁得像一個老人
你僅在陰郁的天幕下的老人

冬天的池沼
枯乾得像老人的眼
被勞苦磨失了光輝的眼

冬天的池沼
荒蕪得像老人的髮
像霜草般稀疏而又灰白的髮

Although written in one stanza, the poem in fact consists of four sections, each of which concentrates on one particular feature of the image of the old man. The first two sections are identical except for the placing of the caesura in the

50. Collected in Dawn, Selected poems, Selected works.

last line. Even in the last section the structural pattern is unchanged, and a sense of finality is created by giving the reader a total picture of the old man and a very slight variation in the rhythm. All the lines in the previous three sections end with a monosyllabic word, while the concluding section ends with a bisyllabic one, thus indicating a difference with a conclusiveness.

Parallel stanzaic construction often alternates with stanzas not restricted by any set pattern in longer poems, in which a close adherence to a definite pattern is impossible. 'The saddler's shop' 鞍轡店 51/, built on three different stanzaic patterns in addition to the use of repetition, is an interesting example. Stanzas six and eight are almost complete parallels, while stanzas five and seven share the same pattern with a slight variation in the first lines:

'Over there are the bridles, the yokes,
That's a bit -- to clasp the teeth of the horses
That's a horseshoe -- to protect the horses' hoofs
over long distances ...'
(stanza 5)

'That's a stirrup -- you use it to mount
That's a bronze bell -- for camels which travel in
deserts
That's a saddle blanket -- for load bearing
donkeys, the poor donkeys
(stanza 7)

「那邊是轡頭，軛，
那邊是嚼子——用來鉗住馬的牙齒
那是馬蹄鐵——保護馬蹄走遠路……」

「那是鐵鞍——用來跨上馬背
那是銅鈴——給走沙漠的駱駝
那是護包——給載重的驢子，可憐的馬廬子」

51. First published in 'Xiandai wenxue' Vol.1 No.2 (1940.5.15)
Collected in Dawn, Anti-Fascism, Selected poems(55),
Selected works, 100 lyrics.

And there are reins
Reins made of flax
Reins made of coir
Reins in different dyes

還有韁繩
麻做的韁繩
棉做的韁繩
染色的韁繩

(stanza 6)

And there are saddles
Saddles in cowhide
Saddles in red laquer
Saddles inlaid with copper-nickel

還有馬鞍
牛皮的馬鞍
紅漆的馬鞍
鑲了白銅的馬鞍

(stanza 8)

The conversational tone of the long lines in stanzas five and seven eases the tension of the pithy lines of stanza six and eight, while at the same time suggesting an almost sinister kindness in the shopkeeper, and the complacent pride he takes in his displays:

'-- All these
Can make the animals look lovely ...'

——這一切
可以使畜生顯得可愛 ...

(stanza 9)

Another poems which is based on a similar technique is 'City dwellers'. Here alternation is even more regular, with the even numbered stanzas being complete parallels in structure, while the intermediate stanzas are not governed by any set pattern:

Oh I recognize you --
Boastful, cunning
Foxy, snobbish
Living in defraud and intrigue

我認得你們啊——
浮誇的，狡調的
刁惡的，勢利的
生活在欺詐與陰謀裡的

(stanza 2)

Oh I recognize you --

Extravagant, haughty
Self-satisfied, grabbing
Living in insatiability 52/ and greed

我認得你們啊——
豪華的，矜持的
自滿的，唯利是圖的
生活在無厭足與貪婪裏的

(stanza 4)

Oh I recognize you --
Profligate
Vicious
Unfathomable
Living in speculation and danger

我認得你們啊——
荒唐的
險惡的
不可猜測的
生活在投機與冒險裏的

(stanza 6)

Oh I recognize you --
Dissolute, seductive
Coquettish and shrewish
Living in carnal desire and intemperance

我認得你們啊
淫蕩的，妖冶的
賣弄風情的潑辣的
生活在肉慾與放縱裏的

(stanza 8)

In fact the only variance is in the sixth stanza. in which only one adjective is accomodated in each line, thus creating five lines instead of four. Yet the rhythm here is far more significant than the exact number of lines or syllables. and this slight variation does not alter the short and accusatory tone in these stanzas. 'City dwellers' is a very good example of how the stanzaic pattern sets the pace of the poem while the stanzas not following the pattern are free to accomodate descriptve images. However, this poem is successful only in

52. '無厭足' in the original is an adjective used as noun.

so far as Ai Qing's manipulation of repetition and structural coherence is concerned. The wide scattering of adjectives attributed to the city men and women are too vague and conceptualized to create any strong impact on the reader.

The most perfect example of parallel stanzaic structure is found in one of Ai Qing's best poems -- 'Hand carts' 手推車 53/. Here the control and equilibrium are superb. The two stanzas of the poem each describe one aspect of the the hand carts -- the first sound, and the second the traces of wheels on the yellow loess. Each stanza, on its own, exemplifies Ai Qing's advocacy of complete freedom from any established poetic rules and formats 54/. There is no rhyme, no regular metre, and no punctuation; each line is based on a grammatical unit which to a large extent governs the internal rhythm of the stanza. But this apparent freedom and lack of regularity is deceptive, for each line in one stanza must be echoed in the other, creating a poetic form particular to this poem. Like a mirror, it enables the two stanzas to reflect upon each other, thus entwining the audio and visual impact the hand cart made on the poet:

53. Collected in North, Selected poems, Selected works, 100 lyrics, Ai Qing.

54. 'Xingshi' 形式 (Form), On poetry. Ai Qing has always emphasized that form should be subservient to content, and in poems up to this period he has put this idea into practice. Metre and rhyme have almost no place in his works not only because he wanted a clean break from traditional Chinese or western poetic rules, but also because he believed that song and poetry should be differentiated.

In areas where the Yellow River flows past
 On numerous dried riverbeds
 The hand cart
 With its only wheel
 Lets out a squeal which makes the overcast
 sky convulse
 Passing through cold and silence
 From the foot of one hill
 To the foot of another
 Reverberating
 The sorrow of the northerners

In frozen snowy days
 Between one poor village and the next
 The hand cart
 With its solitary wheel
 Etches deep traces on the layers ashen yellow
 earth
 From one path
 To another path
 Crisscrossing
 The sorrow of the northerners

在黃河流過的地域
 在無數的枯乾了的河底
 手推車
 以唯一的輪子
 發出使陰暗的天空震擊的尖音
 穿過寒冷與靜寂
 從這一個山腳
 到那一個山腳
 徹響着
 北國人民的悲哀

在冰雪凝凍的日子
 在貧窮的小村與小村之間
 手推車
 以單獨的輪子
 刻劃在灰黃土層上的深深的轍跡
 穿過荒潤與荒漠
 從這一條路
 到那一條路
 交織着
 北國人民的悲哀

However, the poem with the most intricate structure is not 'Hand carts', but 'Fengling Crossing' 風陵渡 55/. The use of repetition in the first stanza is quite obvious, but what is worth noting is the way the images in this stanza are echoed and developed in the next two stanzas. In four lines, Ai Qing gives a succession of four images :

55. Collected in North.

The wind blows on the yellow silt on the yellow loess

The wind blows on the muddy water on the Yellow River

The wind blows on countless ancient ferry boats

The wind blows on the ancient sails on the countless ferry boats

風吹着黃土層上的黃色的泥沙
風吹着黃河的污濁的水
風吹着無數的古舊的渡船
風吹着無數渡船上的古舊的布帆

The effect is that one is brought closer and closer to the river. The second stanza is again based on these four images, but they are given a new dimension. The sand and river are seen as hostile forces, while the boat struggles to convey its passengers to safety. It is an allegory symbolizing the fate of the Chinese people in a political and military storm, with the old vessel being the nation at war. The four images in stanza two are still presented in very similar grammatical units: 'the yellow sand' 黃色的泥沙, 'the Yellow River's waters' 黃河的水, 'the ancient ferry boat' 古舊的渡船, 'the ancient sails' 古舊的布帆. Repetition is used in the words 'ancient' and hinted at in 'yellow', but the varied length of each succeeding line avoids uniformity, and creates instead a tidal effect most suited to the subject matter. The third stanza looks much more irregular, but it too, in turn, echoes the images in the previous stanzas. The first four lines give another angle of looking at the sand and waves; the appeal being auditory rather than visual. The fate of the boat and its passengers (already present in stanza 2) comes under serious threat in this stanza:

Every minute it wants to tear our boat to pieces

And swallow us whole

牠沒有一刻不想把我們的渡船
和鯨吞我們的生命

But the ending is hopeful, and solemn in the faith it expresses. 'Tong Guan' 潼關, 'on the opposite bank of the Yellow River', echoes the last line of stanza two and is an indirect reference to the sails. Thus the three stanzas apparently so different in construction in fact shares a common bond, in the repetition not only of words but of images.

The four years of enforced travelling during the war has broadened Ai Qing's experience of Chinese scenes and landscape. The stark and bleak northern areas, in particular, seemed to call forth his imagination and sympathy. It reveals his sensitivity towards the mood of the location and his masterful use of light, sound and texture which convey the essence of the place and the people. It has often been said that Ai Qing's poems evolved a remarkably pure Chinese flavour during this period, and his works on northern China are frequently quoted as examples. However, I would venture to suggest that this 'Chineseness' is not always an objective presence, especially in some of the landscape poems. An example is 'Hand cart'. In fact the desolate scene depicted in this poem is equally illustrative of remote and hostile areas such as Siberia or the Australian outback. In so saying I am not questioning Ai Qing's ability to convey the essence of Chinese landscape, but rather hoping to draw attention to

the universal quality of some of these scenes as well as Ai Qing's perception.

These four years were a very prolific period in Ai Qing's career. The poems written in this period are rich in variety because his experience was widened through his exposure to different landscapes and people. His lyrical potential, clearly revealed in the prison poems, developed into an array of impassioned rhapsody singing the sorrows of wartime China. Yet as many critics have pointed out, Ai Qing is not primarily a war poet, and they often compare him with Du Fu 杜甫. But Ai Qing's poetic efforts are not just expressions of personal experience or impassioned lyricism; he believed it was the poet's mission to rouse the nation in its struggle for survival. Thus, during the war years he also began to experiment in more blatant political tunes. These works will be discussed in the following chapter.

The fundamental purpose of all arts is propaganda.

-- On Poetry 1/

Ai Qing has often said that in a tumultuous age the concerns of individuals are, and should be, overwhelmed by national issues 2/. Towards the end of his itinerary, and particularly during his stay in Chungqing where he completed On Poetry, there was a notable increase in the political content of his poems, especially with reference to Japanese aggression in China and the war in Europe. One critic, in discussing Ai Qing's works in the 1950's, says that the poet 'belongs more to the world than simply to China.' 3/ As far as subject matter is concerned, this is also true of the poems Ai Qing wrote in his early Yanan years. He seemed as much preoccupied with the international war scene as with the Japanese atrocities in China.

Hitler in particular was frequently in his mind. Between July 1941 and September 1942 Ai Qing wrote four poems on Hitler. These poems expressed a strong repulsion which perhaps also reveals a kind of fascination. The evil

1. 'Poetry & Propaganda,' On Poetry p.93
2. 'Poetry & its Times,' Ibid, p.102
3. Xie Mian, ^{謝冕} 'He xin zhongguo yiqi changge,' 和新中国一起唱歌
(Singing together with a new China) Wenxue Pinglun ^{文學評論}
1979 No.4, p.37

represented by Hitler is such that Ai Qing's imagination could not help but be kindled. He often portrayed Hitler as insane and inhuman -- a mere beast. But his conception of this evil personality is not always lucid or consistent.

Ai Qing's presence in Yanan probably strengthened his faith in Communist ideologies. As a result, the Second World War is seen partly as a class struggle. This theme is introduced 'Hitler' 希特拉 4/ :

A new group of people, uninvited guests --
The proletarians walk onto the stage of
history

新的人，不被邀請的來客——
無產者走上了歷史舞台

But the comparison of Hitler with Napoleon does not tally with the suggestion of a passive role the Nazi leader played in the hands of the bourgeois:

After a grand feast of a hundred years the
bourgeoisie
Is faced with despirited days
To clear up the debris of scattered cookery
They assign a farcical role
To Hitler.

在百年盛宴之後的布爾喬亞
臨到了一串褪色陳腐的日子
為了收拾杯盤狼藉的殘局
他們把一個充滿諧趣的角色
安放在希特拉身上

In the Hitler (ii) 5/ Ai Qing also argues that Hitler came into power only because 'the capitalists of

4. First published in Liberation Daily 1941.7.5.
Collected in Anti-Facism.

5. Collected Ibid.

Berlin / could not find another / more fitting than him 柏林
的資產階級 / 不能選出一個 / 比他較像樣的人物 (stanza 7).

The intertwined images of the stage and the feast in 'Hitler' are not well co-ordinated. It would be more natural for 'the uninvited guests' to walk into a grand feast than onto a stage, while Hitler's 'farcical role' belongs more to the stage than to a feast. The alternation of these two images proves confusing in what might have been effective metaphors. Moreover, to describe madness, uncontrolled fantasies, senseless pride and terrifying courage as 'farcical' is, to say the least, inapt.

Stanza 8 of this poem proves to be more effective:

Countless countries are destroyed
Countless people are enslaved
Half of the world has fallen into a dark
abyss
But he just stares with his idiotic eyes,
opens his blood-stained mouth
Grinning hideously on the edge of the abyss.

無數的國家被滅亡了
無數的人民被奴役了
半個世界沉入黑暗的深淵
他卻瞪着白癡的眼，張着血嘴，
癡笑在深淵的邊上。

By juxtaposing one insane individual with the suffering of nations, Ai Qing reveals the horrific scale of Hitler's destructive power. It is worth noting that in two lines of simple description of Hitler's face, he achieves more than a whole stanza of generalization. Ai Qing's ability to depict character and feeling through facial description, which has been given full scope in his poem on northern China, remains a characteristic of the Yanan period.

But this ability is not always used to full advantage.
In 'Hitler (ii)', well balanced descriptions and striking images are invariably followed by an idea so weak that it is an anti-climax. Stanzas 2 and 3 best illustrate this:

What flows in his veins is not blood
But contempt and hatred for mankind
What governs his psyche is not sympathy
But ambition sprung from jealousy
What occupies his mind is not ideals
But infinite selfishness and greed

He wants to hold in his hands whip and gun
Always aching to slash and fire at people

在他血管裏流着的不是血液，
而是對於人類的輕蔑和仇恨；
支配他的神經的不是同情，
而是出發於嫉妒的野心；
佔據他的腦子的不是理想，
而是無盡的自私與貪婪。

他的手想握着鞭子和手槍，
隨時都在渴望着打人；

Stanza 2 is a solemn accusation built up by an almost complete grammatical and structural balance, but the image in stanza 3 is not so much malicious as almost childish, particularly as whipping and firing is described as a wish rather than an action. A similar incongruity is in stanza 4, in which Hitler's hatred of culture, science and art is disastrously illustrated at the end of the stanza:

When he sees a painting he dislikes
He tears it down without concern.

看見不喜歡的畫幅
就隨便把它扯掉。

This is interesting in that it reveals the sacredness of fine arts in Ai Qing's mind. But compared with all the atrocities Hitler can be accused of, tearing down a picture he dislikes is but a very petty crime.

Structurally, the most significant feature of both poems is parallel construction. However, it is not sustained in either poem. Stanzas 4, 5, and 8 of 'Hitler' and stanzas 1 and 2 of 'Hitler (ii)' are examples of the rhythmic balance and control which can be achieved by this means. Occasionally it can even gloss over the flaws of individual lines. The image of Hitler in stanza 7:

One hand holding Mein Kampf
Another hand holding a gun
一手拿着我的奮鬥
一手舉着手槍

appears, on closer analysis, slightly problematic, for it calls to mind the way Mohammed preached and thus carries a religious connotation either too favourable to Hitler or derogatory to Islam 6/. Despite the rhythmic clarity achieved through parallel construction, Ai Qing also uses a large number of abstract nouns in these stanzas, with the result that images are far from vivid and the quality of both poems very uneven. Yet in very dissimilar ways Ai Qing does raise both poems above mere banal conceptual narration in the concluding stanzas. In 'Hitler' there is a directness of appeal, a sense of urgency in the commands and battle cries of the poet:

Give him a blow, give him a deadly blow
Shatter his fantasies
Lay bare his lies
打擊他，致命地打擊他！
擊碎他的夢想
撕破他的欺騙

6. A similar image is used by Guo Moruo in 'Qian Mao' 前鋒 (The Vanguard), but the reference is to the poet's own decision to save the world, by force if necessary.

and in particular in the last stanza with the image of

Enslaved people rise!

...

Our arms

Linked to form an infinitely long iron chain,

被奴役的人們起來吧！

拿我們的手臂
環成一條無限長的鐵鏈

This idea has at once a simplicity and a grandeur giving an indication of Ai Qing's imaginative power not apparent in the rest of the poem. In the last stanza of 'Hitler (ii)' there is an unexpected turn to an almost amused speculation on Hitler's anatomy:

What a masterpiece of error!

...

The construction of his brain and heart

Must be incredibly mixed up

Someday when he is caught

He should be sent to a museum.

真是錯誤的傑作啊！

他的腦子和心臟的構造
該是一種出奇的混亂！
一天捉住了
可以送進博物館。

With such an unexpected ending the reader cannot help but be surprised. It also departs from the usual way Ai Qing concludes his anti-facist poems, namely with description of stramgling, shooting or crushing the guilty one.

What accounts for the uneven quality of the Hitler poems is probably Ai Qing's inability to either reconcile or juxtapose his two views of Hitler -- the idiot and the propagator of horrific destruction. The various

representations of Hitler as a farcical character 7/, a murderer, a prosecutor and an executioner further complicates the problem. Moreover, Ai Qing's use of biblical and religious references in 'Hitler' (comparing Nazi atrocities to the Inquisition and the Four Horsemen) are probably lost on most Chinese readers.

When Ai Qing settles on one particular image of Hitler, his description can be very sharply focused, as is the case in 'Hang onto It' 拖住牠 8/ and 'Europe' 歐羅巴^{9/}. In both of these short poems Hitler is portrayed as a beast, but this is as far as the similarity goes. In 'Europe', Hitler, a huge blood-thirsty beast, has the continent under his claws:

Hitler's blood-stained claws
Have snatched groaning Europe

...

Hitler's teeth
Are tearing Europe's throat apart
Hitler's long tongue
Is licking Europe's blood

希特勒的血爪
攫住了呻吟着的歐羅巴

...

希特勒的牙齒
在撕斷歐羅巴的咽喉

希特勒的長舌
在紙吮着歐羅巴的血

7. In 'Grief for Paris' 哀巴黎 there are also the lines:

The history of man

Will have one more page

Full of funny and humourous records

人類的歷史

將加上一頁

充滿談諧與幽默的記載

8. Collected in Selected works.

9. Collected in Anti-Facism, Selected works.

The grim, factual statements in the rest of the poem serve to highlight the fierce carnal images, while the descriptions of skeletons, pools of blood, hunger with wolf-like eyes all complement the thematic image. In 'Hang onto It', Hitler is described as a wolf-like beast in a sustained metaphor. The images of Hitler being pulled by the tail and of his being 'cornered' by a crowd are particularly striking, for it has the freshness, simplicity and almost gleeful quality of a child's imagination. This is also true of 'Greetings in October' 十月的祝贺 10/ with the line 'the iron gates of Moscow had squashed bandit Hitler's nose' 莫斯科的鐵門早已碰碎了強盜希特拉的鼻子 (stanza 2).

The war in Europe is also the theme for two other poems written in this period: 'Greetings in October' and 'Revolt in Toulon' 11/. It appears that Ai Qing's concern with the war in Europe was associated specifically with two countries -- France and Russia. The former has a place in his affection probably because of the time he spent there 12/ and the latter by virtue of an ideological affinity. The French fleet, sunk in Toulon, signifies to Ai Qing the unbroken spirit of the French people. The two opening lines of the

10. Collected in Selected works.

11. First published in Liberation Daily 1942.12.5.
Collected in Anti-Facism, Selected works.

12. In 'Tantan xieshi' 談談寫詩 (A talk on writing poetry), Ai Qing emphasized the importance of personal experience. His stay in France is therefore to him a useful background for these poems. The talk is collected in On Poetry (Beijing: Renmin Wenxue 1956) p.32

poem are calm, narrated in an almost matter-of-fact manner; an appropriate salute to the grim determination of the sailors. With the explosion of 'forts, arsenals, bomb factories and oil fields' (stanza 2), the vision expands to the Mediterranean coast and the whole of France, which the poet sees in his imagination as illuminated by the fire of the explosion. This upsurge of emotions is very much evident in the resonant words used in the last lines of both stanzas 1 and 2: 'dikang zhong' 抵抗中, 'yingyong' 英勇, 'shangkong' 上空, and 'guangrong' 光榮. The predominant vowels 'u' and 'o' create a sense of openness and grandeur. This is echoed in the apostrophe 'Brave Toulon! Courageous Toulon! / You are the faithful land of France!' 英勇的土倫! 壯烈的土倫! / 你是法蘭西堅貞的土地! It seems that the poet can no longer contain his emotions, hence the exclamation. Yet what follows is an anti-climax:

You have been betrayed to a foreign race by the
 Royalists
 Revolutionaries snatched you back from its hands.
 你曾被保皇黨出賣給異族
 革命者把你從它手中奪回

The theme of the age old struggle between reactionary governments and revolutionaries is very much Ai Qing's concern during this period, but to present it in the form of a historical event juxtaposed with the exaltation of Toulon results in a sudden change of subject matter as well as emotional level, and leaves the reader vaguely uneasy. Such an abrupt shift of emotional appeal is also apparent in stanzas 4 and 5. Toulon's 'roar which shakes the world', and

calls on the 'enslaved lands of Europe' to rise in jubilation is immediately followed by a stanza of extreme quiet. In a short poem like this, the continual volley between firm emotional control and great exaltation as well as sudden shifts of focus are not conducive to a well balanced effect. Yet structurally this poem, with even line and stanza length, is very well regulated. An example is the penultimate stanza, with its end rhyme and fixed placing of the caesurae:

Dear France will not be destroyed --
The explosions at Toulon have shattered Hitler's
dreams,

親愛的法蘭西不會滅亡 te on the Rhine
土倫的爆炸已粉碎希特勒的夢想 ll be liberated again
十字軍隊傾覆在萊茵河上 夢想
公社的子孫將重新得到解放
十字軍隊傾覆在萊茵河上
公社的子孫將重新得到解放

This rhythmic regularity is resplendent with conviction. It also reflects the influence of demands for 'poetry for recitation' during the war years.

'Greetings in October' is another poem condemning German aggression. At the same time it celebrates the October Revolution. The poem begins and ends with a congratulatory eulogy on the anniversary of the Soviet revolution which is little more than plain narrative and political slogans, while stanzas 2 and 3 describe the Soviets' battle against Hitler. The rhythm of the poem is loose. What binds it structurally is the repetition of 'I pray' 我祝福 and its variations 'I congratulate' 我慶賀 and

'I curse' 我诅咒。 With such regular repetition the rhythm tightens, and there is a hint of ritual incantation:

I pray for snow storms to descend on the Russian
land
So that severe cold shall sooner freeze up the
enemy camps;
I pray for each stone to bear hatred
So that the enemy shall find pitfalls everywhere
before them;
I pray for each trench to turn into a grave
So that the Germans shall not be allowed to step
on the Caucasus.

我祝福風雪降臨俄羅斯大地，
嚴寒早些將敵人的陣營封凍；
我祝福每塊石頭都懷着仇恨，
在敵人的前面到處都是陷阱；
我祝福每個土坑都成了墳墓，
不讓德國人的腳走上高加索。

Besides the Second World War, the Yanan period also consisted of political changes at nearer quarters to Ai Qing. Although some poems written just before he left Chungqing also refer to Stalin and the October Revolution, the idea of class struggle and the praise of the Soviet army never played as important a role as in poems of this period. To begin with, arrival in Yanan must have been a new political and social experience for Ai Qing. After he was elected a representative of the Border region, he wrote his first eulogy dedicated to a political leader: 'Mao Zedong' 毛澤東

13/ This short poem consists of eight two-line stanzas, and each stanza attempts to reveal a facet of Mao's leadership quality. The first two stanzas describe the people's

13. Collected in Anti-fascism, Selected poems (55), Selected works, and Doushou Song 舵手頌 (Eulogy of the Helmsman) Hong Kong: Haiyang Shudian 海洋書店. 1948

response to Mao as a leader, while the rest of the poem concentrate on his appearance, ability, ideas and strategy. There is a strong structural coherence in the poem through the use of repetition and parallel construction: 'leader of the people' 人民的領袖, 'love for the people' 對人民的愛, 'the faith of the people' 人民的信仰 (stanza 2); 'great strength' 最大的力量, 'greatest enemy' 最大的敵人 (stanza 7); 'new slogan' 新的口號, 'new direction' 新的方向 (stanza 8). In the second half of the poem, the internal structure is even more obvious as ideas in one stanza leads up to the next, providing a link between the apparently self-contained stanzas. Thus the phrase 'his action is the concrete practice of his belief' in stanza 4 is developed in stanza 5:

He is always thinking, always summarizing,
With one arm he pushes away enemies, with the
other he embraces more friends

他不斷地思考, 不斷地概括,
一手推開仇敵, 一手包攬更多的朋友

while the 'enemies' lead to 'press the greatest strength against the greatest enemy' (stanza 7). Yet in spite of this attention to structural details the last four stanzas are overloaded with abstract ideas, and lack the force and persuasiveness of Ai Qing's better political works. The only image in these four stanzas is that of the 'arms' (stanza 6). Juxtaposed against the most abstract line in the poem, the picture of the 'arms' becomes disconcertingly vivid. The last stanza also leaves one with this doubt in mind: it should be a new political or military direction which calls for new slogans, and not the reverse as stated in the poem.

Though 'Mao Zedong' is Ai Qing's first political eulogy, and the poem to which he referred when his loyalty and respect to Mao was questioned 14/, there is in fact a more elaborate and also more interesting poem on the same theme. Written in 1946, 'Hail' ^讚 15/ is a poem singing the praises of Mao and other Chinese Communist Party leaders, acclaiming a new life in the liberated areas and a bright future for the country. A major part of this poem is but a conglomeration of political slogans, often repetitive and lacking coherence in the choice of descriptive details. What is of special interest is Ai Qing's totally unbound eulogy of Mao. So great is his admiration and devotion that Mao is endowed with God-like qualities 16/. This is evident from the beginning of the poem, with a quotation from the Old Testament, and is supported by obvious biblical allusions:

Those who follow you
 Will not be walking on the wrong path
 Will never fall
 Those who come to you
 Will be bathed in glory
 Will never be in shame

14. Ai Qing's poem 'Zai Langjian shang' ^{在浪尖上} (On the crest of the waves) written in 1979 has been accused of praising Zhou Enlai at the expense of Mao. In reply he cited this poem as an example of his respect for Mao. This shows that the political atmosphere at the time still made him uneasy.

Ai Qing, 'Learn from the speech of Premier Zhou', loc.cit.

15. Collected in Jubilation.

16. Another example of comparing Mao to a god is Tian Jian's 'Gan che juan' ^{赶车倦} (The cart driver), a narrative poem in the folk song style. However, Tian's portrayal of the god is completely Chinese in appearance and essence.

...
 Your achievements High as the sky
 Your sincerity Reaches the whole universe
 Everyone loves you Everyone respects you
 Your work Is most glorious

凡跟隨你的
 都不會走錯路
 不會跌倒
 凡是朝向你的
 都披滿榮光
 不再蒙受恥辱

...
 你的功勞 高及諸天
 你的忠誠 遠到蒼穹
 人人愛你 人人敬你
 你的事業 無上光榮

Although poems eulogizing Mao abound, this must be one of the most uninhibited adoration of any political figure. Yet it must be said that the use of biblical diction and a formal regularity successfully convey the poet's conviction and reverence. It is only from a subsequent overloading of details and monotonous repetition that the poem falters.

Another poem which evolved from Ai Qing's new experiences in Yanan is 'Tell the world' 向世界宣佈吧¹⁷¹. Written in September 1942, it dutifully follows Mao's dictates at the Yanan Forum: to eulogize the liberated areas and expose KMT corruption. The poem is based on a contrast between past and present, between life under KMT rule and life in the Communist areas. Though stanzas 2 and 3 directly denounce the KMT government, the poem on the whole makes its point through descriptions of the life of common folks. The

17. Collected in Anti-Fascism.

strength of Ai Qing's accusation lies in insistent repetition and regular rhythm. Although most lines in stanzas 2 and 3 begin with the word 'No', the feeling conveyed is very different. In stanza 2 there is a proud and indignant defiance, while stanza 3 introduces a sense of pity and sadness. This is not only because the people described in stanza 3 -- the unemployed, the old, and prostitutes -- call for our sympathy, but because the long lines and drawn out rhythm create a lingering image of the destitute. The second half of stanza 3, in which the lines are again short and the rhythm quickens, illustrates this point:

There are no unemployed who squat on rubbish dumps
looking for food,
No old people who, having spent their energy in
labour, have to stretch out their hands and
beg,
No prostitutes under street lamps to cast lewd
smiles at pedestrians;
No mothers sighing heavily, no wives weeping gently
--
For there is no hunger here,
No injustice which cannot be redressed,
No 'missing' sons
No husbands who disappear without leaving a note ...

這裡沒有蹲在垃圾堆上尋找食物的失業者，
沒有噴盡體力之後伸出手來求乞的老人，
沒有在街燈下向行人裝着媚笑的妓女；
沒有母親沉重的嘆息，妻子輕聲的泣咽——
因為這裡沒有錢餓，
沒有不能申訴的冤屈，
沒有失蹤的兒子，
沒有不留下條子不見回來的丈夫 ...

Structurally Ai Qing also attempts to give a regularity to these two stanzas. The length of lines may vary, but a

rhythmic unit is always formed by two lines, the second echoing the first. But as the poem progresses and description focuses on life in Yanan, the structural and rhythmic regularity are no longer obvious. Instead it is the portrayal of different categories of people -- farmers, workers, soldiers, students, mothers, children and old people 18/, with particular emphasis on their political awareness, which serves as a cohesive force in the narrative. Indeed the poem seems to be a parade of these people embodying the new life in the liberated zone. There is, however, one incongruous image in the description of the workers' wallets as 'bulging with money' (stanza 6), which strikes a jarring note in the generally high-minded tone. Moreover, it is doubtful whether workers in Yanan, then under KMT blockade, were actually as affluent as suggested. The poem also sings the praise of social improvements and political enlightenment by describing the three most significant events in human life -- birth, marriage, and death. The apparently casual conjunction of 'subjectism' with plans for a holiday picnic, and the anniversary of the

18. This parade of different sectors of the proletariat seems to be a standard poetic device in many political poems. Examples can be found in Ma Fantuo's 馬凡陀 (Yuan Shuipai 袁水拍) city folk songs as well as the work of a fourteen year old girl: 'Tamen zai kongsu wo' (They are accusing me), quoted in Lü Jian 呂劍, Shi yu daozheng 詩與鬥爭 (Poetry and Struggle), Hong Kong: Xin Minzhu 新民主 Pub.Co. 1948) pp.64-69.

Russian revolution with the Autumn Festival is a subtle touch, suggesting how deeply communist ideas have penetrated into everyday life. Here, as in the beginning of the poem, Ai Qing is better at depicting daily life than in theorizing:

Everyone unites around our belief,
All technology organized within a common goal,
And only under this highest of principles,
Do people attain freedom, love and equality.

所有的人們團結在信仰的範圍，
一切的技术組織在共同的目的裡，
也只有在這最高的原則下面，
人人獲得了自由，博愛與平等。

The words 'around', 'within' and 'under' have a strange pictorial quality so that one is tempted to ask whether the 'belief' is of any particular shape. This poem shows again that Ai Qing is better at treating concrete images, for it is the unpretentious portrayal of everyday life, not the bandishing of political slogans, which reflects his strong conviction.

The Japanese surrender in 1945 called for whole-hearted celebration, and Ai Qing's contribution is 'The People's Festival of Jubilation' 人民的狂歡節¹⁹. An impressionist record of the excitement in the streets, the poem calls to mind Ai Qing's earlier work 'The Torch', not only because torches play a significant role in this poem, but also because short, staccato lines depicting breathless excitement are used in both poems:

19. First published in Liberation Daily 1945.8.14.
Collected in Jubilation.

Some are lighting torches
Some are passing on torches
Some are coming with torches in hand
All those with torches set off
One, two, three, four ...
Yet more are coming ...
Yet more are coming ...

Crowds, crowds everywhere,
Gratitude infecting gratitude,
Joy infecting joy;
Everyone walks with chests thrown out,
With torches held high overhead,

有人在點燃火把，
有人在傳遞火把，
有人舉着火把來了，
拿着火把的都出發了...
一個、兩個、三個、四個...
愈來愈多了...
愈來愈多了...

人群，到處都是人群，
感激傳染着感激，
歡喜傳染着歡喜，
個個都挺着胸脯，
高高地舉着火把，

The poem's appeal is both visual and auditory. The sight of numerous torches moving forward in the darkness, and the sound of human voices, bells, drums, gongs are described in one long, undivided stanza, showing a torrent of ecstatic emotions. Half of the poem is in fact exclamatory, giving vent to unrepressed elation. But the result is not excessive. By extensively using parallel constructions of two or three lines, Ai Qing creates a structural framework which allows great flexibility. Thus even the most exalted exclamations are governed by a sense of balance:

Sorrow is driven away by the drums and gongs!
Shadows are frightened off by the torch light!
Drums and gongs are getting louder!

Torches are burning brighter!
Sky and earth have embraced!
Laugh! Shout!
Run! Jump!
Dance!
Embrace!

憂愁被鑼鼓趕跑了!
陰影被火光嚇退了!
鑼鼓更響了!
火把更亮了!
天地合抱了!
笑呀! 叫呀!
奔呀! 跳呀!
奔跑呀!
擁抱呀!

The general upsurge of emotions gives a touching spontaneity to the eulogy of Chinese and Russian communist leaders, a spontaneity not always present in Ai Qing's political works. Taken out of context these lines offer little more than other political slogans, but within the exulted emotional framework they are authentic shouts of gratitude:

This is the happiness which Comrade Mao Zedong and
Chief Commander Zhu
The Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army
brought us!
This is the happiness which Supreme Commander
Stalin
And the great Red Army brought us!

這是毛澤東同志朱德總司令
八路軍新四軍帶給我們的幸福!
這是斯大林元帥
偉大紅軍帶給我們的幸福!

The poem ends on a much quieter note; the inner tremours of an individual responding to the excitement around him. The unobtrusively subdued tone show Ai Qing's sure control over the emotional level of the poem. In asking:

Tell me
What night
Compared with tonight is
More moving?
More beautiful?
Tell me:
What joy can ever resemble that of tonight's
In striking a tumultuous chord in the hearts of
millions?

告訴我：
什麼夜晚
能比今天
更動人？
更美麗？
告訴我：
什麼歡樂
能像今夜
這樣激盪著人的心呢？

he seems to stand aside from the jubilant crowd, moved by the intensity of the event. The concluding lines are not so much a question as an expression of deep feeling, addressed as much to himself as to the readers.

In November 1945, with members of the North China Cultural Delegation, Ai Qing reached Kalgan. It was many years since he had seen a big city. It seems natural that the familiar aspects of an industrialized city calls for song. 'City of the People' 人民的城²⁰ is a description of Kalgan. The description of electricity, machines factories, trucks, wide roads, markets and crowds are reminiscent of his city poems since 'Marsaille' and 'Paris'. There are, however, two notable differences between this poem and his earlier works on city life. Firstly, it only concentrates on the appealing aspects of cities, while

20. Collected in Jubilation.

the squalor in cities of his earlier works has completely disappeared, as befits the image of the liberated area. Secondly, the lines and stanzas of this poem are governed by a stronger pattern, and from the simplicity of diction it is obvious that Ai Qing has tried to adapt himself to Mao's directives given in the Yanan Forum.

Divided into five sections, this long poem contrasts Kalgan under Japanese rule and after liberation. Like 'The People's Festival of Jubilation', structurally the poem is based on parallel construction and repetition. Not only is this structural pattern notable on the line and stanza levels, but to a large extent section five echoes the theme of section ^{two} while sections three and four contrast the life in the two areas of Kalgan -- the new eastern part occupied by the Japanese, and the old, western part where the Chinese lived. The first stanza of the poem:

Kalgan
City of the people
City of beauty

張家口
人民的城
美麗的城市

becomes a refrain on which section five is based. Stanza one of the concluding section echoes the Japanese defeat described in section four -- 'Kalgan / Liberated' 張家口 / 解放了 -- followed by the almost standard parade of farmers, workers, soldiers and women living a new life under a new government. However, what catches one's attention in this poem is not the structural coherence, but the tongue-in-

cheek humour of section four, so unusual in Ai Qing's works:

As for those Kitamura Eiko,
Utsuku Meguko, Efuji Haruko,
Kaijitani Choko, Mana Kawako,
Except leaving behind them boxes of rouge,
And pins for their hairdo,
Not a trace of them is to be seen.

...
Counting with their fingers
The last days of their life ...

還有那些北村英子，
美惠子，江藤春子，
梶谷蝶子，花代子，
除了留下脂粉盒子，
和捲髮用的夾子，
就不再看見她們的影子。

...
都在用手指
數着自己最後的日子 ...

It is in depicting details such as colourful kimonos, painted sandals and letters littering the floor of deserted Japanese houses, and in the virtually untranslatable word play that Ai Qing conveys a rare sense of exuberance and wit.

During the Anti-Japanese war there was much discussion as to what kind of themes and subject matters a writer should choose. Mao's talk in the Yanan Forum gave a general guideline, especially for writers living in the liberated area. But the imagination of writers was also fired by the heroic deeds of soldiers and common people united in their will to resist Japan. As a result there was a bloom of reportage during this period. Ai Qing, for his part, also wrote three long poems describing the people's struggle against Fascist invasion as well as praising model farmers

thriving under communist rule.

'Snow Breaker' ^{雪裡鑽} 211, written in September 1941, is subtitled 'A young reporter praises his horse'. Ai Qing based this long narrative poem on the story which a young reporter told him. In describing the young man's adventure with the horse he attempts to recreate for the readers action at the front. It is perhaps worth noting that Ai Qing himself was never in direct contact with the enemy, and the action in this poem is not derived from his personal experience.

The poem is divided into five sections. The actual battle takes place in section four, the longest among the five. Sections one to three introduces the characters and events which lead up to the fighting, while the concluding section restores calmness. The opening stanza, simple and direct, reminds us of Ai Qing's advocacy for 'the beauty of prose in poetry' :

One February evening after heavy snow fall
A phone call came from the special detachment in
town:

'Tonight at eleven
An enemy ammunition train
Goes from Beijing to Baoding.'

二月大雪後的黃昏
城裡的特別部隊來了電話
「今天晚上十一點鐘
敵人有一列軍火車
從北平開到保定。」

21. Collected in Snow Breaker, Narrative Poems.

This immediately arouse a sense of anticipation in the reader, who, from the soldiers' preparation in stanza 2, realizes that action is imminent. The three major characters in the story are then introduced -- the narrator, the regimental commander, and the horse. In fact it can almost be said that the only character which is described in detail is Snow Breaker, the horse. The reporter is more a mirror of events. We know little about him beside the fact that he was young and brave (section 4 stanza 20). As for the commander, taciturnity and calmness seem to be the two qualities Ai Qing considers necessary in his portrayal. Even the physical appearance of these two men is not described. On the other hand, the appearance, origin, temper and history of the horse is given in full detail. The contrast of black and white, of darkness and light in Ai Qing's description of the horse is effective, in the tactile as well as visual sense:

Its shining, pitch black body
Is smooth as if wrapped in black satin;

It stands solemnly in the night
Its black coat illuminated in the light of snow

...

You will think that it is
A statue of a horse cast in memory of a hero.

烏黑發亮的身軀，
像裹住了黑緞似的光滑；

牠肅靜地站在夜色裡，
全身的黑毛映着雪光，

你會以為牠是一個
為紀念英雄而鑄造的馬像。

This stillness, like the quiet opening of the poem, is symbolic of the calmness before a storm.

In fact what is most impressive in this poem is Ai Qing's sense of atmosphere and the vivid description of action. The quiet beauty of the northern countryside in section two again enhances the tension in the air:

Boundless snow on the wilderness reflects light

We passed many villages --
The low and spacious houses of the north
And many thin woods;
All is quietly covered in snow,
Only dogs' barking is heard from afar.

無邊的雪在原野上反光

我們經過了許多村莊——
北方的低矮而又寬敞的屋
和許多稀疏的樹林；
一切都靜靜地被雪掩蓋着
只從遠處聽見了狗的叫聲。

Snow, in this poem, is equated with stillness. At the end of the poem there is a vivid image of peace after danger:

On the snowy plain of China,
I suddenly saw bright red traces of blood
Dripping on clean, white drifts of snow,
Dripping on the paths imprinted with marks of its
hoofs

中國的雪的平原。
突然看見鮮紅的血跡。
淋漓在淨白的雪堆上，
淋漓在印着蹄影的道路上...

In section three Ai Qing describes the ease with which the regiment fulfills its mission. One thing worth noting is the part sound plays in the narrative. The noise of dynamiting which destroys the ammunition train also breaks the silent tension of the first two sections. It is followed by light hearted, jubilant noises: the crowing of the cock, and the songs and laughter of the soldiers. Because of this

relief from tension, the enemy's sudden attack in section four is the more breath-taking. The light hearted noises are contrasted here with the sound of guns, vehicle motors and the rolling tank wheels. In the regiment's flight from the enemy, the horse's neighing seems to break through the confusion and leaves a lasting impression (stanza 11).

The narrative of action depends heavily on rhythm. In moments of crisis, as when the regiment comes to a river, and when the horse falls, the length of lines is comparatively short:

The enemy's machine guns
Began concentrated shooting
Those small cannons
On the roofs of the village behind us
Are spurting shells
Like heavy summer showers
Hit on the opposite bank of the river
Blocking our advance.

...

Its left hind leg
Was suddenly trapped in a hole in the ice
Its front legs slipped on the ice
It was on its knees.
I cried in alarm,
'All is lost!'

敵人的機關槍
開始密集的攻擊
那些小銅砲
在後面村莊的屋頂
噴發着砲彈：
那些砲彈
像夏天的急雨
打落在潛河的對岸
阻止我們前進

牠的後左腿
突然陷進冰窟裡
兩條前腿被冰一滑
跪下了。
我發出了驚叫：
「完了！」

Similarly, the length of stanzas is also shortened to suggest the rapidity of the action:

Many comrades
Gave out a last cry
Helplessly sacrificed!

Our horses
Jump over their dead bodies.

許多同志們
發出最後的一聲呼叫
不可援救地犧牲了!

我們的馬匹
從他們的屍體上躍過。

As in Ai Qing's earlier poems, hope is symbolized by dawn and spring. Thus the successful ambush on the enemy train takes place just before the cock crows (section 3), and when the incident is over, peace is restored in the sunshine of an early spring morning (section 5).

Like 'Snow Breaker', the poem 'Suoya' 索亞 22/ is not based on first hand experience, but inspired by a poem on the same subject by the Turkish poet ^{Nazim} Hikmet (1902-1963) 23/. Also like 'Snow Breaker', the action takes place in winter, but instead of the open plain, the setting is a small Russian village. Although we are told the name of the village, rather than suggesting a precise location it has a representative quality -- this story could have taken place anywhere in Russia. Similarly, the description of

22. Collected in Snow Breaker

23. Ai Qing, 'To Hikmet', collected in Spring and Ai 'Ai Qing tan shi' 艾青談詩 (Ai Qing on poetry), Xin Wan Bao 新晚報 1981.1.6 p.12

characters, especially their physical appearance, also concentrates on the representative rather than the individual quality. In fact only two characters in the poem make a lasting impression -- Suoya and the German officer who questioned her. Ai Qing's portrayal of the German officer, in particular, reveals that he is only the embodiment of German aggression in general:

The young German officer
Who sits opposite her
Stretches his glittering riding boots,
Casting open his woolen military coat,
With one hand stuck in the cartridge belt,
And another taking a cigar out of his mouth,
Inclines his head once to someone standing on one
side
And the man lifts the whip high.

那年輕的德國軍官
正坐在她的對面
伸出發亮的長統馬靴
把呢軍大衣敞開着
一隻手插在子彈帶的裏面，
另一隻手從嘴上取下雪茄煙；
他向旁邊站着的人歪了一下頭，
那人就高興起皮鞭

As his role in the poem is to represent the ruthless cruelty of the German forces, his uniform, symbolic of his status, is described, but his actual physical appearance is not once mentioned. What distinguishes him from the rest of Suoya's torturers is his aloof calmness. This control over emotions, in the poem, symbolizes the struggle between good and evil, for Suoya is even calmer than the officer:

She heard the calm voice of the officer:
'Tell me at once, where is the guerrilla force?'

But Suoya's voice
Is even calmer than his:
'I will not tell you --
You are my enemies.'

她聽見那軍官的冷靜的聲音：
「快點說，游擊隊在什麼地方？」

而比那聲音更冷靜的
是索亞的聲音：
我不願意告訴你們——
你們是我的敵人。

Unlike the German officer, whose calmness is a manifestation of the callous nature of Facism, Suoya remains calm out of a sense of dignity as well as hatred of the German army. She has to make a tremendous effort to achieve such control:

Suoya held herself together with strength;
Not a sigh escaped from her until she died.

索亞堅強地支持着自己
一直到死都不曾漏出一聲嘆息。

Unlike the portrayal of the German officer, descriptions of Suoya concentrates on her face, especially her eyes and mouth:

Two large, hollow dark eyes,
Calm and alert, looking at the floor;
Long, even eyelashes cover her pupils,
Averting the sight of her hated enemies.

...
Her lips are pale from the severe cold,
But pressed tightly
-- as cold as the mouth of a procelain jar.

兩隻深陷着的大黑眼，
冷靜而警戒地凝視着地面，
長長的睫毛淺蓋着眼瞳，
不去看那她所嫌惡的敵人。

嘴唇雖因嚴寒而發白，
卻緊緊地抿着
——就像磁瓶的口似的冰冷

(stanza 2 & 3)

But this attempt at presenting characters as symbols of clashing forces somehow blurs the action. The impact of Suoya's suffering is weakened by the fact that her torturers are unidentifiable as individuals.

As a political poem, 'Suoya' may have served its purpose by providing a symbol of patriotism; not only a martyr but 'a saint' (stanza 18). Yet as a poem its merit is not in the narrative or characterization, but in the creation of striking images which seem to stand out from the action. Two of these are particularly haunting: That of the youth lying outside the house where Suoya was tortured, and the last image of Suoya after she was hanged:

His clothes are torn to pieces,
His face is pressed against the earth,
Brown hair dishevelled on his head,
Beneath the hair,
There is a purple patch of frozen blood.

他的衣服已被撕成破爛，
他的臉緊貼着土地，
棕色的髮披散在頭上，
在那頭髮的下面，
凝滯着紫血一片。

(stanza 9)

-- Her neck is much lengthened by the hanging rope,

Her head droops in front heavily

——她的頸被絞索拉得很長，
她的頸沉重地向前俯垂

(last stanza)

← More effectively than all the description of
← German soldiers, the image of the dead young man

epitomizes Nazi cruelty and the fate awaiting Suoya. It also expresses a sadness of youth wasted. The image of Suoya after she was hanged, with its elongated lines, has the unearthly quality of an El Greco painting. This shows that Ai Qing's ability to create terse, poignant and impressionistic images is still very much an important asset, but he seemed to have considered this technique as incompatible with the demands of shorter political works.

The fact that Ai Qing was inspired by the stories of a horse and a Russian girl to write two long poems perhaps reveals that what attracts him is not just bravery, but a sense of romance in the heroic.

On the other hand, he also felt he had an obligation to follow Mao's instruction of 'popularizing' literature. The narrative poem 'Wu Manyou' 吴满有 24/ is Ai Qing's answer to the call of 'learning from the masses'. It follows Mao's decree that writers in the liberated areas should not expose but eulogize. Wu Manyou was the hero of the day, a model peasant selected for praise by the Yanan government 25/. In this poem Ai Qing relates the life of this hero in nine sections, beginning and ending with his welcome in

24. First published in Liberation Daily 1943.3.9.
Collected in Wu Manyou.

25. In section 7 stanza 8, it is recorded that Wu became a popular subject of news reporters, photographers, song writers and painters. His story was also despatched abroad.

Yanan. As far as the form of the poem is concerned, Ai Qing is probably only experimenting with the style of folk songs rather than trying to create a new work in this genre. The number of stanzas in each section varies from seven to twenty-six, and the number of lines in each stanza from two to thirteen. A typical folk song would be more uniform in the length of lines and stanzas ^{26/}. Moreover, there is no fixed rhyming scheme within the different sections, let alone one which runs through the whole poem. Caesurae also vary from line to line, although the rhythm and length of lines are conspicuously more regular than most of his early narrative works. Musicality is a very important element in folk songs, but 'Wu Manyou' does not possess this quality to any great extent. However, as an experiment in the different techniques of folk song writing, this poem is of special interest in Ai Qing's search for a new poetic style.

One of the significant features of 'Wu Manyou' is the use of rhymes, particularly end rhymes. Though the poem is not governed by any rhyming scheme, if we recall Ai Qing's former reluctance to employ this poetic device, the use of rhyming in 'Wu Manyou', though limited, represents a new departure. In this poem, rhyming is generally found in short stanzas of four to five lines. There is no single rule in the distribution of rhymes in a stanza. The rhyme words in a

26. Although folk songs of northern China tend to be more flexible than their southern counterparts, the length of stanzas within one song is still usually constant. This is true of folk songs of Shanbei, with which Ai Qing must be familiar at this time.

four-line stanza, for example, are placed in any two of the four lines:

You brought with you several mouths
Nothing else,
Facing wind and dust,
Sitting at the crossroads.

你帶著幾張嘴
啥也沒有 (yǒu)
背著大風沙
坐在路口 (kǒu) (section 2 stanza 4)

When you come near these animals,
They all turn their heads,
Their wide mouths sniffing at your hands,
Waiting for you to distribute hay and black beans.

你一走過這些牲口 (kǒu)
牠們就轉過頭來
用大嘴來嗅你的手 (shǒu)
等你給牠們乾草和黑豆 (dòu)
(section 5 stanza 11)

When rhyming in the longer stanzas, the rhyme words usually come at the last few lines to create a sense of conclusion:

...
The crops you grow
Are grown better than all others --
The fierce sun cannot wither them
And heavy rain cannot wash them away.

你的莊稼
比誰也種得好 (hǎo)
烈日曬不枯
大水沖不倒 (dǎo)
(section 4 stanza 2)

In fact, if we take into consideration words of different tones such as 手 (shǒu) and 豆 (dòu), which do not qualify as full rhymes and yet possess the essential quality of echoing and complementing each other, Ai Qing's use of rhyming in 'Wu Manyou' becomes much more extensive. This technique of

rhyming is frequently used in his later poems.

Two other major folk song techniques which Ai Qing incorporated in this poem are parallelism and repetition. Although both devices have been used by him since 'Da yanhe', in 'Wu Manyou' the simplicity of diction and syntax add a rustic appeal:

Like an old man newly-wed,
Your clothes are all new --
A new black quilted jacket,
A new pair of white cotton trousers,
A new grey felt hat.

You are a new farmer

像一個年若的新女婿
你一身都是新的——
新的黑棉襖，
新的白棉褲，
新的灰氈帽。
你是一個新農民

(section 1 stanzas 1 & 2)

The word 'new' is repeated six times 27/. An even better example of the use of repetition is as follows:

You who farm take back your land from the
landowners!
They do not farm the land!
We farm the land!

You who are in debt demand your money back from
your creditors!
We are not in debt!
They are in debt!

27. Repetition of this kind can be used to create a humorous effect. An example is a nonsense verse in Li Jiangwu's 李健吾 'Qingchun' 青春 (Youth), spoken by a rustic, in which every noun is preceded by the adjective 'black'. However, the repetition of 'new' here is limited, and is aimed at a rustic flavour rather than a humorous effect.

耕地的向地主交還地！
耕地的不是他們！
耕地的是我們！

欠債的向債主交還錢！
欠債的不是我們！
欠債的是他們！

(section 3 stanzas 4 & 5)

The subject in each stanza is repeated at the beginning of each line. According to Zhu Ziqing's study of folk song techniques, this is classified as 'word repetition at the beginning of line' 句頭疊字 28/ But this example is more complex than just a repetition at word level. There is a strong link between the two stanzas because structurally, they are parallels, and syntactically, they are identical.

'Word repetition at the end of line' 句末疊字, also commonly used in folk songs, is also present in this poem:

You say you're not worthy.
If you're not worthy, who is worthy?
You have ploughed land aplenty,
Sown seeds aplenty,
Threshed crops aplenty,
Pay tax aplenty.

你說你不配，
你不配，誰配？
你開荒開得多，
種地種得多，
打糧打得多，
繳稅繳得多。

(section 7 stanza 2)

28. According to Zhu Ziqing's study of folk song techniques, there are six kinds of repetition: meaningless repetition 無意義重疊, repetition of stanzas or sentences 重疊句, chorus 和聲, circuitous repetition 迴文, word succession 接麻, word repetition. Word repetition can be subdivided into four categories according to the position of the repeated words: word repetition at the beginning of line 句頭疊字, word repetition at mid-line 中疊字, word repetition at end of line 句末疊字 and overall word repetition 全篇疊字.

Not only are the words 'worthy' and 'aplenty' repeated at the end of each line and phrase, but the verbs in the last four lines are each used twice within a five-syllable line, thus reinforcing the strength of the repetition. Such a complex grouping of simple repetitive devices within one of two stanzas is perhaps one of the features distinguishing the style of literary adaptations of folk songs from the original genre.

What distinguishes 'Wu Manyou' from Ai Qing's pre-Yanan poems is not only the incorporation of folk song techniques, but also the level of language used. Although Ai Qing has always advocated 'the beauty of prose in poetry' and the use of colloquial expressions in poetical works, 'Wu Manyou' is a step ahead of his earlier poems in an attempt to learn from 'the language of the masses.' The vocabulary of this poem is not only colloquial, but very close to the everyday speech of peasants. Phrases such as 'fortune rising' 發起來了, 'Japanese devils' 日本鬼子, 'foreign words' 洋字 have a conversational, and frequently dialectal, quality. There are also examples of substandard grammar such as 'to celebrate you' 慶祝你, 'to propagate you' 宣傳你 (section 7 stanza 5) and 'good at planning' 好計劃, 'good at executing' 好執行 (section 8 stanza 2) which give an authentic flavour to the colloquial style. Moreover, expressions such as 'so very flat' 平坦坦 (section 5 stanza 8) and 'so very lively' 熱鬧鬧 (section 7 stanza 7) call to mind the dialectal expressions

used in 'Xin Tian You' 信天游, a popular form of folk song in Shanbei 陝北 brought to public notice by Li Ji's 李季 highly acclaimed poem 'Wang Guei yu Li Xiangxiang' 王貴與李香香 (Wang Guei and Li Xiangxiang) 30/. However, such expressions, while used extensively in 'Xin Tian You', play but a very minor part in 'Wu Manyou'. Ai Qing's purpose in borrowing such dialectal usage is probably to strengthen the colloquial appeal of his poem rather than to imitate the 'Xin Tian You' style 31/.

The images in 'Wu Manyou' also reflect Ai Qing's intention to create the poem around the life as well as the thoughts and ideas of a peasant. There are twenty-two similes in the poem, none of which is beyond the daily experience of simple peasant. Of the twenty-two, six are comparisons to plants and four to animals:

As natural as picking fruit

像採果子一樣自然

(I, 6)

30. 'Wang Guei yu Li Xiangxiang' was first published in the summer of 1946 in Sanbian Bao 三邊報, and subsequently in the Liberation Daily 1946.9.22 - 24. Its original title was 'Taiyang hui cong xibian chulai ma' 太陽會從西邊出來嗎 (Will the sun rise in the west?). The poem was immediately translated into chulai ma' 太陽會從西邊出來嗎 (New China News Agency) and publicized in China and abroad.

31. In this style, the second syllable of a two-syllabled adjective is frequently repeated to create a three-syllabled adjective. This helps to establish a stylized and easily recognizable rhythm. The line length of 'Xin Tian You' is regulated, though the number of syllables may vary slightly.

Her lips are like dried vegetables

嘴唇焦得像菜乾

(II, 8)

Your fortune is like leaves and flowers
in spring

Getting better and better every day

前景像春花春草
一天更比一天好

(V, 1)

Your name

Like a morning glory

Blooms on the Liberation Daily

你的名字
像一朵牽牛花
開在解放日報上

(VII, 4)

You are like a tree

With no leaves,

And no branches;

...

Covered in flowers,

And loaded with fruit ...

你像一棵樹
沒有葉，
也沒有枝；

...

開滿花
又結滿果子...

(IX, 13)

Dirty as pigs,

Thin as monkeys,

髒得像豬子，

瘦得像猴子，

(II, 13)

Like a draught animal

Dumb --

像一頭牲口

不說話 —

(II, 16)

Warlords and bureaucrats,

Had run away like old wolves,

Had been beaten to death like old foxes.

軍閥和官僚
像老狼似的逃走了，
像老狐狸似的打死了。

(III, 6)

Spiked millet are so big!
Every spike is worth five,
Thick and heavy,
Like so many dogs' tails ...

穀子長得大，
一根抵五根，
又肥又重，
像一條條狗尾巴 ...

(IV, 3)

These images, falling within the framework of a peasant's experience, are effective in their simplicity. However there are instances when the result differs from Ai Qing's intention. The 'spiked millet ... / Like so many dogs' tails' is one such example. To compare a single spike to a dog's tail may be quite apt, but the idea of a whole field of dogs' tails is simply ludicrous. When Wu Manyou points at his sheep, speculating on the amount they are worth, he is 'so happy that as though in a dream' he saw 'a pile of silver pieces' 快樂得像在夢裡/看見一大堆銀子 (V, 13). This suggests an underlying element of greed which is quite out of character with a model peasant.

In this poem the description of scenes is often vivid in its simplicity, especially in section two where Ai Qing depicts Wu's dire poverty before communist liberation. However, the narrative in the poem is jerky, and the story line often unclear. Despite the detailed information Ai Qing gives of Wu and his surroundings, the hero's portrayal remains superficial. His former sufferings and his devotion to the Party are all very typical of what is expected from a model peasant.

Ai Qing's concern for factual accuracy in 'Wu Manyou' is not only manifested in the poem, but also in the appendix. That he should take pains to point out Wu frequently responded to the poem by saying 'Yes, Yes, I have said that' is significant. When the poet praises Wu's receptiveness 32/, the examples he gives are invariably factual. This perhaps points at a new direction in the way he works, which is probably related to the blooming of reportage during the war years. Wu Manyou is, after all, the venerated hero of the day. A Poem on him, experimenting with folk song techniques, seems a satisfactory answer to the technical and ideological requirements set by the Yanan Forum.

However, as a poem 'Wu Manyou' never aroused much enthusiasm. The effectiveness of its style, an interbreeding between folk song and free verse, is at best doubtful. There is an inconsistency which justifies Lo Hanchao's comment that Ai Qing has forsaken his old style before he has mastered the folk song style 33/.

Although 'Wu Manyou' is the only narrative poem written in the folk song style in this period of Ai Qing's career, he also experimented with similar techniques in his

32. Appendix, Wu Manyou, pp.46 - 48.

33. Lo Hanchao, 'Lun Ai Qing de shige yishu' 論艾青的詩歌藝術 (On the art of Ai Qing's poetry), Wenyi luncong 文藝論叢 no.10 (1980.4)

shorter works. 'Elegy to Romain Roland' 悼羅曼羅蘭 34/

contains a stanza with a fairy-tale quality:

The mountain is the highest mountain in
Europe,
The lake is the most beautiful lake in
Europe,
The old man is the best old man in Europe --
Righteous, solemn, brave and clever;

山是歐羅巴最高的山，
湖是歐羅巴最美的湖，
老人是歐羅巴最好的老人，
正直嚴肅，勇敢而又聰明；

(stanza 2)

Yet this quality seems out of place in a poem consisting largely of conceptual narrative. A more sustained effort at learning from the folk song style came in the spring of 1948, in the form of a series of eight poems published under the collective title 'The Cuckoo' 布谷鳥 35/. These are short verses on rural life, and with the exception of 'Sending off enlisted soldiers' they are all descriptions of scenes in the fields. This is not a new subject matter; Ai Qing had written a number of poems on rural life during his travel in northern China. But early works such as 'Bonfire' 篝火 are mostly impressionist sketches of rural scenes, with such a strong visual appeal and sense of atmosphere that they seem to be conceived not only as poems, but also as paintings. In 'The Cuckoo', although the angle of observation remains basically unchanged, Ai Qing is much less concerned with pictorial quality than with presenting the new,

34. First published in Liberation Daily 1945.1.29.
Collected in Selected works.

35. Collected in Red Star.

liberated life style of peasants in a predominantly light-hearted manner. Like 'Wu Manyou', 'The Cuckoo' is also an attempt to create along the lines of a folk song style. In neither case does Ai Qing model his poem on folk songs ^{from} a particular region. But with a simple diction, a colloquial tone and frequent references to village adages, he aims to capture the quality of folk songs without following any rigid poetic form or stanzaic pattern.

One of the most striking features in these poems describing work in the fields is the predominance of short lines. With the exception of 'Irrigating', which contains one eight syllable line, the length of lines in these poems does not exceed seven syllable, and the majority are four or five syllable lines. The use of run-on lines is also limited. As a result, the syntax is uncomplicated and close to the language used of ordinary peasants. This is complemented by the simple vocabulary and colloquial tone. 'Turning the soil' is actually in the form of a conversation between the poet and a farmer, with the former urging the latter to take a rest, and the latter refusing to do so, explaining the importance of turning the soil in time for spring rain:

My old villager
It's getting windy
It's also getting dark
Stop and rest

老鄉啊
刮大風了
天也黑了
快休息吧

These four lines, each ending with an auxiliary word 'a'wǎ, 'le' } or 'ba'wǎ, establish a casual and conversational level. The auxiliary word 'le' in particular is used in all seven poems. Phrases such as 'old villager' and 'windy' are part of the everyday speech of country folks, and similar examples can be found throughout the collection.

An equally effective way of capturing local flavour is the incorporation of village adages:

Spring rain is as precious as oil

...

One mu yields as much as six or seven mu
Food and clothing will be no problem

春雨貴如油

一畝六七畝

吃穿不用愁

-- Spring rain

'Cutting wheat, planting rice

Cutting wheat, planting rice

Landlords are well fed

Peasants go hungry'

割麥插禾 (hé)

割麥插禾

地主吃飽

農民受餓 (é)

-- The Cuckoo

In spring when it blows from the east it will
rain all night

春發東風連夜雨

-- Turning the soil

These adages contribute to the poems in two ways: as popularly accepted rural sayings they enhance the rustic quality of the poems, and the fact that they often consist of end rhymes brings a musical appeal inherent in all folk

songs. In 'The Cuckoo' this is particularly effective. Lines one, two and four of the adage quoted above end with the rhyme words 'hè' and 'è', while the lines are all four-syllabled, with the caesurae coming in mid-line, imitating the rhythm of the cuckoo's song.

'Sending off enlisted soldiers' is a poem very different in form from the rest of the collection. It is the only poem in the series which follows a regular rhythmic pattern. This rhythmic regularity is achieved by the placing of the caesurae, which, in the majority of lines, are followed by three syllables. In some lines when the caesurae precede four syllables, the rhythm still remains basically unchanged:

Bridal sedan chairs carried by four,

...

Want to know who's sitting inside?

You won't guess it in a whole day --

八仙花轎四個人抬，

要問轎裡坐的是誰？

你猜一天也猜不下一

The words 'ge'個, 'de'的 and 'ye'也 are unstressed, thus maintaining the impression of a three-syllabled pattern. This strong rhythmic regularity suggests, more than any other poem in the collection, the musical quality of folk songs.

As studies in adapting folk song techniques, 'The Cuckoo' collection shows better control over the genre than 'Wu Manyou'. One reason is probably the choice of subject matter. Ai Qing's description of rural scenes has always

been one of his strong points, and the most effective stanzas in 'Wu Manyou' are also scenic descriptions. In 'The Cuckoo' Ai Qing's attention to detail captures the essence of rural life. The diction and syntax may be simple, but the angle of observation remains similar to his early rural poems. In this Ai Qing seems to have achieved a sense of balance between the requirements of a more colloquial style and his own descriptive techniques. However, the light-hearted verses in 'The Cuckoo' still cannot rival the intensity of his rural poems on northern China.

Ai Qing's move to Yanan resulted not only in a predominance of political poems, even his works on the familiar theme of dawn and the sun were imbued with a new spirit. The fierce, scorching qualities of the sun and the agony of longing for dawn have all disappeared. Symbolic of his having reached the liberated zone, his poems on this theme all begin, not with frustrated vigil, but with the soothing presence of the rising sun:

Say that I have come with dew on my feet
I have come under the guiding light of the
last star

說我已踏着露水而來
已借着最後一顆星的照引而來

-- Dawn heralds its arrival 36/

In the morning, I wake up from my sleep,
Glad to see your light;
早晨，我從睡眠中醒來，
看見你的光輝就高興； -- For the sun 37/

Open your windows
Open your doors
打開你們的窗子吧
打開你們的板門吧 all houses
讓我進去，讓我進去
進到你們的小屋裡
進到你們的小屋裡
-- The sun's words 38/

However, past and present sufferings are not totally disregarded. In 'For the sun' the joy of waking up to sunlight is contrasted with the discomfort of the previous night, symbolic of the poet's past suffering:

-- though last night I was fatigued,
haunted by countless nightmares
雖然昨夜我還是困倦，
而且被無數的惡夢糾纏

In 'Dawn heralds its arrival', the tired, the weak, the wounded, the sick and all the unfortunate people are called upon to celebrate the coming of dawn, and thus of hope and rebirth. Like his earlier works on the same theme, spring, dawn and the sun are all manifestations of a bright new era, and each image in these poems enhances the effect of the other. In 'For the sun' the poet wakes up not only to the sun, but to spring:

37. Collected Ibid.

38. Collected Ibid.

Full of gratitude, I get up from bed,
To open the windows shut for a whole winter

我心裏充滿感激，從牀上起來，
打開已關了一個冬季的窗門，

-- stanza 3

and in 'The sun's words', what the sun brings to the poet
are images of spring:

Let me, with bouquets, with fragrance,
with light,
warmth and dew, fill the void in
your heart.

讓我把花束，把香氣，把亮光，
溫暖和露水撒滿你們心的空間

-- stanza 4

Most prominent in these poems are the sun's soothing and
benevolent qualities, often combined with a quiet, rustic
charm:

Please open the windows decorated with
papercuts
Please open the doors posted with new year
couplets

Please wake the hard working women
And the snoring men

請打開那糊有花紙的窗子
請打開那貼着春聯的門
請叫醒勤勞的女人
和那打着鼾聲的男人

-- Dawn heralds its arrival

You paint the window papers a powdery yellow
Set in neat shadows of the frame of pale blue
...

So that you can spread a beautiful table
cloth knitted in threads of gold
On my desk in front of the window.

把窗紙敷上淺黃如花粉的顏色，
嵌在淺藍而整齊的格影裡。
請你把金絲織的明麗的檯布
鋪展在我臨窗的案子上。-- For the sun

On the other hand, there are also images of much greater brilliance, and ideas associated with Ai Qing's earlier poems on the theme of the quest for light:

The brightness of your rays hurt my eyes
...
You mint days into countless golden wheels
Flying on ancient wastelands ...

你的光芒刺痛我的瞳孔

...
你把日子鑄成無數金輪，
飛旋在古老的荒原上 ...

-- For the sun

The 'brightness' of the sun's rays calls to mind the power of light to scorch and burn, represented in 'The flute' in the image of a furnace, while the 'golden wheels' reminds us of images used in 'The sun' (1937) and 'Era' (1941). But in both cases, the implication of violence and fierce force in the earlier versions are absent. Indeed, with his concentration of the comforting, beneficial qualities of the light motif, it is surprising that Ai Qing is still not entirely free from the idea of death:

Make me live fervently, suffering for ideals,
Until death takes my life away.

使我熱情地生活，為理想而痛苦，
直到我的生命被死亡帶走

-- For the sun

It is the same romantic wish to be sacrificed for a great cause which prompted him to exclaim, in 'To the sun' (1938):

I even wish to die in this moment of glorious
encounter

我甚至想在這光榮的際會中死去

But the sense of ecstasy vibrant in the earlier poem is not noticeable in 'For the sun', though the poem concludes on a

no less romantic gesture:

Today, I want to go to the top of the hill
Loosen my clothes, and naked,
Bathe my soul in your brightness ...

今天,我想到山巔上去,
解散我的衣服,赤裸着,
在你的光辉裡沐浴我的靈魂 ...

Not only are images of the sun and the emotions expressed in these three poems comparatively calm, the structure of the poems is also well balanced and regulated. Both 'For the sun' and 'The sun's words' are written in four line stanzas, and the length of the lines are on the whole even. This is especially true of 'The sun's words', in which repetition and parallel construction reinforce the regularity and creates a quick, light-hearted pace. In 'Dawn heralds its arrival', the two-line stanzas convey the tone of command or request. By varying the placing of the caesurae and the length of lines, Ai Qing avoids rigidity and monotony. This move towards a more regulated verse form is continued throughout the Yanan period as a response to the movement of learning from popular literature. But these poems, written before the Yanan Forum, probably took this direction as a response to the calmer feelings of the poet rather than the dictates of a new literary movement.

Ai Qing's move to Yanan led directly to the new developments of his poems in this period. With his fervent patriotism and dissatisfaction with the Nationalist government, he would most likely have been influenced by

literary movements initiated in the communist areas even if he had not arrived in Yanan. But his actual presence meant that he was much more exposed to the discussions and struggles going on around him, especially as his article 'Understand Writers, Respect Writers' was under attack in the Yanan Forum. As a patriot convinced that Communism would give China a brighter future, Ai Qing, not surprisingly, followed Mao's call to popularize literature and write for the masses.

Some of Ai Qing's political eulogies and anti-war poems of this period are slogan-like and often monotonous. One of the reasons for this is probably the influence of 'poetry for recitation', or 'street poems', which aimed at direct appeal at a wide public. In Li Guangtian's ^{李廣田} opinion, such works should convey strong feelings of love or hatred shared by a large number of people, and presented in a straight-forward rather than delicate or subtle manner so that the power of the subject matter would not be diminished by too much polish ^{39/}. If we place Ai Qing's political works against such criteria, it becomes quite obvious that he was fulfilling the requirements of the time. However, it still remains true that aside from their political significance, his works of this period, experimenting with a new poetic style, have lost much of the strong evocative power of his earlier poetry. Thus is due only partly to the

39. Quoted in Lu Jian, Poetry and Struggle, pp.27 - 28.

unfamiliarity of a new style. What plays an equally, if not more important part is the nature of Ai Qing's imagination. He is more easily kindled by scenes of sadness or extreme excitement than by subject matters which call for praise by virtue of their political significance. Ai Qing himself has admitted that he is better at writing on sad subjects, and finds it difficult to concentrate on celebrating happiness.

40/ Another characteristic of Ai Qing's poetic imagination is that while he can easily empathize with common folks he finds it difficult to deal with larger-than-life characters and events. As he shifted his attention from describing individual suffering to motivating the masses politically and ideologically, his approach towards his subject matters became less sure. Sometimes it seems that the wartime atrocities, whether in China or in Europe, loomed so large that he had to reduce their significance with mockery, as is the case with the 'Hitler' poems and the description of the Japanese women in 'City of the people'. But in so doing, he also reduces the scope and impact of his perception of such atrocities. While fulfilling Ai Qing's sense of patriotism and the duty he felt he had towards the general public, his poems of the Yanan period, taken out of the context of wartime requirements, do not measure up to the freshness and poignancy of his previous works.

40. Feng Weicai 馮偉才, 'Shidai de shiren yu shiren de shidai' 時代的詩人與詩人的時代 (The poet of our times and the times of a poet), Xin Wanbao 1981.2.24, p.12

Stylistically, Ai Qing's poems of the Yanan period witnessed equally important changes. With his conscientious effort at learning from folk songs, there is a move towards regularity of poetic form. This is especially obvious in the shorter works. Both stanzas and lines are more even in length and generally shorter, and in works experimenting with folk song techniques Ai Qing begins to use end rhymes. Even in the use of long-favoured poetic device such as repetition and parallelism, he has cast aside the long adjectival and adverbial phrases prominent in his earlier works such as 'Da Yan He', and adopted shorter, crisp and clear phrases in descriptive details. This new development will bear fruit in the Post-Liberation years, when Ai Qing works to blend his individual style with what he has learned from studying folk songs.

Every poet has his own Muse
-- On Poetry 1/

When the Communists swept to power in 1949, not only did they destroy the old political, social, and economic order of China, but they also altered the course of art and literature. For writers who had worked in communist areas before liberation, however, this was perhaps more a continuation, albeit on a much larger scale, of the lifestyle they had been used to. There was little that was new in the dictates of the government in the fields of art and literature, which had been established in the Yanan Forum of 1942, and were to remain the basic doctrine for writers in the years to come.

According to Mao's ideas, literature and art were to serve the purpose of the revolution and its three backbone classes -- workers, peasants and soldiers. But rather than just the Communist controlled areas of wartime China, the whole country now fell under the sway of the same rules. However, there was one significant difference for writers of the new China. Since the Nationalist troops had been defeated and the country united under a proletarian government, there was no longer the need to expose social evils. In the Yanan days writers were directed to sing the

1. 'On Poets' No. 18, On Poetry.

praises of communist areas and expose the corruption and incompetence of the Nationalist rule, but under the new order, it would have been treacherous to expose any inadequacies, which, in any case, were not supposed to exist at all. Thus writers and artists were left with the sole task of eulogizing and encouraging the revolution.

Writers from the liberated areas were assigned a large number of official posts. They had been tested, if not exactly trusted. Ai Qing's first poem in this period, befitting his official capacity as leader of the design team for the national flag and emblem, is entitled 'The national flag' 国旗 2/. Written immediately after the committee had decided on the five star flag, this poem is simple and dignified. A sense of balance is created through the regularity of rhyme and stanza length. As far as the form of the poem is concerned it marks a new direction in Ai Qing's poetic development. Compared with his former works, the lines in this poem are exceptionally short (four to seven syllables) and the frequency of rhyming unparalleled even by his folk song style poems written in Yanan. The poetic techniques used in this poem are perhaps not innovative, for the skilful manipulation of repetition has been one of Ai Qing's strong points since the beginning of his career. The first stanza of this poem, for example, is almost an echo of

2. First published in Renmin ribao 1949.9.28. Collected in Jubilation, Spring and Selected poems (79).

a description of Kalgan in 'The city of the people':

Flag of beauty	美麗的旗
Flag of solemnity	莊嚴的旗
Flag of revolution	革命的旗
Flag of Unity	團結的旗

-- The national flag

Kalgan --	張家口 --
City of the people,	人民的城,
City of beauty,	美麗的城,
City of bliss,	幸福的城,
City of glory!	光榮的城!

-- The city of the people

The major element which gives this poem its strong sense of dignity is a consistently well balanced rhythm. Stanza two serves as an excellent illustration of this impression:

Four gold stars
Follow one great star
We, all of one heart,
Follow the people's revolution

四顆金星
朝向一顆大星
萬眾一心
朝向人民革命

The first half of the stanza finds a perfect antithesis in the second half in terms of line length as well as the number of words in each line. That the words in the whole stanza all consist of two syllables further enhances this symmetry, while the use of end rhymes 'in' and 'ing' rings an authoritative note and contributes to the overall effect of balance and control. 'The national flag' does not boast of the impassioned spirit or intricate imagery of some of Ai Qing's best works, but its very simplicity and terseness is

quite a perfect instrument for a poem of this nature. One can almost describe it as a kind of new 'court' poetry, written to satisfy the demands of a special occasion.

Indeed Ai Qing was so heavily loaded with official duties that such 'special occasions' abounded, one of which was the campaign to protect world peace. Although writers of Communist China were not supposed to criticize their own country, they were given a number of targets which they were to attack with all vehemence; the most important of these being the imperialist countries of the west. Ai Qing produced several poems on the theme of world peace in early 1950 during his tour of five Chinese cities, one of which is 'I sign the call for peace' 我在和平呼籲上簽名 3/, followed by 'Voyage of shame' 恥辱的旅行 4/ and 'Arise, Asians' 亞細亞, 起來 5/. What immediately captures our attention in these poems is again the impression of regularity. All three poems are composed of four line stanzas and reveal quite a consistent attempt in the use of end rhymes:

'Oppose wars of aggression!'
'Support world peace!'
'Ban the atomic bomb!'
'Whoever uses it first is a war criminal!'
「反對侵略戰爭!」
「擁護世界和平!」
「禁止原子彈!」
「誰先使用, 誰是戰犯!」
-- I sign the call for peace

3. First published in Renmin Ribao 1950.5.21. Collected in Jubilation and Spring.

4. Collected Ibid.

5. Collected Ibid.

Hundreds and thousands of mothers,
Wrote hundreds and thousands of letters,
The letters only express one wish:
'What we all want is peace!'

千千萬萬的母親，
寫上千千萬萬封信，
信上表達一個意志：
我們要的是和平！

-- Voyage of shame

They are a group of scurvy vagabonds,
Whose intentions are far from kind-hearted;
To indulge their intemperance,
They want to squeeze out all our blood.

那是一批卑鄙的流氓，
他們不安什麼好心腸，
為了要生活得更荒唐，
想把我們的血都榨光。

--Arise, Asians

Of these three poems, 'Voyage of shame', describing European reaction to the visit of an American 'warmonger', proves to be the most unsatisfactory largely because it is based on the poet's imagination and information gathered from the news. As we have seen in the example of Ai Qing's works on the Nazi invasion in Europe discussed in the previous chapter, such a mode of creation is not really his strong point. The reactions of the Parisians and Londoners towards the American 'warmonger' are so different in degree that they almost seem incompatible with each other. In Paris Acheson is compared to the 'plague' 瘟疫 and 'black death' 黑死病, but in London the people were simply 'displeased' 不高興 with his arrival. Simplicity of diction had been one of Ai Qing's goals in the post Yanan period, and in many poems he resorted to colloquial expressions. But in this case the

occasionally conversational tone and colloquial vocabulary imprints the whole poem with a light-heartedness highly undesirable. It shows that Ai Qing is far from adept at political satires.

'Arise, Asians' is a call on Asians to defend their homeland against imperialism. With the exception of stanza five, which consists of the metaphor of a storm brewing in the air, this poem is nothing more than a conglomeration of slogans and battlecries. But even this single metaphor has been used so often in the course of the description of wars that it is ^{platitudeous} platitudinous to use it in a poem. What redeems it in this case is the taut rhythm, which does convey a feeling of tension.

Although 'I sign the invocation for peace' is very much a piece d'occasion and actually consists of alternate stanzas of slogans, it is nevertheless the most effective of all the poems on the theme of anti-imperialism, for the very simple reason that Ai Qing has based his arguments on the reality around him. Except in the repetition of slogans there is no direct attack on the warmongers. Instead he describes the joyousness of life after the war: bridges repaired, crops growing on battle ditches, long separated friends meeting again, and the smile of new born babes. It is through such detailed descriptions of peaceful scenes that he convinces us of the cruelty of war, and because of these suggestions of contrast, the slogans do not appear as empty

battlecries, but serve the function of highlighting the need for peace.

Another poem which shares the form of 'I sign the call for peace' is 'Hundreds and thousands marching in one direction' 千千萬萬人朝着一個方向⁶¹. The calm and occasionally delicate images of the former, however, are replaced with much more robust pictures and flagrant colours. Ai Qing's train of thought as expressed in this poem is typical of his anti-war poems written during this period. It begins with a celebration of the bliss of peace under the new regime, followed by a denunciation of the imperialist warmongers, and ends with a reaffirmation of the people's willingness to fight in order to safeguard peace. Since it is the duty of writers to praise the new order, many have written eulogies contrasting past and present conditions. Indeed, recalling the sufferings of the past while enjoying the bliss of the present seemed to be a favourite device of poets during this period. Ai Qing's two long poems, 'Safeguard peace' 保衛和平⁷¹ and 'Dedication' 獻詞⁸¹, written soon after the communist victory, are also examples of this kind.

6. First published in Renmin Ribao 1952.9.28. Collected in Spring.

7. Collected in Jubilation & Spring.

8. Originally published under the title 'Dedicated to Stalin' 獻給斯大林 (collected in Jubilation), it is changed to 'Dedication' in the collection Spring. Eight stanzas are published under the title 'Renmin gesong Sidalin' 人民歌頌斯大林 (People sing the praise of Stalin) in Renmin Ribao 1949.12.18.

Divided into four sections, the train of thought in 'Safeguard peace' is identical to that of 'Hundreds and thousands marching in one direction', while the descriptions in sections one and two are reminiscent of his earlier poems on the theme of dawn, the sun, and city life. The poem begins with the awakening not only of the poet, but of life in general, symbolized by the cry of a new born babe. The descriptive details, suggestive of spring (though the poem was in fact written in early Autumn), call to mind 'The sun's words' and 'To the sun'. Written in free verse, this opening stanza unfolds in a leisurely pace. In his eyes, the city crowds and traffic are still 'like rushing torrents' 江水似的奔騰, and 'the clamour of the big city' 大城市的騷擾的喧聲 follows a 'rhythm of steel' 鋼鐵的節奏. But the chimneys and electricity poles, symbols of industrialization, are no longer threatening or repulsive. The smoke coming out of chimneys is given a new image of health and vitality by being compared to 'the tails of racing horses' 像跑馬的尾巴似的, while the electricity poles are depicted as bearing spikes of jasmine flowers, and thus become a part of nature. 9/ This is in fact the same method by which Ai Qing resolved his dilemma when he was faced with the conflicting claims of city and village life.

9. Similarly, in the poem 'Siberia' 西伯利亞 (Spring), the chimneys are compared to giraffes and the vibration of electricity wires to buzzing bees.

However, in the beginning of section three the narrative tone quickly changes as Ai Qing moves from description to declamation, and from careful presentation of selective images to seemingly endless lists of names and places. In section four the torrents of slogans represent some of the worst of propagandist verse written in this period. This poem, with its sudden change in narrative tone and technique is perhaps one of Ai Qing's works most representative of his strength and weakness as a poet. His best qualities are lyrical, and in obeying the demands of the time to produce blatantly propagandist works he fell into the trap of mistaking political slogans for poetry.

As one of the leading literary figures in new China, Ai Qing was not only expected to devote his works to anti-imperialist campaigns but also to the glorification of Communism. In 1950 he visited Moscow as a member of the Chinese cultural delegation, and as a result of this visit, a series of poems was published under the collective title 'Red star of gems' 寶石的紅星 10/. True to the teachings of Mao Zedong, these poems are eulogies of the Soviet way of life. Most of these poems are descriptions of natural and city scenery, and the shorter lyrics are written in four line stanzas with a regularity of rhyme and rhythm which reflects

10. First published in Renmin wenxue in three instalments. In vol.3 no.3 (1950), 'Red star of gems', in vol.5 no.1 (1951), 'Land of bliss' 幸福的園土, and vol.11 no.1 (1952) 'Red square in October' 十月的紅場. Collected in Spring.

the experiment in poetic form carried over from his study of folk song styles. Since a number of these poems describes the country scenes he saw on the train journey, one is tempted to compare these with his earliest poems written on his return journey from France to China. Not only is the form of the later poems very different from the free verse written almost twenty years before, but the poignancy of the earlier works is replaced by a general atmosphere of cheerfulness. It is true that Ai Qing still retains his keen sense of colour. Indeed in works such as 'Siberia' and 'Shout' 呼喊, much of the jovial atmosphere depends on the bright and cheerful colours in the description:

Pink, mud-red roofs
 And snowy white window frames,
 Dark blue wooden fences
 Setting off the deep green forest
 And light green birch forest,
 Composing beautiful scenic pictures...

粉紅的，土紅的房頂
 和雪白的窗戶
 深藍的木柵
 襯托着深綠的樅木林
 淺綠的樺木林
 構成一幅幅美麗的風景...

-- Shout

A new city,
 Red factories,
 White houses,
 Like a garden.
 Succeeded by a garden.

新的城市，
 紅色的廠房，
 白色的住宅，
 像一個花園，
 接着一個花園。

-- Siberia

The destination of the Chinese delegation was of course Moscow. Thus poems related to important landmarks of the Soviet capital such as 'Red square in October' 十月的紅場，

'Pushkin square' 普希金廣場 and 'The Kremlin' 克里姆林宮 form an important part in the series 'Red star of gems'. Unlike poems written on the train journey, which, though containing a political message, are still lyrical in nature, almost all the poems on Moscow are dominated by one political figure -- Stalin. It is most appropriate that 'Dedication', written in December, 1949, is included in this series, for its style as well as content is indeed in keeping with the long Moscow poems. In 'Dedication', Stalin is directly compared to God:

The people praise Stalin --
Unlike the way they praise Jehovah

....

Because you led us
In creating a brand new society
Not in heaven, but on earth.

人民歌頌斯大林 ——
不像歌頌耶和華

...
為的是你引導我們，
建設一個嶄新的社會
不在天上，卻在地上：

while in the poem 'Red star of gems' he is saluted as 'The teacher of mankind' 人類的導師. These longer poems are in fact in the same vein as the works on 'peace' discussed earlier, composed of a mixture of praise for the new order and condemnation of western powers. However, these poems are worth examining for one special reason. Up to this point, Ai Qing had very seldom, if ever, revised his published poems, but in the post liberation period quite a number of his poems were revised when they appeared in the collection Spring. Poems written in the Soviet Union eulogizing Stalin and the new way of life he created are outstanding examples of this

new working method.

The poem which had undergone the most drastic revision so far in Ai Qing's career is 'The Kremlin'. As published in Renmin Wenxue (1951) the poem consists of thirteen four line stanzas, but in the collection Spring it is cut down to five stanzas. The truncated stanzas are descriptions of Stalin working inside the Kremlin, and consists of details such as:

In my imagination,
He is pacing in his room,
Holding a pipe in his hands,
And meditating with his head bowed:

Sometimes he sits by the desk,
His body bending forward,
Studying a plan,
Or perusing a document:

在我的想像裡，	有時坐在桌邊，
他正在房中踱步，	上身俯伏向前，
手上拿着煙斗，	研究一個計劃；
低頭正在沉思；	審閱一個文件；

Such a portrayal of Stalin seems at once too generalized and too contrived. The man pacing his room holding a pipe could very easily have been a writer instead of a politician. Perhaps Ai Qing realized the inadequacy of such descriptive details and therefore amended the poem almost six years later. However, if one takes into consideration the change inside the Soviet governing stratum one may come to the conclusion that Ai Qing revised this poem for political as well as artistic reasons. In February, 1956 Stalin was dethroned by Kruschev at the twentieth congress of the Soviet Communist Party. The collection Spring was published soon

after this event, and may indeed have been influenced by this new development in Soviet politics. 'Dedication', another poem which has been extensively revised, illustrates this possibility. Although this poem was originally dedicated to Stalin on his birthday in 1949, in the revised version most of the references to Stalin are substituted by the phrase 'The Soviet people' 蘇聯人 or 'the Soviet Union' 蘇聯 .

Yet there is perhaps a third reason for this rather particular revision. Although the Chinese Communist Party's 'Hundred Flower Movement' was not launched until May, 1956, Ai Qing had started doubting the literary policy dictated by the Party prior to this movement. 11/ One of the four fables he wrote in response to the 'Hundred Flowers Movement' is 'The idol's words' 偶像的話 12/, the purport of which was against idol worshipping political leaders. One can easily discover that in the revised poems, notably 'The Kremlin' and 'Dedication', Ai Qing as a rule substituted the celebration of the individual (Stalin and Mao) by references to all Soviet and Chinese people. One may still argue that the substitution of 'Stalin' by 'Soviet citizens' in 'Dedication' is a purely political decision, but in the same poem at

11. A poem similar in ideas to the four fables is 'Oriole', written in 1953. Ai Qing's rebellious spirit against current conditions of the literary scene as expressed in his works will be discussed in the course of this chapter.

12. This, together with the other three fables, will be discussed later in this chapter.

least one stanza unconnected with Stalin has also been changed:

To support Mao Zedong,
We raise our swords and guns!

擁護毛澤東，
舉起了刀槍！

becomes, in the final version

We raise our swords and guns,
To support the Communist Party!

舉起了刀槍，
擁護共產黨！

This seems to point at the third reason for revision suggested above.

Ai Qing's journey to the Soviet Union in 1950 was but the beginning of a series of travels both in the country and abroad. The journey in which Ai Qing produced the largest number of poems was undertaken in 1954 -- a visit to Chile in celebration of the poet Pablo Neruda's fiftieth birthday. The poems written on this journey are published collectively under the title 'A journey to South America' 南美洲的旅行 13/. If one compares this series to the poems written four years back in the Soviet Union, one is immediately struck by the affinities as well as differences between these two groups of poems composed under similar circumstances.

It is to be expected that poems written under such circumstances would draw comparisons between communist and non-communist societies. 'In this part of the world' 在世界的

13. First published in Renmin Wenxue 1954 no.11. Collected in Spring and Selected poems.

這一邊， written immediately after the delegation arrived at Santiago, echoes Ai Qing's favourite theme in his early post-liberation poems on 'peace' :

'Chinese' are welcome everywhere!
Our hardships and courage are world renowned!
Six billion people marching forward under one banner,
On which is written one word: peace!

「中國人」到處受到歡迎！
我們的苦難和英勇到處聞名！
六億萬人高舉着大旗前進，
大旗上寫着兩個大字：和平！

The emphasis in this poem, however, is on the love Chinese people have inspired in foreign lands, and there is a notable absence of his previous attempts to contrast western aggression with communist love of peace. There is even a sense of humour when he explains why members of the delegation were hugged and embraced :

Not because we are still young,
And not because we are handsome,
不是因為我們還年輕，
也不是我們長得英俊，

As a result this poem does not suffer from the vein of hysteria or the endless lists of factual details which encumbered similar works written in 1950.

Among the poems written during this journey, the one which received the largest share of critical acclaim is 'The Atlantic' 大西洋 147. This is a long poem comparable in

14. Collected in Cliff and Selected poems(79)

scope to Ai Qing's early works such as 'To the sun' and 'The torch', and it is also written in free verse, a poetic form which Ai Qing used only sparingly in his post-liberation works. The theme of this poem is again the condemnation of imperialist powers and the necessity to fight for peace, but through an abundance of images and a careful manipulation of syntactic repetition, Ai Qing has on the whole avoided the array of slogans found in his previous long poems on the same theme. The transition from the apparent calm and timelessness of the Atlantic to the danger, aggression and enmity lying beneath its unperturbed surface is indeed a masterful stroke. The Atlantic serves as a bridge between reality and imagination and a link between past and present. It is at once the source of inspiration and the dominant image in the poem. There are similes in this poem which reveal Ai Qing's imagination at its best:

If we can cut air
 Like we cut a piece of meat jelly
 And cut out a small slice of space;
 If invisible, moving electric waves
 Creates a line every time;
 Then, in this small slice of air,
 Is entangled
 Lines more difficult to separate
 Than a mad woman's hair.

假如我們能把空氣
 像切一塊肉凍似的
 切下太空中的一小片，
 假如無形的、流動着的電波
 每一次都是一條線，
 那麼，在這一小片的空氣裡面，
 就糾纏着
 比一個瘋狂的女人的髮絲
 更難於清理的線，

Images of his faith in science and

progress which he advocated in some of his works written during the Sino-Japanese war. Not all the images in this poem, however, are equally impressive. For instance there is a sense of incongruity in the following description :

And on both coasts of North Atlantic
Inside some skyscrapers
Of clamourously bustling metropolis
There are many people
Working over the sale of arms
And hastily moving the beads of abacuses

而在大西洋的兩岸
喧鬧騰天的大都市的
某些摩天樓的裡面，
也有許多人
為了一批批軍火的騰銷
忙亂地撥動着算盤 ...

Here Ai Qing has unwittingly mixed images symbolic of modern development with an image suggesting a traditional way of doing business. It seems that through this eastern (and rather old fashioned) way of calculation, the arms dealers have lost much of their menance.

There are also sections in this poem which are only plain statements:

A new decade lies ahead of us,
Inter-human relationships are constantly changing,
Many concepts are given new meaning,
New men are born in hundreds and thousands

我們面臨着一個新的世紀，
人與人的關係在改變着，
許多觀念賦有了新的意義，
新的人在成千成萬地誕生 ...

They occupy, however, a comparatively small proportion of the poem, and consequently are not as damaging as the repetition of political slogans in his earlier works.

Such changes in politically orientated works is only one of the difference between poems written during Ai Qing's journey to the Soviet and those written on his South American tour. Another notable element is the predominance of lyrics in the latter series of poems. During his visit to the Soviet Union, short lyrics were written on the train journey celebrating Russian country and city scenery, but they played no part in political and social criticism. In the works on South America, however, Ai Qing at last established a balance between his lyrical propensity and the theme of social criticism. These poems mostly consist of four line stanzas and a more regular rhythm than his free verse. With the exception of 'The place where the blacks live' 黑人居住的地方 15/ there is no regular use of end rhymes. What gives these poems their poignancy is the deliberate unfolding of images. As social criticism, the poet's quiet meditation carries more weight than any public outcry.

In 'A black girl singing' 一個黑人姑娘在唱歌 16/, our realization of the girl's status is gradual -- only in the third stanza does the poet tell us that the baby she is carrying is her master's. The poem denounces racial exploitation through the use of contrast : black against white, sturdiness against fragility,

15. First published in Renmin wenxue 1954 no.11. Collected in Spring.

16. Ibid. Also collected in Selected poems and 100 lyrics.

comfortable against pitiable, and tears against songs of joy. Similarly, without the last two stanzas, 'Where the blacks live' would only have been a description of the poverty of the black people. It is towards the end of the poem that Ai Qing brings out the contrast between the affluence of the white and the poverty of the black by a mere mention of the high rise buildings nearby in which the white men live. His condemnation of racial exploitation is strengthened by the one line:

They all believe devoutly in God.

都同樣虔誠地相信上帝。

-- Stanza 4

In many of Ai Qing's poems on the aggression of western powers, he has presented Christianity as one of the means by which the exploiters control and subdue the exploited, but this is the only instance when he subtly hints at this idea rather than elaborates the whole theme.

The use of understatement enhances the effect of these poems. An outstanding example is the short verse 'He's asleep' 171, consisting only of two four-line stanzas. On the surface it describes a black young man sleeping in a corridor inside the airport, but it is in fact calling on the Negroes to rise against foreign exploitation. The idea is conveyed very succinctly in the last stanza:

But you should wake up now
It's getting late

17. Collected in Spring.

Soon it will dawn
The sun will be rising

但你也該醒了
時候已經不早
天快亮了
太陽要昇起了

Although it is possible to take this stanza literally, if we consider the significance of dawn and the rising sun thought out Ai Qing's poetry, it is quite clear that this poem should be read on two levels.

If the subtlety of Ai Qing's criticism of western imperialism is worth noting, so is the joy of life expressed in some of his poems in the South American series. What stays in our mind after reading 'A song of pity' 憐憫的歌 18/ is neither the boy's loneliness nor the identity of his parents, but the sheer joy of being alive he expresses in his smile to the sun, and his strength and courage symbolized by the straight back and raised arms. Since Ai Qing sees hope even in the young man's dire poverty, it is not surprising that this spirit is even more obvious in the jubilant atmosphere of 'Poems written on coloured paper' 寫在彩色紙條上的詩. 19/ We have already had a glimpse of the same celebration of life even in some poems he wrote in the late thirties when he was travelling through northern China. As the title of the poem suggests, it is indeed a colourful work -- red and green pieces of paper, blue and red lights, firelight in a dark forest, azure sky and lush meadows --

18. First published in Renmin Wenxue 1954 no.11. Collected in Spring and Selected poems (79).

19. Collected Ibid and in 100 lyrics.

symbolizing youth, joy and vitality. An essential element contributing to the sense of delight is the light hearted rhythm, created by the simplicity of syntax, the comparatively short lines, variation in stresses, and a skilful use of repetition. Even the defense of peace takes on a lively quality through syntactic repetition:

Peace is yours	和平是你的
Also mine	也是我的
It is ours	是我們大家的
None should touch it	誰也不能碰的

The similes are simple, and much of the charm of this poem lies in its simplicity. Some lines in section two of the poem are recognizable echoes of traditional folk songs:

Please take off your satin mask
Let me look at your eyes
請摘下綢製的假面
讓我看你的眼睛

In contrast with the lively scene of song and dance, the last stanza reveals Ai Qing's masterly description of nature. The shift from a festive atmosphere to the quiet beauty and stillness of an autumn night suggests all the poignancy of the conclusion of a good night's festivity, but without the sense of nostalgia so often associated with such occasions. One is equally impressed by the activity and the tranquility described in the poem.

These poems on South America differ most significantly from their predecessors of a similar nature in that Ai Qing has moved away from abstract ideas and speculations to concrete images. The generalization of his earlier social

and political criticism is replaced by carefully selected and polished details. The mode of presentation, which used to be exhaustive, is now pregnant and understated. In order to understand the factors leading to this change of emphasis in his poetic style, one has to study in some detail Ai Qing's poetic career in the four years between his visits to Moscow and Chile.

As Ai Qing himself had once said, his reputation as a leading poet in Communist China entailed a large number of official duties, as a result of which he could hardly find time for creative writing ^{20/}. This, however, is perhaps only one of the reasons why in the three years following his return from the Soviet Union his poetic output was minimal. Ai Qing is first and foremost a lyrical poet, to whom a staple diet of political propaganda must have been less than nourishing. Though he had answered the call of the times with readiness he had yet to answer the call of the Muse in the search of new themes and new forms for his poetry. As a result, while a large number of mainland Chinese poets were still paving the road to Communist millenium with slogans and battlecries, Ai Qing withdrew from this group to ponder on the direction his poems should take.

20. Ai Qing, 'Zai Zhongguo zuojia xiehui dierci lishihui huiyi (kuo da.) shang de fayan' 在中國作家協會第二次理事會會議(擴大)上的發言 (Speech delivered at the second conference (enlarged) of Council of the Association of Chinese Writers). Wenyi Bao, 1956 nos. 5/6.

In 1953 Ai Qing visited his native place of Jinhua. The calm and repose offered by the country landscape roused his creative urge, and in weaving his own feelings and experience into the description of scenery he modulates the tones and shades of the poem. If one recalls the unvaried cheerfulness of the Soviet countryside as described in his 1950 poems, one would realize that 'Twin peak mountain' 雙尖山 21/, the poem he wrote in early 1954 after he returned from his visit to Jinhua 22/, is an important step in a new poetic direction.

The poem starts on a familiar note -- the singing of birds in the morning. In Ai Qing's poetic vocabulary, bird song is almost always associated with dawn and sunrise 23/. In this poem, its significance is increased because it also serves as a link between past and present. Through the process of association, Ai Qing's thoughts drift from a spring morning in Beijing to his recent visit to 'Twin peak mountain'. In the poem he recalls his relationship with this mountain from the cradle to the present, using two four line stanzas describing the singing of birds to mark the watersheds in his life. There is thus a subtle shift in narration at certain intervals in the poem.

21. First published in Renmin wenxue 1955 no.9. Collected in Spring.
22. Ai Qing composed two long poems after his return from Jinhua. 'The hidden gun', written in the folk song style, will be discussed later in this chapter.
23. Another poem in this period which begins with the same imagery is 'Safeguard peace'.

Although this poem can also be considered in the light of eulogies of the new order, what impresses one most is the unhurried tempo of Ai Qing's reminiscences and the way in which he enriches and elaborates on selected images. The sustained personification of the mountain as a warrior in stanza two is one such example, while in stanza twenty-one, Ai Qing brings a new dimension to the use of an old simile:

And under the huge rock,
A clear brook
Makes a rippling noise,
Like a silver snake
Sliding into clumps of grass,
Disappears
Then suddenly reappears over the other side of the
wood

而在巨大的岩石下面
一泓清泉
發出淙淙的聲音
像一條銀蛇
滑進了草叢
不見了
忽然又出現在林木那邊

One may recall that in a poem entitled 'Spring rain' 春雨 24/ written in 1937 Ai Qing had created an almost identical simile:

A brook amongst the grass,
Swims leisurely past --
Like a big silver snake
草叢中的溪水
徐緩地游過去——
像一條銀色的大蟒蛇

The later version, however, seems to take on a new lease of life through the added details and the variation of line length. Similarly, to compare a road to a length of thread is not really an innovation, but to present it as a thread

24. Collected in Wilderness

which is 'wavering' (stanza 19) immediately endows the simile with a freshness of appeal. In this poem, Ai Qing demonstrates how carefully refined details can enhance the effect of certain images, and thus contribute to the atmosphere of a poem.

It is true that Ai Qing has envisaged progress and modernization for the area, in high voltage wires, new factories and motor vehicles, yet most of the poem's strength lies in quiet observations and reveals a predominantly meditative quality. Towards the end it is even tinged with sadness 25/:

What kind of bird is that
In that forest
Singing, singing, singing,
As though it is calling for someone,
As though it is recounting something,
It does not stop though it is raining,
Even its voice is wet

究竟是什麼鳥
在那樹林裡，
唱着，唱着，唱着，
好像在叫喚什麼，
好像在訴說什麼，
下雨了也不停，
連聲音也濕了...

The last line again reveals the refinement of images in this poem. The merging of the bird's song and the drizzling rain is highly evocative, but when the poem was included in Spring and Selected poems it is altered to:

Pouring out its sadness to the wilderness
對山野傾訴衷情

25. Lo Hanchao suggests in Ai Qing Lun that this sadness is a reflection of his marital problems. op.cit. p.210

Perhaps Ai Qing regrets the association with tears in the original version, and therefore supplants it with a new line which forms part of a concluding couplet, but one still feels that some of the freshness of the image is lost in the revised version.

'Twin peak mountain' is not only a step forward in Ai Qing's assertion of his lyrical power, it also marks the point when Ai Qing abandons the discursive and argumentative styles which he adopted since his arrival in Yanan in 1942. The poems on South America discussed earlier in this chapter are in fact a continuation of this development.

After 'Twin peak mountain', Ai Qing concentrated his efforts on lyrical works and produced a number of poems which are remarkable for their tranquil beauty. One of the most representative example is 'A snowy morning' 一個下雪的早晨 26/.

Sitting quietly on a winter morning watching the falling snow, Ai Qing recalls the little boy whom he had seen in the summer playing in the woods. The first stanza is a description of the falling snow, and reveals the hypnotic quality of Ai Qing's lyricism:

The snow is falling, falling, without a sound,
The snow is falling, falling, never stopping,
Clean white snow, covering the courtyard,
Clean white snow, covering the roofs,
How quiet the world is, how quiet.

雪下着,下着,沒有聲音,
雪下着,下着,一刻不停,

26. Collected in Selected poems & 100 lyrics.

潔白的雪，蓋滿了院子，
潔白的雪，蓋滿了屋頂，
整個世界多麼靜，多麼靜。

The two elements which create the atmosphere of prevailing tranquility are repetition and rhyme. Repetition is found on the vocabulary, syntactic as well as rhythmic levels, thus engendering an impression of infinity. This is enhanced by the rhymes 音 (yīn), 停 (tíng), 頂 (dǐng), 靜 (jìng). Even the one line which does not rhyme with the rest ends on an unstressed syllable with a soft vowel 子 (zi), further emphasizing the stillness of the scene.

In the rest of the poem, this regularity of form is relaxed to show the contrast between the movement of summer and the stillness of winter. In describing the woods Ai Qing gives minimal details:

At dawn in those woods,
Dew daubed on everything;
The sun has just risen,
樹林裡的早晨
到處都是露水
太陽剛剛升起

His attention is focused on the little boy, the image of the simple and pure joys of life, and especially on what he was holding in his hands:

In his other little hand,
He carries a string of green things,
-- a very long stalk of foxtails,
Strung with grasshoppers, beetles, and dragonflies.
他的另一隻小手，
提了一串綠色的東西，
——一根很長的狗尾草，
結了炸螞，金甲蟲和蜻蜓，

Yet the sense of silence still dominates the atmosphere. The only noise in the woods is the little boy's soft singing and the sound of cicadas. The 'in' and 'ing' rhyme is resumed at

the end of stanza two and used throughout the poem, though at more distant and irregular intervals.

Ai Qing's affection for the child is conveyed in the repeated use of the word 'little' 小, which is not only a description of size, but also implies a kindly, protective attitude. Yet towards the end of the poem one realizes that the boy is by far the happier of the two. In the summer woods he was the one who actually experienced the joy of life while Ai Qing was just an onlooker, and in the snowy winter morning he longs to go out and play in the woods or on the lake, totally unaware of the impression he had made on someone who had seen him during the summer. On the other hand, the poet is filled with a hopeless longing to see him again. Though less obvious than in 'Twin peak mountain', this poem again betrays a hint of melancholy in a basically pleasant atmosphere. In fact many of Ai Qing's lyrical works written after 1954 tend to reveal traces of solitude and sadness. 277

The poems which are most clearly evident of the change of direction in Ai Qing's career at this point are the two folk songs written in the period under discussion.

27. By 1956 Ai Qing's marital problems were solved, and therefore Lo Hanchao's earlier suggestion that this was the cause of the sadness expressed in his poems no longer stands. I shall discuss the possible reasons for this later in the chapter.

'The hidden gun' 28/ is one of the two poems Ai Qing composed after his visit to Jinhua. It preceded 'Twin peak mountain' by a few month and is the last of his long poems designed to satisfy the Party's criteria for writers. Less than two years later, Ai Qing was to follow his own poetic guidelines and compose a folk song of a very different nature -- 'Black Eel' 黑魚 29/.

In many ways 'The hidden gun' is a continuation of the experiment Ai Qing carried out in 'Wu Manyou', written ten years ago. Like 'Wu Manyou' it is based on facts; Ai Qing had collected the material for this poem during his stay in Zhejiang.

As far as the form of the poem is concerned, 'The hidden gun' is much closer to the folk song style than 'Wu Manyou'. This is perhaps due to the fact that Ai Qing had spent some time studying folk songs of Shanbei 陝北 in general, and the works of a local singer Wang Tingyou 汪庭有 in particular. 30/ Although stanza length varies from two to twenty-one lines, the majority are four to eight-lined stanzas. Moreover, in the beginning of the poem there is an

28. First published in Renmin Wenxue 1953 no.11. Collected in Spring.

29. First published in Renmin Wenxue 1955 no.4.

30. Ai Qing, 'Wang Tingyou de ge' 汪庭有的歌 (The Songs of Wang Tingyou), Xin wenyi lunji 新文藝論集 (Essays on new literature) (Shanghai, Wenyi, 1952)

attempt to conform to the seven syllable line with end rhymes in alternate lines. The caesura usually comes after the second or fourth syllables, further enhancing the sense of uniformity. Although as the poem progresses, the rhythm and rhyme become more flexible, each line rarely exceeds seven feet, and there are end rhymes in most stanzas. The regularity is especially obvious in the short stanzas. This is more in the style of folk songs of Southern China, in which the seven syllable line is still predominant, and which requires a stricter conformity than folk songs of the north. 31/ To add a more stylized flavour to the poem, Ai Qing also introduces a number of folk song devices not found in 'Wu Manyou', one of which is analogy combined with rural maxims:

There are roots to every tree, sources to every river;
 A kite flying a thousand miles is tied to a string.
 Look at the swallows on every eave,
 Leaving yearly they always come back.
 No matter how far you shall go,
 Never forget your homeland.

樹有根，水有源，
 萬萬丈一線牽；
 你看那家家標上燕，
 年年去了又回還，
 你走得再多麼遠，
 不年忘了舊家園。

-- Section I, stanza 13

'Replies' 唱和 is yet another device used extensively in 'The hidden gun'. In the beginning of the poem, the action is introduced in the conversation of Aunt Yang and

31. Shanbei mingexuan 陝北民歌選, ed. He Qifang 何其芳 (Shanghai: Haiyan shudian 海燕書店, 1951) p.35

Mrs. Li 李大娘.32/ There is, in the Renmin Wenxue version of the poem, an additional stanza using the same technique:

Mrs. Li said,
'If I'm cheating you, I'd die a violent death.'
Aunt Yang said,
'If you lie to me, you'd be hit by thunderbolt.'

李大娘說：
「我要騙你，我不得好死。」
楊大媽說：
「你每誑我，你遭天雷打。」

This is also an attempt to bring familiar expressions into the poem. It was left out when the poem was revised probably because it suggests an element of violence uncalled for here, and which also reflects poorly on the two characters. The last two stanzas in section two of the poem is also a form of replies. There is, moreover, a comic quality here with echoes of the popular entertainment xiang sheng 相聲 (comic dialogue) 33/ which brings a sense of humour and enlivens the poem.

The structure of 'The hidden gun' is in fact not dissimilar to that of 'Wu Manyou', but 'The hidden gun' is by far the more dramatic poem, because of the quick tempo and the comparatively large number of characters. However, the drawback with this poem is its lack

32. I classify this as 'replies' rather than 'question & answer' 問答式 because according to Zhu Ziqing in Chinese folk songs the latter is a form of repetition.

33. 'Comic dialogue' is a kind of entertainment popular in northern China. It takes the form of two performers on stage carrying on a funny conversation on almost any topic with the aim of provoking laughter.

of cohesive force. The story line is episodic, and characters appear out of the blue only to be discarded in the next section. Mrs. Li, Aunt Yang's husband and daughter-in-law, the spy, the traitor, Yan Fu 延富, leader of the liberation army, and to an extent even Aunt Yang's son Little Tiger, all fall into obscurity after their brief entrances. Even the two major protagonists, Aunt Yang and Yang Minggang, cannot sustain our interest because they are such stereotypes. In emphasizing their courage and class awareness, Ai Qing has sacrificed their individuality. Perhaps this is an accurate pointer to the nature of his imagination. He seems to be more at home in bringing to life characters created by him (as witnessed in 'Torches' and 'The bugler') than in portraying real people and real events.

Between 'The hidden gun' and Ai Qing's third poem in the folk song style -- 'Black Eel' 黑鳗, there is a gap of slightly over a year. Yet within this one year, Ai Qing's mastery of folk song style seems to have exceeded his achievement in the ten years between 'Wu Manyou' and 'The hidden gun'. I would suggest that there are two major factors contributing to the comparative success of 'Black Eel', which was written after Ai Qing's visit to the navy stationed at the Zhoushan Islands 舟山群岛. During his stay there, he must have heard many local folk songs, some of which have probably found their way into this poem, thus contributing a genuine local flavour. Moreover, the poem is based on a folk legend, and is therefore in itself more a

product of the imagination than of facts. The hero Chen Chuan's 陳全 search for Utopia, touched with a tint of the romantic and the tragic, must have struck a chord in the heart of the poet whose pursuit of light can be traced throughout his career. That Ai Qing should be inspired by a folk legend rather than the heroic navy he was sent to celebrate perhaps sufficiently bears out one's speculation that his poetic temperament is more drawn to creatures of the imaginative world than to real human beings.

I suggest that Ai Qing has borrowed fragments of local folk songs in writing 'Black Eel' because there are two examples in the poem which point at this possibility:

A thousand hardships, a million hardships,
Be it a thousand or a million hardships don't go to
Black Wave Mount.

千難，萬萬難，
千難萬難不上黑浪山。

-- Section IV stanza 10

The first haul is gold -- aiyo hei,
The second haul is silver -- aiyo hei,
The third haul is a treasure pot -- aiyo hei,

一拉金夾 — 愛唷嘿
二拉銀夾 — 愛唷嘿
三拉打個聚寶盆夾 — 愛唷嘿

-- Section VII stanza 16

In an article entitled 'Zhoushan yuge' 舟山漁歌 (Folk songs of fishermen in Zhoushan) 34/, the following lines of local folk songs are recorded:

34. Qun Ming 群明, 'Zhoushan yuge', Miniian wenxue 民間文學 1955.9, pp.18-22.

Ten thousand hardships,
A million hardships,
Be it a million hardships don't go to Lang Gang
Mount.

千萬艱
萬萬難
萬難不上浪圍山

which varies only very slightly from the first cited example
from 'Black Eel', while

The first haul is gold, hai ya,
The second haul is silver, hai ya,
The third net brings a treasure pot, hai hai ya,
hai hai ya,

一拉金束，嗨呀，
二拉銀束，嗨呀，
三網打個聚寶盆，嗨嗨呀，嗨呀！

is almost an exact equivalent of the second example. Based on
such a strong similarity, it is probably safe to conclude
that Ai Qing has borrowed from local folk songs in creating
this poem, and that the four stanzas describing the
characteristics of different fish, with a special chanting
quality, are probably also inspired by existing folk songs of
the area.

Besides borrowing from specific folk songs, Ai Qing
also incorporates traditional folk song techniques into 'Back
Eel'. Some of these techniques are also found in his
previous folk song style poems, but they are never used as
extensively as in this one. Analogy, for example, dominates
section X of the poem, and is often used in association with
other folk song devices:

The wild grass on Black Wave Mount is especially
green

The wild flowers blooming especially beautiful

The blushes on Black Eel especially deep

The hair on her head especially black

Black Eel's eyes are especially bright

....

Black Eel's waist is especially supple

....

黑浪山的野草格外綠
野花開得格外美麗
黑鰻臉上的紅暈格外紅
頭上的頭髮格外黑

黑鰻的眼睛格外亮

黑鰻的腰身格外軟

...

The repetition of 'especially' in the middle of every line serves as a syntactic link, reinforcing the analogy between the beauty of nature and the beauty of the girl. One can easily notice that the analogues are almost exclusively natural phenomena or natural objects such as plants, animals, the sun, moon and stars, and the change of seasons. 35/

Besides serving as analogues, nature and its creatures also play a part in similes, thus strengthening the stylistic consistency. All three major characters are extensively associated with such similes, which partly explains why 'Black Eel' is a much more interesting poem than Ai Qing's previous attempts. Metaphoric language contributes to the atmosphere

35. Zhu Ziqing, in Chinese folk songs, makes a similar observation. He also noted that plants play the biggest role as analogues in folk songs. Since analogues are usually based on what is immediately observable, the choice of natural objects and phenomena is quite obvious.

of the poem, while a straight forward narrative is often dull and dry.

One of the most popular form of 'fixed repetition' is the use of seasons and months. In both northern and southern China, folk songs following the order of the twelve moons abound. Titles such as 'Twelve Moon Flowers' 十二月花 and 'Twelve Moon Sorrow' 十二月苦 are common to many regions and provinces. In Ai Qing's hands this verse form is given a new flexibility. Whereas in folk songs an equal number of lines is devoted to each moon, in 'Black Eel' it ranges from just one line to a whole stanza:

In the third moon is the Qingming festival
In the fourth moon the coming of summer
Flowers bloom in the warm weather
And to the flowers bees come for nectar

In the fifth moon the herrings meet
Not in the daytime but at night
The sand is softer than the bed
And the forest wider than any net

In the sixth moon the yellow croaker laid its roe
In the seventh moon Black Eel's belly bulges
In the eighth moon it reaches the Kingfisher's ears
The old man splinters his teeth in rage

三月是清明
四月是立夏
天暖百花開
花開蜜蜂採

五月時節鱈魚會
日裡不會夜裡會
沙地要比林板軟
樹林要比紗帳寬

六月黃魚下魚子
七月黑鰻鼓起了肚子
八月傳到漁王的耳朵裡
那老頭氣得咬碎了牙齒

While conveying the essence of fixed repetition, Ai Qing has also avoided the possible monotony of recurring to the same syntactic structure in every line. Moreover, a number of other popular folk song devices are also incorporated into these stanzas. The first two lines in the first stanza cited are parallels, while the next two lines employ the technique of 'linkage' 接麻 in which the last two syllables of line three is repeated as the first two syllables of line four. In lines one and two of the second stanza cited, word repetition is used, and the second line is also a 'contrast' in its own right. The fusing of folk song techniques is characteristic of the whole poem and indicates that Ai Qing has successfully mastered this style.

The form of 'Black Eel' also conforms to the folk song style with a new ease. The poem is composed only of four line stanzas, and there are end rhymes in almost every stanza. The length of lines in the same stanza is remarkably regular, the variation usually within one or two syllables. Yet between the stanzas the rhythm can vary markedly to avoid monotony and to create certain desired effects. The musicality of 'Black Eel' is unmistakable, and this, achieved largely through regularity of rhythm and rhyme, is one of the major elements which sets it apart from Ai Qing's previous folk poems.

What makes 'Black Eel' unique in Ai Qing's venture into folk poetry is, however, not only its comparative technical

maturity, but also the way in which he identifies with the hero Chen Chuan. Armed with nothing but a magic flute and a bamboo-leaf sword, he reminds us of Ai Qing's earliest poems and his conception of a hero before the Yanan days:

From your colourful Europe
I brought back a flute
And with it
I travelled along the Atlantic coast
Like travelling at home
....
Here
Even the flute is banned

我從你彩色的歐羅巴
帶回了一枝蘆笛
同著牠
我曾在大西洋邊
像在自己家裡般走着
...
在這裡
蘆笛也是禁物

-- The flute 36/

On Montparnasse I lost my bamboo-leaf sword
And sighs were my song
....
I wish the 'poet' and the 'bandit' are friends
When I have lost my bamboo-leaf sword
I shall use my feather-shedded quill...
To pierce the evil of the old world

在巴黎山我遺失了竹葉刀
拿嘆息當歌唱
...
但願「詩人」和「強盜」是朋友
當我已遺失了竹葉刀的時候
我再用這脫落了毛羽的鴉毛管
刺向舊世界醜惡的一切

-- The bandit & the poet 37/

36. Collected in Dayanhe, Selected poems(C), 100 lyrics.

37. First published in Shi wenxue congkan 詩文學叢刊
(Collections of poetry) vol.1, 1945.2. Collected in
Village, Selected poems(55) and Leaves.

Like a fragrant canoe
Leaving a desert island
A passionate and melancholy youth
Leaves his small village

像一隻飄散着香氣的獨木舟
離開一個小小的荒島
一個熱情而憂鬱的少年
離開了他小小的村莊

-- Departure 38/

Chen Chuan, the hero in 'Black Eel', a wanderer from the start, is endowed with the strength of the bandit and the lyrical power of the poet. Eversince 'The flute', written in memory of Apollinaire, this musical instrument has become representative of the magic of poetry in Ai Qing's vocabulary. The fact that Chen Chuan should possess qualities Ai Qing so closely associates with himself is striking, and one is tempted to ask whether Chen Chuan's experience could be read as an equivalent of the poet's search for ideological Utopia.

This poem was indeed criticized by those who struggled against Ai Qing during the Ding-Chen case, but what they objected to was basically his choice of subject matter. That Ai Qing should write about a folk legend instead of the heroic navy they considered unpardonable, though at the time of its publication no one objected to it. 39/ The choice of subject matter, if we do not judge it according to any

38. First published Ibid. Collected in Village.

39. Ai Qing himself mentioned this choice of subject matter in 'Feiteng de shenghuo he shi' 沸騰的生活和詩 (Seething life and poetry), and suggested that someone from the navy could have corrected him. Wenyi Bao 1956 no.3, p.26.

political criterion, simply reflects the nature of the poet's imagination. But it is only recently that Chinese critics begin to admit this point. 40/

The theme of the poem -- a struggle against tyranny and the final destruction of the tyrant -- should not have roused any objections from even the strictest of critics. But lurking beneath this almost stereotyped story is a sense of uneasiness. One calls to mind C.T. Hsia's comment on the direction that literature should take as advocated by the Communist Party:

The individual wish for change, the individual assertion of freedom, and the individual gesture of defiance and rebellion had to be merged in the collective will and concerted action. 41/

Considered in the light of this, it becomes apparent that Ai Qing's treatment of 'Black Eel' differs conspicuously from other poems on similar subject matters. It is, to say the least, unconventional.

Instead of the 'masses' overthrowing the tyrant, Chen Chuan and Black Eel are rescued twice by sympathetic individuals. When the Kingfisher tries to drown Chen Chuan for playing the flute (again significant if we take the flute as the synonym of poetry), the fishermen come close to taking action; close, but not yet ready, partly because the

40. Xie Mian 謝冕, 'He xinzhongguo yichi gechang' 和新中國一起歌唱
(Singing with the New China) Wenyi pinglun 文藝評論 1979
no.4, p.38

41. T.C. Hsia, introduction to T.A. Hsia's Gate of Darkness
(Yale University Press, 1953) p.xx

Kingfisher is too cunning for them. In any case a number of fishermen have already dispersed out of fear, and Chen Chuan owes his life to Black Eel's pleas. The people who take effective action to rescue the lovers do not do so as a revolt against tyranny as such, but rather because of personal motivations. Lin Ma 林媽, being like a second mother to Black Eel, helps them out of love as well as revenge for her husband. and the cook who, single-handedly, brings about the tyrant's destruction, is motivated by a simple humanistic feeling:

To let the dying go without help is like slaying
them with a sword

見死不救好像拿刀殺人

There is no hint of righteous anger against the Kingfisher or any strong sense of comradeship with the victims. Although he succeeds in outwitting the tyrant, this result seems almost accidental, and certainly not a pre-meditated or well-organized rebellion. Moreover, the Kingfisher's own obsession with punishing the lovers is also instrumental in his peril. The ending of poem certainly diverges from the usual pattern of anti-tyranny poems in which the hero and heroine are invariably happily united after a courageous struggle against the tyrant -- Chen Chuan and Black Eel escape only in spirit, not in life.

Another point of interest in this poem is Ai Qing's portrayal of the fishermen, which is more akin to his pre-Yanan works than his post-Yanan ones:

When the fishermen are ashore
They drown their sorrow with wine
Bowl after bowl are poured down
And if they're drunk they'd roar and cry

等漁夫們都回到了岸上
大家用酒來澆灌愁腸
一碗又一碗往肚子裡倒
要是喝醉了就亂叫亂嚷

-- section VI stanza 14

A sea breeze brings the smell of wine
As though somewhere a barrel is broken
A fisherman comes staggering across
Singing with a drunken belch in his voice.

海風索風來了一陣酒氣
好像那兒打翻了酒缸
一個漁夫踉踉蹌蹌走來
用打嗝的喉嚨在歌唱

-- section VII stanza 17

The idea behind these scenes bears an affinity to that expressed in 'Transparent night'. Instead of portraying the fishermen as wallowing in sorrow or helplessly brooding over their predicament, Ai Qing actually gives a jovial quality to their conversation. Not that they do not suffer under the Kingfisher:

Listening to the flute they think of their misfortune
The men sighed, the women cried

聽着笛音想起自己的身世
男人們嘆息，女人們流淚

-- section VI stanza 5

but more impressive is their ability to rise above their sorrow. The death of a fishing woman illustrates this point:

So the fishermen gather together
Expressing sorrow over the death of their sister
They put their catch into a big pan
And light a fire with the dead woman's clothes

於是漁夫們聚集在一起
對死難的姊妹表示悲哀
把打來的魚裝在大鍋裡
拿死人的衣服點起火來

What Ai Qing reveals here is not only their ability to forget, but also the sheer necessity to forget in order to survive. This portrayal of the oppressed, a clear departure from the stereotyped heroism expected of them in post-liberation literature, duely earned him criticism when he was struggled against. Feng Zhi, in 1958, accused him of presenting production workers in the light of vagabonds, and strongly condemned his interest in the down-and-outs. 42/ Yet it is precisely such descriptions which give the fishermen a touch of realism and provides a lively contrast to the rest of the poem. It is also an example of how Ai Qing has combined the poetic resources he has developed throughout his career.

It is unlikely that we shall know for certain whether 'Black Eel' is intended to be a camouflaged expression of the poet's disillusionment in his search for an ideological and political Utopia. However, the way he set resourceful individual against the inaction of the group is sufficient witness of his non-conformity towards the stereotyped struggle against tyranny recurrent in folk poetry after the success of 'Wang Gui and Li Xiangxiang'.

When Ai Qing was denounced as a rightist in 1957, many of his works published after the 'Hundred flowers movement'

42. Feng Zhi, 'Lun Ai Qing de shi' 論艾青的詩 (On Ai Qing's poetry) Wenxue yanjiu 文學研究 1958 no.1, pp.9-22. It is devoted to castigating capitalist and individualistic tendencies in Ai Qing's works.

were heavily criticized for their antagonism to party doctrines. A number of these poems, however, were actually written two to three years before the launch of the 'Hundred flowers movement', but were kept unpublished until Ai Qing was lured by the breath of fresh air which the said movement seemed to bring. I have suggested that 'Twin peak mountain' was the first major step taken by Ai Qing towards a new direction in which politics should not be the unremittingly harsh master of the Muse. However, in 1953 Ai Qing had already written two short lyrics -- 'West lake' 西湖 43/ and 'Oriole' 黃鳥 44/ -- which point at this new development.

'Oriole' in particular shares the spirit expressed in the four fables Ai Qing wrote in the latter half of 1956, and is, as a result, one of the most heavily criticized poems Ai Qing has ever written. 45/ The ideas which inspired 'Oriole', 'The dream of the gardener' 養花人的夢 46/ and 'The song of the cicada' 蟬的歌 47/ are basically the same -- Ai

43. First published in Wenhui Bao 1956.12.2. Collected in Cliff.

44. Published in Beijing Ribao 1956.8.26.

45. Among those who singled out this poem for criticism are the poets Tian Jian ('Ai Qing, turn back', Shikan 1957.9), Zang Kejia ('What do Ai Qing's recent works reveal?', Wenyi xuexi 1957.10') and Xu Chi ('Can Ai Qing sing for Socialism?', Shikan 1957.9).

46. First published in Wenyi yuebao 1957.2. Collected in Cliffs and Selected poems(79).

47. First published Ibid. Collected in Cliffs.

Qing's dissatisfaction with the literary policies of the Chinese Communist party and with the development of literature under such policies. The oriole, like the myna in 'The song of the cicada', is a renowned songster among birds whose song here is synonymous with good poetry. Its place, however, is usurped by the magpie just as in 'The song of the cicada' the myna is driven away by the monotonous chanting of the cicada. Similarly, in 'The dream of the gardener' the flowers which are banned from the garden complain of their exclusion, and even the favoured Chinese rose find it too solitary to bloom only amongst its kind. What Ai Qing asks for here is a relaxation of the strict control over creative writing imposed by the literary doctrines of the Party, perhaps of a toleration of non-political works. These fables, however, were condemned as expressions of pride and individualism. 48/ One would think that although Ai Qing must have based these works on his personal feelings, they do not just represent his individual wish, but were meant to serve as a comment on the much larger issue of creative freedom in Communist China.

Although Ai Qing had woken up to the need for variety in literary and artistic creation, and had at last summoned up courage to voice this opinion, he was in a minority. This accounts for the feeling of isolation revealed in a number of short lyrics written between 1954 and 1956. In

48. Accusations by Tian Jian, Zang Kejia and Xu Chi, loc.cit.

some of these poems he expresses his feelings towards the task of poetry writing. 'Cowrie' 珠貝 49/ is a sustained metaphor in which the poet's search for beauty and perfection in his works is compared to the formation of pearls in a shellfish, 50/ while the idea in 'Venus' 啟明星 51/ sets forth his willingness to join the rank and file of a brilliant new world which he has heralded. 'The brook' 泉, a poem written in praise of a folk song singer, 52/ can also be seen as a symbol of the poet's hard task -- in order to improve the quality of his songs he has to reach a height which common people would not climb:

Only two kinds of birds	只有兩種鳥
Come here to dwell	到達兒留停
In the daytime the lark	白天的百靈
At night the nightingale	夜晚的夜鶯

In this poem the sense of loneliness underlying his fables discussed above again surfaced, although there is no trace of the frustration and mild satire inherent in the former.

Ai Qing's feeling of solitude is also revealed in many of his poems on nature. 'Reef' 礁石 53/, another poem which was published two years after its composition, emphasises a

49. First published in Guangming Ribao 1956.12.22. Collected in Cliff, Selected poems(79), 100 lyrics.

50. Ai Qing, preface, Selected poems(79).

51. First published in Wenhui Bao 1956.12.19. Collected Ibid.

52. Lo Hanchao, On Ai Qing, p.246.

53. First published in Guangming Ribao 1956.12.22. Collected in Cliffs, Selected poems(79 & F), 100 lyrics.

a firm stand and a spirit of defiance. During the anti-rightist campaign this was seriously denounced as a reactionary work but recently the Chinese critic Lo Hanchao interpreted it a symbol of the unbending spirit of the Chileans in the face of imperialist exploitation. Ai Qing, on the other hand, defends this poem by saying that the reef, by nature's command, is stationary. It is the vessels which should avoid colliding with it. That a short lyric needs to be defended from such a diversity of angles perhaps best illustrates why Ai Qing was so concerned with the issue of creative freedom in China. Although Lo Hanchao's interpretation is a valid one, one should also consider the four lines which were deleted from the first draft of the poem:

He is used to the endless malediction
And the loud clamour
When they are tired
They will just disappear 54/

他已聽慣不停的咒罵
和巨大的喧吵
等他們疲倦了
自己會消隱

This much more explicit stanza seems to indicate that the poem contains personal feelings which Lo's interpretation has excluded. The idea of rising above the clamour around him resembles the sentiments expressed in 'Oriole' and 'The song of the cicada'. It is thus possible to read into this poem a similar allegorical statement.

54. In Xu Chi, loc.cit., it is mentioned that the first draft of 'Reef' which contains this stanza was sent to Shikan's editorial board. It was deleted when the poem was published in Guangming Ribao.

A poem written on the same day as 'Reef' and 'Cowrie' is 'Sea weed' 海帶 55/. It is perhaps the most pessimistic of Ai Qing's lyrics written in this period:

But fate does not make
A better arrangement for it
It goes on daily
Dried, broken
Slowly turn to dust ...

但命運不給它
較好的安排
它就這樣一天天
枯乾、碎斷
慢慢變成塵埃 ...

Of course one cannot insist that Ai Qing meant the sea weed to be a symbol of himself or of his creative power. In fact, in an interview he had strongly refuted such an interpretation. 56/ However, one would suggest that the way a poet presents natural objects and natural phenomena must reflect not only the objects themselves, but also the poet's world view at that particular point of time. Thus, Lo Hanchao's opinion that poems such as 'Sea weed', 'Little blue flower' 小藍花 57/ and 'Plateau' 高原 58/ are just naturalistic descriptions or logical induction 59/ is not entirely convincing.

'Plateau', for instance, is regarded by Lo Hanchao as an unsuccessful poem. The reason for its failure, he says,

55. First published in Guangming ribao 1956.12.22. Collected in Cliff, selected poems, 100 lyrics.

56. Yan Huo, Portraits of contemporary Chinese writers, p. 117

57. First published in Beijing Ribao 1956.12.9. Collected in Cliff, 100 lyrics.

58. First published Ibid. Collected in Cliff, Selected poems (F).

59. Lo Hanchao, loc.cit., p.245.

is Ai Qing's naturalistic attitude towards feelings and impressions, as a result of which the poem lacks perception and poetic sentiments. 60/ One would like to suggest that Lo's interpretation is perhaps too literal, and that it is possible to approach this poem in the light of the lines composed by the famous Sung poet Su Dongpo 蘇東坡 :

But I fear that the heavenly palaces
High above will be too cold for me

又恐瓊樓玉宇
高處不勝寒

-- 'Shuidiao getou' 水調歌頭

Actually, Ai Qing's position at that time was not dissimilar to the Sung poet who was banished from court because of party politics. Many of his post liberation poems had been criticized both before and after the 'Hundred flowers movement' 61/ although he was still recognized as one of the leading poets in China. Just as the plateau experiences extremities of temperature because it is too close to the sun and the moon, so Ai Qing might have felt that his prominent status attracted unfavourable criticism. As I have argued, natural scenes do not really impose any particular interpretation on a poet, it is the poet's subjective reaction which governs the ideas of a poem.

I have suggested that 'Reef' is close in ideas to 'Oriole' and 'The song of the cicada'. 'Little blue flower', on the other hand, is reminiscent of 'The dream of the 60. Ibid.

61. A major occasion in which he was criticized was 'Seething life & poetry' 沸騰的生活和詩, Wenyi Bao 1956 no.3.

gardener'. Unlike the flowers which are banned in the garden, however, the tiny blossom blooming by the roadside does not voice its grievance. It is 'lonely in its deep love' 寂寞又深情 . Even if Ai Qing felt isolated in his search for diversity and creative freedom, in most of his lyrics he has not expressed any strong dissatisfaction with the Party, and his concern was chiefly with the frustrating creative environment.

Up to this point in his career, Ai Qing has never expressed any diverse opinion on the non-literary policies of the Chinese Communist Party, but in two of his fables written in 1956, Ai Qing went beyond the immediate boundaries of literature to voice his opinion on what can be considered political and social problems. Possibly Ai Qing had been forced to the realization that in Communist China literature and politics are intertwined, and that his objections to the literary doctrines were equally applicable to the political scene.

'The idol's words', 62/ in particular, was a daring attempt to argue against idol worship, perhaps in literature as well as in politics. Ai Qing's action was as good as his words. As I have shown in the above discussion, in revising his poems for the collection Spring Ai Qing replaced the frequent evocations of Stalin and Mao with general references to the people of the two countries. This is perhaps the best 62. Collected in Cliff.

evidence of how far Ai Qing travelled in his reappraisal of his own works in the post liberation era.

The post-liberation period for Ai Qing was both a time for consolidation and reform. He began by following the rules laid down by the Communist party and fulfilling his duties as one of the leading literary figures; he ended up denounced as a rightist and deprived of the right to publish. If one looks back at what Ai Qing had said in the article 'Understand writers, respect writers' written in 1942, one would perhaps realize that it is almost unavoidable that he should finally rebel against the shackles of politics after having submitted to them for almost ten years:

He (a writer) only knows that his world view should be the criterion through which he perceive things, describe things and criticize things. When he writes, his loyalty is towards his feelings, because otherwise his works will be false, lifeless.

Even the most enthusiastic of writers would find it difficult to shout at the top of his voice all the time. For ten years Ai Qing had tried to fulfill what he saw as his duty. He had always maintained that poetry should reflect the times, and had contributed a large number of poems which were inspired or demanded by the political situation. But when peace finally came and China was united, Ai Qing was not the only one to feel the need for more diverse modes of expression. 63/ A poet's creative instinct does not allow for prolonged

63. Like Ai Qing, He Qifang 何其芳 also wrote a number of non-political works in 1954 which were heavily criticized after they were published, as a result he stopped writing for at least a year.

stagnation, and in view of the one track development of literature under the Communist government, Ai Qing strove to break new ground with his own works.

The lyrics written between 1953 and 1956 are not only significant because they reveal Ai Qing's feelings towards the literary scene, but also confirm the stylistic developments of his poetry. Most of the short lyrics consists of one to four stanzas, of which the four-line stanza is most frequently used, though occasionally he still returned to free verse, as in the case of 'Sea weed'. In these short lyrics, end rhymes become an established element. Of the short lyrics, 'The brook', with its five-syllable lines and four-line stanzas, best illustrates the new-found uniformity in Ai Qing's poems. But the most impressive exercise in regularity of form is still 'Black Eel'.

One may recollect that during the late thirties Ai Qing had also written a large number of short lyrics. The works of the fifties, however, differ from their predecessors in their refined simplicity of vocabulary and especially of syntax. Each line in a poem consists of a self-contained grammatical unit; run on lines are seldom used. Moreover, each foot is usually made up of two to three syllables, and not a trace is left of the torrents of adjectival and adverbial phrases found in his early works. This strengthens the impression of neatness in the lyrics. The development towards regularity of form undoubtedly reflects the influence

of folk songs which he had studied under the direction of Party literary doctrines. On the vocabulary level, however, although Ai Qing had incorporated colloquial speech into a number of his poems written in the early post-liberation period, in the later lyrics the choice of words is simple but refined, often conveying a sense of authority.

Although Ai Qing had spoken against the restrictions the Party's literary doctrines, he had not rebelled against all that these doctrines stood for. What he asked for was perhaps best described as a freedom of choice, even a limited choice. One may also say that in returning to lyrical composition Ai Qing was in fact resuming his path before the Sino-Japanese war brought the demand for more blatantly patriotic and political works, and which finally took him to Yanan. However, one cannot deny that working under the Communist regime had helped Ai Qing to forge his new poetic style. When he resumed writing in 1978, his style was very much a continuation of the period under discussion.

CONCLUSION

If I grow deep in the mountains
Who will discover me
Quietly growing and blooming
Leading a life of peace

Peace is not blissful
Loneliness means pain
I'd rather grow by the roadside
And willingly be crushed

-- 'The little flower replies' 1/

Students of modern Chinese literature must admit that it is quite impossible to separate their subject of study from the socio-political problems of twentieth century China. The Literary Movement of 1919 was not only a landmark in Chinese literature, but also a watershed in the awakening of social awareness. Efforts of writers such as Xu Zhimo and Lin Yutang 林語堂 (1895-1976), who opposed the idea of subjugating literature to non-literary considerations, only bore witness to the dominance of the socio-political stance. For a large number of Chinese writers, the Japanese invasion of China put an end to any purely literary considerations. Circumstances and their own sense of patriotism compelled them to join the ranks of writers dedicated to a literature of national defence and national survival. Of the writers who changed their literary style and direction, He Qifang, who went to Yanan in 1938, is a typical example. Although Ai Qing had never

1. Written in 1980. Collected in 100 lyrics.

been as delicate a poet as He, it is quite obvious that the tumultuous times he lived in also played a decisive part in shaping his career.

The forces which change a person's life may take many forms. In the case of Ai Qing these forces were often dramatic. His poetic career began almost purely as a result of circumstances. While prison life gave him a chance to develop his talent in versification, it also throttled his budding hopes as an artist. Actually in early poems such as 'Little black hand' ^{2/} one may even say that Ai Qing is exercising his frustrated artistic imagination through the only medium then available to him -- words. The contrast of the primary colours red and yellow with a similarly strong colour black is revealing of his artistic training, equally so is the play on geometric forms -- the round persimmons, the curved tubular bananas, and the distinctive outline of a child's hand.

As his poetic talent and skill grew with constant exercise, his artistic sensitivity became an integral part of his poetry. Throughout Ai Qing's career, colour plays a major role in his poetic imagination. It gives extraordinary vividness to his images, and his palette often controls the atmosphere of a poem. Although Ai Qing's choice of diction and poetic form has seen a number of changes during his long career, the unique pictorial quality

2. Quoted in Chapter 2, p.77

of his poems and his keen eye for colour remain intact. One has only to recall the brilliant red and gold associated with 'The sun', the details of peasant life in 'Wu Manyou', the cheerfulness of red, white and green in the series 'Red star of gems', and the loneliness of pale blue and purple in 'Little blue' flower', to realize that this involvement with colour is not governed by subject matter or poetic form. It is an integral part of Ai Qing's perception; a unique artistic sensitivity which characterizes his works.

In many of Ai Qing's early works written in prison, there are symbolist traces, especially in his choice of imagery. Moreover, a number of these early works, such as 'Dawn & five other poems' 3/, deal with very personal feelings and experiences. If one but recalls Ai Qing's personal and poetic experience and the circumstances under which he was writing, this would seem only natural. After all, French symbolist poetry was among the first foreign poetic works with which Ai Qing came into contact. But Ai Qing is, from the start, different from the so-called Chinese Symbolist poets of the period such as Li Jinfa and Dai Wangshu. Though personal, the ideas in his early poems are lucid, and do not suffer from the deliberate obscurity of which Li is often accused. Nor could he boast of the aural delicacy generally associated with Dai Wangshu. What he had in common with these poets was an admiration for

3. Chapter 2, pp.104-106.

4. Chapter 2, p. 102.

French Symbolist poetry. But his venture into symbolism did not really go far beyond the use of 'exotic' images (as in 'Ill in prison' 4/) and a sense of melancholy. Few, if any, of his poems can be accused of being vague and obscure. The foreign flavour and despondency found in many of his early works were not simply adopted because of his love for the Symbolist school, but more probably a natural result of an imagination forced to look inwards and backwards, to nourish itself on experiences and knowledge acquired before his imprisonment. It is thus not surprising that more than half of the poems written during this period, including the famous pieces 'Marsailles' and 'Paris', dealt with foreign subject matters or contain a distinctly foreign flavour.

Yet Ai Qing was ultimately too optimistic and direct in his natural approach, and too concerned about the future of China and its people to remain in this melancholic vein. Even in prison his poetic style began to move steadily towards a wider and more robust outlook, as testified by a number of poems written towards the end of his imprisonment. 'Dayanhe', for example, has transcended the prison walls and western subject matter. If it is still an expression of personal feelings, it nevertheless also reflects on the sufferings of millions of his countrymen. Moreover, 'The flute' and 'The death of a Nazarene' 5/ , while drawing from his own experience, also reveal an optimistic and rebellious spirit. The introspective mood in

his short lyrics such as 'Dawn & five other pieces' gave way to a more heroic and prophetic frame of mind.

His release from prison strengthened this sense of optimism. It also broadened his vision and the scope of his poetic imagination. Instead of concentrating on personal sentiments his poetry takes on a prophetic outlook, as witnessed in 'The sun' and 'Conversation with coal' 6/. There came a sense of urgency and of explosive power in his works of this period, which includes 'The nine hundred' 7/, a long poem which is no less than an incitation to revolt.

Yet this feeling of exuberance did not last long. It was a feeling nurtured by hopes of a better future, perhaps most importantly of a future free from foreign aggression. But Ai Qing's vision of a righteous and glorious war was quickly overshadowed by the sufferings of those he saw daily around him. Before he left Shanghai he could only write about past experiences, personal sorrow, and visions of a glorious future, but during his enforced journey as a refugee he came face to face with the daily grind and prostration of a long oppressed people. Though his optimistic belief in a better future was not dimmed, his poetic energy was all channelled to the immediate present. It is perhaps significant that in a large number of the

- 6. Chapter 2, p.115
- 7. Chapter 2, p.120

poems written in this period, Ai Qing assigned himself the role of an observer. Compared with the poems written in prison, references to himself are often conspicuously absent. This of course does not mean that Ai Qing deliberately obliterated his own feelings, but he no longer concentrated on his private experiences as a major source of inspiration. The sense of melancholy often associated with his early poems turned into empathy for his fellow countrymen. Most of the poems of this period, especially the short lyrics, are still tinged with sadness. This is, however, firmly based on his observations of a war-tormented, poverty-stricken people. As he says in On Poetry,

Asking an honest spirit not to be melancholy in this age is like asking a peasant not to be melancholy in his fitful, mud coloured dreams. Both are extravagant hopes born of naiveté. 8/

Poetry was Ai Qing's means of pouring out his love for his country; a channel through which he identified with its suffering masses. Sorrow and misery were for him also a kind of strength. 9/ He achieved artistic greatness during the war years, not simply because of technical maturity or stylistic innovations, though these are important factors one would consider in assessing a poet's achievements, but primarily because of his ability to speak not only for a handful, but for millions. During the war Ai Qing was probably the most popular and most influential of poets, not just because his poems appealed to a large number of people, but because in his empathy and compassion, he

8. 'Service' 服務 No.29, On poetry.

9. No.30 Ibid.

became one of them.

It is said that early in his poetic career, Ai Qing had been told that he had the ability to write for the sake of art and also for the sake of the people. 10/ This is of course a somewhat forced dichotomy, but it exerted a certain degree of influence on many modern Chinese writers, especially during the Anti-Japanese war. Ai Qing, among others, had expressed his belief that a writer, faced with the choice, should 'fail in his art rather than in his thoughts':

Rather be a slave to a good concept appropriate to this age than compromise for the sake of art. 11/

Actually one wonders whether a poet ever really makes a deliberate choice as suggested. Given his compassionate nature, the sufferings he witnessed daily around him, and his belief in a poet's Promethean mission, Ai Qing could not have chosen otherwise. His strong sense of duty persuaded him that he should contribute more actively towards arousing the nation by directly commenting on war-time issues. Poems such as 'Anti-facism' 12/ bear witness to such efforts.

However, Ai Qing is still one of the modern Chinese poets with a more 'universal' outlook. The war in Europe was as much on his mind as Japanese aggression, and the poems he wrote on the atrocity committed by Hitler are

10. Eugene Ouyang, Introduction to Selected poems (F), p.iii

11. 'Thoughts' 思想, No. 10, On poetry.

12. First published in Kangzhen wenyi 抗战文艺 1938.5.28.

Collected in Anti-facism.

evidence of this concern. But this new step towards a more utilitarian approach to literature also gives one an important clue to the particular qualities of Ai Qing's poetic imagination. While he earnestly believed in putting poetry to a more popular use, many of his poems written in this period still exhibit strong traces of his earlier artistic and literary inclinations. Two outstanding examples are 'Hitler' and 'Lamentation for Paris' discussed in some detail in Chapter 4. As I have said earlier, one doubts how many of his readers would have grasped the meaning of the images used or fully shared his strong feelings for the artistic heritage of France. In so saying I am not trying to discredit Ai Qing's efforts in the field of 'political poems', but simply pointing out the difficulty he, and many others like him, faced during this period of transition. If one agrees with C.M. Bowra's definition:

The essence of political poetry deals with events concerning a large number of people, grasped as matters known largely from hearsay interpreted in simplified and often abstract forms 13/

one would perhaps understand why many of Ai Qing's political works seem to fall short of the standard he established with his earlier poems. Ai Qing is not a poet who revels in abstract ideas or the description of distant events. Up to this point most of his best poems deal with ordinary, humble folks and their daily chores. Even 'The torch' 14/, his most dramatic narrative poem, relies heavily on the

13. C.M. Bowra, Poetry & Politics 1900-1960, (Cambridge U Press 1966) p.4

14. Chapter 4, p.172

emotional drama of the characters. Ai Qing is ultimately a romantic. Exercising his skills in the new terrain of political works he reveals one of his limitations -- his is not a poetic nature which can easily come to terms with larger-than-life characters and issues. Hence his conception of Hitler lacks consistency. Hitler is in turn a blood-thirsty beast ('Europe'), a puppet of the bourgeoisie ('Hitler'), an idiot ('Hitler ii'), and a propagator of horrific atrocities including the tearing down of famous art works ('Lamentation for Paris') 15/.

Moreover, Ai Qing's techniques in characterization is often behaviouristic. An outstanding example is 'The beggars' 16/. This technique requires familiarity with the subject, and, imaginatively at least, detailed observations of the characters described. This is perhaps why his poems on political leaders such as Hitler and Stalin 17/ do not really strike one as convincing portraits. Ai Qing still tries to give concrete details as a basis of characterization, but they fail to convey the essence of these personalities and, at worst, seem superfluous. 18/

While it was out of patriotism that Ai Qing started to fulfill what he considered to be a poet's mission in times of war to write overtly political works and patriotic poems

15. Chapter 4, pp.192 - 199

16. Chapter 3, p.132

17. Chapter 5, p.254

18. I think Ai Qing also realized this problem. He truncated a large section on Stalin from 'Kremlin'. Chapter 5, p.255

for recitation, this became more of a duty after he went to Yanan. Although during the war years Yanan enjoyed the status of a kind of Mecca in the hearts of many leftist writers, and many of them, Ai Qing included, made hazardous journeys to this land of hope, not all who arrived there found existing conditions satisfactory. This was evidenced by the articles drawing attention to unfavourable conditions in the liberated areas published in the literary section of the Liberation Daily under the editorship of Ding Ling. 19/ Although Ai Qing's contribution 'Understand writers, respect writers' is far from being strongly worded, it does show that, at that time at least, he was not completely satisfied with Yanan's attitude towards writers.

This outburst of diverse opinion in 1942 is highly significant in the development of contemporary Chinese literature. It led directly to Mao Zedong's talks at the Yanan Forum on Art & Literature, which set down the guidelines for Chinese artists and writers in the decades to come. This was also the first occasion in which Ai Qing was drawn into a theoretical debate on the responsibilities of writers and artists. Under the direction of Mao he prepared an essay entitled 'My opinion on some current problems in art and literature', which was published during the Yanan Forum 20/. As I have suggested in Chapter 4, this essay, which has not attracted much critical attention,

19. Chapter 1, pp 31-32.

20. Collected in On the literature of a new democracy.

is in fact a vivid illustration of a writer's dilemma at the period of the Yanan Forum. Although Ai Qing echoed Mao's idea that literature should serve the purpose of revolution, and that workers, peasants and soldiers should be a writer's target readership, he also pleaded that administrative cadres should be more understanding of the nature of creative writing. 21/ This latter point was in fact the gist of the article 'Understand writers, respect writers'. It shows that while Ai Qing submitted himself to Mao's literary doctrine and personal supervision, his concern for the writer's individual problems and the very personal nature of the creative process had not really subsided.

However, the Yanan Forum did have a strong and direct influence on Ai Qing's poetic career. In the same way as he started to write 'street poems' and 'political works' during his peregrination out of the belief that it was the poet's duty to serve his war tormented country, he now felt that he had a duty to follow the drum beats of a revolutionary doctrine. Thus, one could say that Ai Qing started to study folk song styles not because he had a personal interest in the matter, but because he followed the dictates of objective circumstances and his own sense of a poet's mission.

If one places the long poem 'Wu Manyou' in such a context, one would realize why it is often considered a

21. Ibid.

failure whether when measured against Ai Qing's poetic achievement or against the folk song style in general. 22/ In trying to write in a 'popular' style, Ai Qing gave up his poetic forte -- the use of suggestive images -- and resorted to a straight forward narrative. Yet in spite of this effort his established artistic characteristics still occasionally slipped through, as witnessed in the colourful description of the farm animals. Lo Hanchao attributes the failure of 'Wu Manyou' to the fact that Ai Qing had given up his own style too soon 22/, thus suggesting that the poem could have been bettered had it been written after Ai Qing mastered the different folk song techniques. However, I wonder whether that would have been case. I'd like to suggest that 'Wu Manyou' failed not only because Ai Qing was treading on unfamiliar terrain, but because the subject matter is not one which appealed to his poetic imagination. Ai Qing probably felt that it was his duty to praise a model peasant, but his imagination was not inspired by his hero. Moreover, Ai Qing also admitted that he is at his best writing things imagined, not witnessed 24/.

If one wishes to come to an understanding of Ai Qing's poetic nature, it is perhaps to poems such as 'Suoya' and 'Snow breaker' 25/ that one should turn. These long poems

22. Lo Hanchao, On Ai Qing, p.309.

23. Ibid.

24. Ai Qing, 'Yu qingnian shiren tan shi' 與青年詩人談詩
(A talk to young poets on poetry) Shikan 1980.10

25. Chapter 4, pp.218 - 222

suggest that what attracts Ai Qing is not just patriotism, but a sense of the romantic. (This is again the case with 'Heiman', written in 1954). In Ai Qing's works of the Yanan years, if we want to look for unforgettable, poignant images and mastery of atmosphere, qualities which mark the best of his works, it is to these poems that we should turn.

The conflict between Ai Qing's poetic nature and the dictates of political doctrines did not end with the Communist victory of 1949. If anything, being officially recognized as one of the country's foremost writers meant that he was expected to lead others in following the official guideline. It is perhaps not too far fetched to compare his position with that of a court poet in old China. Both were expected to sing the praises of the ruling regime, and to celebrate festive or special occasions with their verses. Among others, 'Red star of gems' 26/ is a collection of such works.

But Ai Qing has too strong an individualistic creative instinct and dedication towards poetry to remain long subservient to the dictates of politics. Most probably he also felt that since the country was unified and the revolution successful, writers should be given more creative freedom. This does not mean that he no longer gave any thought to politically related subjects -- 'The hidden gun' was written in 1953 -- but he also wrote a large number of

26. Chapter 5, p.252

short lyrics which are decidedly un-political. 'Twin peak mountain', a long lyrical poem written in the spring of 1954, marked the beginning of this new development. 27/ Once Ai Qing's lyrical spirit asserted itself, it was difficult to curb. He channelled his poetic energy to the refinement of language and imagery, as witnessed in the lyrics collected in On the cliff and Spring 28/. These poems, moreover, often reveal a pensive mood. Both Lo Hanchao and Ai Qing himself have attributed his melancholy to his marital problems. 29/ However, bearing in mind poems such as 'Oriole', 'The brook', and the four fables which were severely attacked in the Anti-rightist campaign, one would like to suggest that what troubled Ai Qing was not merely emotional problems, but also the uni-directional approach of modern Chinese literature.

This concern for the future development of literature cost him dearly. Shortly after the Hundred Flowers Movement, during which the four fables were published, Ai Qing was branded a rightist, stripped of all public offices he held, and deprived of the right to publish. Yet one feels that perhaps it is more appropriate to say that Ai Qing was punished for being an individualist; a poet with too strong a sense of mission which would not be suppressed, and which did not allow him to conform to mere political demands. By

27. Chapter 5, p.266

28. Chapter 5, p.287

29. Lo Hanchao, loc.cit., p.225

'Ai Qing on Poetry', Xin wan bao 1981.1.6

the mid 50's he had successfully blended his early poetic style with what he learned from the study of folk songs. A new style had emerged, more regulated and refined than that of his previous works, but retaining Ai Qing's striking ability in creating evocative images. That Ai Qing believed this was the right path for him is substantiated by the fact that when he was rehabilitated in the late 70's, he resumed writing in this style. The only difference is that the pensiveness of the 50's is replaced now by a philosophic vein, so that sometimes lines of recent poems read almost like adages.

For a poet who has been described as unabashedly romantic Ai Qing's silence in the area of romantic love is somewhat surprising. 31/ From its earliest written record in the Shijing Chinese poetry has not shied away from expressions of individual love. Actually, the celebration of love and the romantic longing for loved ones form the bulk of the Ci poetry of the Sung Dynasty. Neither is romantic love a stranger to European poetry. Vahaeren, the Flemish poet Ai Qing much admired, also wrote a volume of poems dedicated to his wife. Thus, neither Chinese tradition nor western influence can explain this apparent neglect in Ai Qing's

30. Eugene Ouyang, loc.cit. p.v

31. Recently published poetry collections such as Zhongguo xiandai qingshi xuan 中國現代情詩選 (Contemporary Chinese love poems) (Changjiang wenyi 長江文藝, 1980) and Xiandai qingshi xuan 現代情詩選 (Contemporary love poems) (Guangxi: Renmin, 1981) include 'The torch', 'Mysterious fruit' 神祕果 and 'On love' 關於愛情, none of which are personal expressions of romantic love.

creativity, and one must look to Ai Qing himself for an answer.

In Ai Qing's opinion, the poet's first duty is to reflect the times in which he lives and to voice the feelings of common people. It is true that Ai Qing lives in a tumultuous age in which large issues of national survival and revolution often overwhelmed individual wishes, and that his contemporaries such as Zang Kejia and Tian Jian have also produced little in the field of romantic lyrics. But common people have romantic feelings too. It is still surprising that throughout the fifty years of his career he has only published one 'love poem' 32/, and that only recently. One can only conclude that although Ai Qing enthusiastically celebrates the life-giving force of light, for reasons unique to his time and his temperament he is reluctant to dwell on another perhaps equally strong life-giving force -- that of romantic love.

If literary greatness is judged by a writer's ability to stand the test of time, Ai Qing is vouchsafed a place of honour in the Halls of Fame. A poet who can still command a large audience after twenty years' enforced silence is no ordinary versifier. However, Ai Qing's poetic career spans over half a century, and a question remains to be asked: Which is the most glorious period in his creative career? In other words, which of his works can be said to represent the

32. 'On eyes'. Chapter 1, p.25

best of Ai Qing?

Regarding a poet who is still creating daily this is a difficult question to answer. I am tempted to suggest that Ai Qing will be best remembered for his war-time poems, for several reasons. It was during the war years that his individual poetic style grew into maturity. This was coupled with a sudden exposure to a vast expanse of Chinese territory hitherto unknown to Ai Qing. It opened up before him endless poetic possibilities. While he toned down the occasional clumsiness of repetitive syntax as witnessed in 'Dayanhe', the language of his poetry retained its highly individual flavour. What first comes to mind when one thinks of poems in The north or of the long poems written during the war is invariably their vivid pictorial quality and the directness of communication. They depict an individual's experience which was also shared by a large number of people. Because Ai Qing did not make any strenuous effort to involve his readers, the poems communicate with spontaneity and a divine simplicity. He was also free to explore new poetic forms and new techniques, with the result that this period produced poems as varied in style and content as 'The torch' with its dramatic intensity and 'The sorghum' with its quiet pastoral charm. As a lyrical poet Ai Qing's strength is his powerful mastery of atmosphere and sustained images, and the freshness of his vision. In contemporary Chinese poetry Ai Qing's works are perhaps among the most 'unmusical'. He depended entirely on the

natural cadence of the language and did not believe in conforming to any preconceived pattern.

This highly individualistic approach to versification was challenged by the requirements of 'political poems' and 'poems for recitation'. Ai Qing saw it as the poet's mission to fulfill the need of his times, and thus dutifully submitted himself to the comparative uniformity of 'political poems'. This resulted in an effort towards regularizing stanza and line lengths. After the Yanan Forum, Ai Qing's sense of duty was supported by more concrete commands, commands which led to his studying folk song techniques and the composition of 'Wu Manyou' and other poems in a folk song style. But one must realize that an intellectual response to a mass movement is not always paralleled by an emotional response to the Muse, and Ai Qing himself admits that one cannot write without inspiration.

33/ One would like to suggest that many of Ai Qing's 'political' works fail to kindle the lasting response evoked by his earlier poems because he was exercising his poetic imagination on a different, and an unfamiliar, plane. Ai Qing, endowed with a romantic spirit and a lyrical voice, is not really at home with abstract ideas and larger-than-life personalities. Thus, his portrayal of Hitler, Stalin and Mao Zedong comes far behind that of Dayanhe, the beggars and the soldiers. His lack of ease with the chosen subject

33. Quoted in K.C. Low ^{奇復}, On Poet Ai Qing, Singapore: XiLeng Art Gallery, 1984. p.48.

matter is further magnified by a change in poetic form. In trying to adopt a more regularized poetic style Ai Qing sacrificed much of his most outstanding and individual techniques -- the compilation of details, the use of syntactic repetition, and a preference for free verse. Most importantly, Ai Qing's reliance on the natural cadence of vernacular Chinese was the basis on which he built his own recognizable poetic voice. Now, because of the need to regularize his poems in the tradition of folk song styles, he had to sacrifice his own tone of voice. As a result, his poetry lost much of its individuality. To account for this change and to understand its result, one should perhaps take note of what C.M. Bowra says on the writing of political poems:

A poet may wish to sink his personality in that of others, whose sufferings he shares or would like to share ... His change of mood calls for a change of style ... But such an adjustment is never easy, and at times it may cost more than it is worth. 34

In the case of Ai Qing and many other Chinese writers, the change of style was not even purely self-motivated, but to a large extent forced on him by objective circumstances. This, no doubt, must have made the adjustment even more difficult. I think this is why, although Ai Qing's poetic output did not significantly decline after he went to Yanan, many of his works written during this period lost the unique freshness of vision and individual appeal of his itinerant years.

34. Bowra, op.cit. p.173

In the few years before the Anti-rightist campaign, Ai Qing's creative instinct must have urged him to search for new poetic horizons, to strive for something more than the fulfilment of political demands. The fact that his romantic inclination finally asserted itself is witnessed by his choice of a folk legend as the basis of a long narrative poem while he was supposed to write of life in the navy. 'Black Eel' 35/ is not only a love story. It is also a tale of the search for Utopia which was doomed to fail. As I have said in Chapter 5, one will never know for sure whether Ai Qing saw a parallel between the hero's experience and his own search for ideological Utopia, but it is significant that at the end of the poem, the music of the flute, so closely related with Ai Qing, triumphed over all evil to remind posterity of the lovers' heroic efforts.

The short lyrics written by Ai Qing in this period also reveal a new refinement of craftsmanship and often a turn towards a philosophical mood. They are also much more regularized in poetic form. All these qualities are further developed in the recent poems he has written after his rehabilitation. They add a quiet, mellow glow and a meditated wisdom to Ai Qing's poetry. This development also shows that Ai Qing had successfully blended the knowledge and techniques he acquired from the study of folk songs with

35. Chapter 5, pp.275. In K.C.Low, On Poet Ai Qing, Ai Qing said that acquiring poetic material such as 'Black Eel' was one of the rare and fortunate occurrences in a poet's career. (loc.cit. p.48)

his own poetic style. However, one is still haunted by the sharply focused images, the impassioned cries of youthful ardour, and the faith in the ultimate triumph of goodness -- qualities which stand out in the war time poems of Ai Qing.

TEXTS

POETRY COLLECTIONS

Da yan he

Shanghai: Qunzhong Zazhi she 群眾雜誌社, 1936
Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo pub.co. 文化生活出版社, 1939
Guilin: Wenhua shenghuo, 1942
Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo, 1950

Beifang 北方 (The North)

(ed. Hu Feng 胡風) Chongqing: Nantian pub.co. 南天出版社
1943, 1945 (3rd ed.) (8 poems)
(ed. Ba Jin 巴金) Wenhua Shenghuo, 1942, 1946, 1949
(16 poems).

Ta si zai dierci 他死在第二次 (He died the second time)

Shanghai: Shanghai zazhi co., 1939, 1941, 1944, 1946, 1948

Xiang taiyang 向太陽 (To the sun)

(ed. Hu Feng) n.p. Haiyan shudian 海燕書店, 1940
Shanghai: xiwang she 希望社, 1947, 1949,
1955

Huoba 火把 (Torches)

(ed. Wenji she 文季社) n.p. Fenghuo she 烽火社, 1941
Chongqing: Wenhua shenghuo, 1941
Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo, 1946, 1949, 1951

Kuangye 曠野 (The wilderness)

Chongqing: Shenghuo shudian 生活書店, 1940, 1942, 1947

Xue li zuan

Chongqing: Xinqun pub.co. 新群出版社, 1944
Shanghai: Xinqun, 1945, 1949.9, 1949.12
Shanghai: Xin wenyi pub.co. 新文藝出版社, 1955

Xian gei xiangcun de shi 獻給鄉村的詩 (Poems dedicated to the village)

Chongqing: Beimen pub.co. 北門出版社, 1945, 1946, 1947
Shanghai: Qunzhong shudian, 1947

Fan Faxisi 反法西斯 (Anti-Fascism)

Shanghai: Dushu pub.co. 讀書出版社, 1946, 1947

Liming de tongzhi 黎明的通知 (Dawn heralds its arrival)

Guilin: Wenhua gongying she 文化供應社, 1943
Shanghai: Wenhua gongying, 1948, 1949

Yuan chuntian zaodian lai 願春天早點來 (I wish spring will come soon)

Guilin: Shiyi pub.co. 詩藝出版社, 1944

- Wu Manyou 吳滿有
Yenan(?) Fu lan yi yinshu ju, 1944
Shanghai: Zuojia shudian 作家書店, 1946
- Renmin de ge 人民的歌 (Songs of the people)
Chongqing: Beimen pub.co., 1945
- Dazhong de shige 大眾的歌 (Songs of the people)
n.p. Dazhong shudian 大眾書店, n.d.
- Huanhu ji 歡呼集 (Jubilation)
Beijing: Xinhua shudian 新華書店, 1950
Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1950, 1953
- Ai Qing Xuanii 艾青選集 (Selected works of Ai Qing)
Beijing: Kaiming shudian 開明書店, 1951.7, 1951.12,
1952
Hong Kong: Dawen she 達文社, 1978 (2nd ed.)
Hong Kong: Wenyi yanjiu she 文藝研究社, 1980
- Baoshi de hongxing 寶石的紅星 (Red star of gems)
Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1953, 1956
- Ai Qing shixuan 艾青詩選 (Selected poems of Ai Qing)
Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1955, 1956, 1957 (72 poems)
Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1979, 1981 (90 poems)
Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1982
(ed. Eugene Chen Ouyang; English/Chinese
edition, 60 poems)
- Heiman 黑鱈 (Black Eel)
Beijing: Zuojia pub.co., 1955, 1957
- Haixia shang 海峽上 (On the cliff)
Beijing: Zuojia, 1957
- Chuntian 春天 (Spring)
Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1956, 1957
- Gueilai de ge 歸來的歌 (Homecoming songs)
Sicun: Renmin pub.co., 1980
- Ai Qing xushishi xuan 艾青敘事詩選 (Selected narrative poems
of Ai Qing)
Guangdong: Renmin, 1980, 1982
- Caise de shi 彩色的詩 (Colourful poems)
Jiangsu: Renmin, 1980
- Ai Qing shuqingshi yibai shou 艾青抒情詩一百首 (One
Hundred lyrics of Ai Qing)
(ed. Gao Ying) Hong Kong: Shidai tushu co. ltd.
, 1980

Leye ji 落葉集 (Fallen leaves)
Zhejiang: Renmin, 1982

Ai Qing (Zhongguo xiandai zuojia xuanji 中國現代作家選集)
(ed. Gao ying) Beijing: Renmin wenxue; Hong Kong:
Joint Pub. Co., 1982

TRANSLATIONS

Emile Vehaeren, Yuanye yu chengshi 原野與城市 (The plain
and the city)
Shanghai: Xinqun pub.co., 1948

LITERARY THEORY AND CRITICISM

Shilun 詩論 (On poetry)
Guilin: Sanhu tushu she 三國書社, 1941, 1942
Shanghai: Xin xin pub.co. 新新出版社, 1946, 1947
Shanghai: Shanghai zazhi she 上海雜誌社, 1947
Shanghai: Shubao lianhe fahangsu 書報聯合發行所
1949
Shanghai: Xin wenyi pub.co., 1953, 1954
Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1956, 1957, 1980

Shi xinwenzhu zhuyi wenxue 釋新民主主義的文學 (On literature
of the new democracy)
Hong Kong: Haiyang shuju 海燕書局, 1949

Xin wenyi lun ji 新文藝論集 (Essays on contemporary
literature)
Shanghai: Qunyi pub.co. 群益出版社, 1950, 1951
Shanghai: Xin wenyi pub.co., 1950, 1952, 1953

Xin shi lun 新詩論 (On contemporary poetry)
Beijing: Tianxia pub.co. 天下出版社, 1952
Shanghai: Xin wenyi pub.co., 1953

OTHERS

Tudi ji 土地集 (The earth)
Guilin: Weiguang pub.co. 微光出版社, 1940

Zou xiang shengli 走向勝利 (March to victory)

Shanghai: Wenhua gongzuo she 文化工作社 , 1950

Su Xiangfu de gushi 蘇長福的故事 (The story of SM Xiangfu)
(Pseudonym: Nayong 納雍)
Xinjiang: Renmin pub.co., 1961

Xibei zhanzhi ji 西北剪紙集 (Paper cuttings of NW China)
(ed. Ai Qing) Yanan.

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(Answering a visitor's questions after returning from
U.S.A.) Daidi 1981.3
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(Modern poetry should be examined) Wenxue yanjiu 1979 No.5
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tese' 論艾青近作的思想藝術特色 (On the artistic
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(Meeting Ai Qing in Beijing) Zhengming 爭鳴 1978.9
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APPENDIX
(CT1 & CT2)

艾 青 年 谱

艾青，一九一〇年三月二十七日生于浙江省金华县畛田蒋村一个地主家庭。取名蒋正涵，字养源，号海澄。一九三二年以前，一直以号为名。另有笔名莪伽、克阿、纳雍、林壁。

艾青的父亲蒋忠禔(1889—1940)，一生喜爱读书看报，订有《东方杂志》、《申报》，经常翻阅世界地图，读气象学，是“万国储蓄会”的会员。支持女人放足，不顾宗族封建势力的阻挠，把女儿送到教会学校。然而，却又中庸、保守、吝啬和自满。结交的朋友是退伍的陆军少将，省会中学的国文教员，大学法律系和经济系的学生，镇上的警佐，县里的县长。付村和孝顺镇上有他和别人合股经营的“永福祥”酱酒坊和“蒋贤兴”南货店。艾青的母亲楼仙筹(1890—1941)，义乌县五环村人，不识字，由于受丈夫的影响，能背一些唐诗。

艾青是难产的，算命先生说他要“剋父母”，从小就不喜欢他，放在同村一个叫“大叶荷”的穷苦妇女家里哺养。“大叶荷”原是一个村名，距畛田蒋村约五华里。这位穷苦妇女幼小时从大叶荷村卖到畛田蒋村当童养媳，人们就用村名唤她。

五岁时，艾青离开“大堰河”回到自己家中。

一九一五年，艾青在村蒙馆受学。后来村里又办了“乔山小学”前后一共读了四年。平时不太爱讲话，喜欢画画和手工艺。

一九一九年九月，到离村三华里的付村镇私立育德小学念书。这是一所教育质习较高的小学。当时读的是复式班，先生给另一个班上课时，常常偷偷地做手工，用粘泥、蜡、油捏小玩艺，有时还悄

悄地在作业簿上给先生画头像。

一九二四年七月高小毕业，艾青报考省立第七中学，因作文题为《苦旱记》，没有实际生活体验，交了白卷没考上。

经过一段时间的补习，艾青于一九二五年九月入金华的省立第七中学。进初中后，第一堂作文课老师出了个《自修室随笔》的作文题，艾青写了篇《一个时代有一个时代的文学》的论文，反对文言文。

在初中，图画打下了一定的基础。暑假回家常到野外和二、三里外的“禅定古寺”写生。

一九二六年，国民革命军北伐经过金华，在革命思想冲击下，艾青想去投考“黄埔军校”，但父亲不给钱，没有去成。

一九二八年七月初中毕业。

一九二八年九月考入杭州国立西湖艺术院绘画系。是这所学院的第一届第二期学员。

一九二九年春，从上海乘法国邮轮到巴黎。住在离市区十余里的“玫瑰村”格里姆家里。

父亲寄了一、二次钱后就断绝了供给，自己找工作。在一家工艺美术作坊就业，干的是最后一道工序，用中国漆模仿买主的签名描在打火机和香烟盒上。

不久，离开“玫瑰村”，住到巴黎第二区浮斯哈（VAUGL RARD）大街葡萄牙人开的“里斯本旅社”的一个小房间里。

上午干活，下午画画。主要在蒙巴那斯（MONTPARNA SSE）大街的一个“自由工作室”画模特儿。

参加法国名画家、印象派头头蒙内举办的“独立沙龙（画会）”

送自己的作品一幅。

开始读些中译的哲学、文学书籍。接触了俄罗斯批判现实主义的文学，如陀思妥耶夫斯基的《穷人》，屠格涅夫的《烟》、托尔斯泰的作品和苏联十月革命时期的诗，法译叶赛宁的《一个流浪汉的忏悔》、马雅可夫斯基的《穿裤子的云》、布洛克的《十二个》等，后来又接触了法国现代诗人兰波的诗，在诗歌创作上受影响较大的是比利时大诗人凡尔哈仑的诗。

一九三一年“九·一八”，日本侵略我国东北。艾青在法国参加“世界反帝大同盟”。

试着写诗，在练画的速写本里记一些偶然从脑际闪过的句子。

一九三二年一月十六日，写《东方支部的会合》（即《会合》）一诗。这是他的第一首诗，后以莪伽的笔名发表在同年七月的《北斗》杂志上。

一九三二年一月二十八日，离开马赛回国。

二月二日，抵苏伊士运河。

二月二十六日，抵湄公河。

四月上旬船到香港，停了四天后去上海。

五月参加了“中国左翼艺术家联盟”，编在第四小组第二特组。并曾列席“美联”第六次、第七次执行委员会委员会议，讨论组织和宣传等问题。

组织“春地美术研究所”，发行美术画报等宣传物品。

六月二十六日，“春地美术研究所”在八仙桥基督教青年会举行画展。展出作品有油画、粉画、漫画、木刻画共计百余幅，以及从鲁迅先生处借来的珂勒惠支的版画。

七月十二日晚，法租界巡捕搜捕萨坡赛路丰裕里84号“春地美术研究所”所址，艾青等十三人同时被捕。

八月十六日，国民党江苏省高等法院第三分院以“宣传与三民主义不相容主义”“危害国民紧急治罪法第六条、第十条、刑法第九条、第四十二条”，判处有期徒刑六年。押在上海第二特区法院看守所。

在监狱里继续写诗。这时期的诗作有：《监房的夜》、《叫喊》、《Orange》、《聆听》、《透明的夜》、《九百个》、《芦笛》、《一个拿撒勒人的死》、《画者的行吟》等。

一九三三年一月十四日，在看守所写《大堰河——我的保姆》一诗，抒发了对哺乳、养育他的穷苦妇女的深情追怀。

在看守所译了凡尔哈仑的《原野与城市》。

在看守所和法院提审时，因闹事而“提前执行”转押到监狱。

监狱中对政治犯极端虐待，经过三天的绝食斗争，监狱方面终于让步。

一九三四年底，坐满刑期三分之一，按监狱惯例，解到苏州反省院。

因为要解到苏州，诗稿一束交给难友，请他出狱后带给友人。其中《大堰河——我的保姆》发表在《春光》杂志一卷三期上。因他曾用过的笔名“莪伽”监狱方面知道，故改用“艾青”的笔名发表。这是他第一次用艾青这个笔名。

苏州反省院每坐六个月为一期而释放，一连坐了二期，于一九三五年十月出狱。

在沪、杭两地作短时间逗留后回到金华。在家住了不到一个月。一九三六年上半年，在江苏省常州武进女子师范学校教国文和国画。由于他在学生中有较高的威信，引起一些教师的嫉嫉和排挤；校长怕他在学生中传播革命思想，第二个学期一开学就被解聘了。

回到上海，继续以写诗维持生活。由于朋友们的资助，自费出版了诗集《大堰河》，共收《大堰河——我的保姆》等九首诗。这是他的第一本诗集。出版后，立即受到文艺界的重视，引起社会的强烈反响。

在上海陈唯稜办的《天下日报》编文艺付刊。

一九三七年七月六日离沪赴杭。

九月，在杭州私立蕙兰中学任教数月。

同年冬回家乡，稍住一些日子即去武汉。

三八年初，离武汉到山西临汾，在民族革命大学任教。不久晋南失守，离临汾到西安，在“抗日艺术队”当队长。

(三八)年春离西安回武汉。

三月二十七日，与茅盾、冯乃超等一百人在武汉发起成立“中华全国文艺界抗敌协会”。

四月，在武汉写长诗《向太阳》。

年底，离武汉经湖南衡山于三九年初到桂林。

在《广西日报》编付刊《南方》。

与戴望舒合编诗刊《顶点》。

三月，写《他死在第二次》、《吹号者》。

自费出版了第二个诗集《北方》。

《诗论》脱稿。

同年冬，从桂林撤出到湖南，在新宁县“衡山乡村师范学校”任教。

一九四〇年五月到重庆。在湖南到重庆的路上写了长诗《火把》，发表在《中苏文化》上。

在重庆育才学校任文学系主任。

任《文艺阵地》编委。除编辑工作外，还写了大量的文艺评论、散文、诗歌，发表在重庆报刊杂志上。

一九四一年一月“皖南事变”发生后，国民党发动了“第三次”反共高潮，重庆的进步作家都受到国民党特务的跟踪、恐吓和迫害。得周恩来同志帮助，化装成国民党“绥蒙自治长官公署”的高级参谋，先后闯过国民党47道检查站，于四一年三月抵达延安。

受到党中央总书记洛甫（张闻天）同志的接见，安排在“文艺界抗敌协会延安分会”工作。

八月，参加“文抗”延安分会第五届委员会，当选为理事。

十一月，当选为陕甘宁边区参议会参议员。

同月，《诗刊》创刊，任主编。

一九四二年三月十一日，《了解作家、尊重作家》一文在《解放日报》付刊发表。

一九四二年春，曾多次和毛泽东同志谈文艺问题。

五月，参加延安文艺座谈会。

五月十五日，《我对于目前文艺上的几个问题》在《解放日报》发表。

在党校三部参加整风运动。在党校秧歌队当付队长。

一九四三年，到吴家枣园生活了一些日子，交识了当时的边区劳动英雄，并写了一首长诗。

这期间，创作风格有了很大变化，写了一些记录性的散文，并学习采用民歌体写诗。

同年，率陕甘宁边区文化界慰问团到三五九旅慰问、演出。

一九四四年十一月，参加边区劳动模范代表大会。获得中央直属机关“模范工作者”奖状；中央党校“为人民服务的模范”奖状。

一九四五年上半年，在鲁迅文学艺术学院文学系任教。

同年，加入中国共产党。

一九四五年八月，日本投降后，鲁艺分成华北、东北、延安文艺工作团三部分。任华北文艺工作团团长。九月，率文工团取道山西，察哈尔，十月抵张家口。

一九四六年，华北文工团并入华北联合大学作为文艺学院，任院长，后改任付院长。

不久，解放战争爆发，张家口放弃，转移到冀中南一带。

华北联合大学和北方大学合并为华北大学，任第三部付主任。
一九四七年到一九四八年在河北省获鹿、京鹿涿鹿等一带农村配合土地改革运动。写过组诗《布谷鸟》。

出版了散文集《走向胜利》。

一九四九年二月随军进入北京。在中国人民解放军军事管制委员会文化接管委员会工作，任中央美术学院军代表。

参加中华全国文学艺术界联合会和全国第一次文学艺术工作者代表大会的筹备工作。

参加中华人民共和国第一届政治协商会议筹备工作。任国旗、国徽图案评选组组长。

七月二日至十九日，参加中华全国文学艺术工作者第一次代表大会，并当选为中华全国文学艺术界联合委员会委员。

九月，参加中华人民共和国第一届政治协商会议，当选为政协全国委员会候补委员。

十月，《人民文学》创刊，任付主编。

一九五〇年，《艾青选集》出版。

参加全国总工会、妇联、团中央、文联等各大团体联合组织的“宣传保卫世界和平旅行讲演”，从北京到上海、杭州、广州、武汉、西安等地讲演。

七月，随中共中央宣传工作代表团访问苏联四个月。

一九五一年，在北京会晤了世界著名诗人巴勃罗、聂鲁达和爱伦堡。

同年，去广西永宁县参加土改半年。

一九五二年三月，《人民文学》编委改组，留任编委。

当年春，回家乡一次，搜集抗日战争时期浙东游击队的斗争事迹，以民歌体试写了叙事长诗《藏枪记》。

三月二十七日，在上海美术工作者政治讲习班作《关于国画改造问题》的报告。

九月三日至十月上旬，参加全国第二届文代会。大会决定改组：“文协”为“作协”。当选为理事。

调中国作家协会为驻会作家。

中国美术工作者协会成立，当选为理事。

一九五四年七月，受智利众议院议长卡斯特罗的邀请，取道莫斯科、布拉格、维也纳、日内瓦、里斯本、达卡、里约热内卢、布宜诺斯艾利斯，一共飞了八天，到智利访问。写了组诗《南美洲的旅行》。

九月九日 返抵北京。

十月到舟山群岛人民海军部队深入生活。十一月《黑鬃》脱稿。

一九五六年二月，参加中国作家协会创作委员会诗歌组“诗歌创作座谈会”，并发了言。

二十七日到三月六日，出席作协第二次理事会（扩大）会议。受到批判。

人民文学出版社出版了诗集《春天》，这是他的第二个选集。

到内蒙旅行参观半个月，写了一些小诗。

一九五七年一月，《诗刊》创刊，任编委，并任《收获》编委。

计划写“匈牙利事件”，已完成《蒂洛拉》、《巴拉顿湖》两个章段，因材料不足而搁下。

三月，赴沪杭两地游访。在上海收集了帝国主义在经济上侵略中国的历史资料，准备写一首长诗，已写了《外滩》一节。五月，

接北京急电返回首都。

六月，在文学讲习所做“谈诗”的报告。

前往昆明迎接从南美来的聂鲁达和巴西作家亚马多，经重庆、武汉到北京。

参加“反右”运动，并受到批判。

十二月，被开除党籍。

五八年四月，被划为右派分子，撤销美术家协会理事、文联全国委员会委员和《诗刊》、《收获》编委职务。

得到一个将军的帮助，到东北黑龙江北大荒一个林场，“体验生活”，当了一年半付场长，和工人们一起伐过木、制订了一张林场发展规划图。

写了长诗《踏破荒原千里雪》、《哈蟆通河上的朝霞》。

一九五九年十一月，到新疆维吾尔自治区。

一九六〇年春，长篇报告文学《苏长福的故事》脱稿，由新疆青年出版社出版。

一九六〇年八月调石河子农垦部生产建设兵团农八师。

一九六一年十一月十七日列入《人民日报》发表的第二批右派摘帽名单。

在新疆文艺杂志上发表了诗歌《年青的城》。

在农八师内刊《大跃进》上发表了《从南泥湾到莫索湾》一诗。

一直没有停止写作，写了许多诗，积累了三、四十万字的小说素材。准备写一部反映莫索湾建场历史的长篇小说《沙漠在退却》。

一九六七年被赶到离场部百余里外的一一四团二营八连“劳动改造”，睡的是地窝子，打扫厕所。

一九七二年冬回到石河子师部。

一九七三年春到北京治眼病。四个月后再转到京沪线，浙赣线于九月下旬到老家金华、逗留半个月返回新疆。

一九七五年春，再次赴京治眼病，就一直住了下来。

一九七八年四月三十日，《文汇报》发表他的《红旗》一诗。这是他复出后发表的第一首诗，立即在全国引起了关注和反响。

同年十月，随作家参观访问团到大庆、鞍钢访问。

十一月二十五日，在北京举行的诗歌朗诵会上朗诵了他的长诗《在浪尖上》。

一九七九年一月号《人民文学》发表长诗《光的赞歌》。

一九七九年二月，任诗刊社组织的诗人海港访问团团长，率二十余名诗人到海南岛、湛江、广州、上海等地参观访问。写了许多小诗。

三月，中共中央组织部为艾青平反，恢复党籍，恢复政治名誉，恢复原工资级别。

任《诗刊》编委。

五月，随中国人民对外友好协会代表团访问德意志联邦共和国、奥地利、意大利三国。

六月，增补为全国政协委员。

八月，应约到哈尔滨写作一个月。

黑龙江省文联为之举行了“艾青诗作朗诵会”。

九月，人民文学出版社出版了新编的《艾青诗选》。

十一月，被选为文联第四届全国委员会委员，中国作家协会付主席。

一九八〇年，（北京）外文出版社出版了《艾青诗选》（法文

版)。

三月五日晚，在北京劳动人民文化宫和诗歌爱好者谈诗歌创作问题。

五月，四川人民出版社出版了他的诗集《归来的歌》收集了他从“沉默中”归来后发表的诗歌66首。

会晤了“国际写作计划顾问”美国诗人安格尔和他的夫人——“国际写作计划”主持人，华裔作家聂华苓女士。

六月十日，应法国辛格·波利巴丑克基亚会和巴黎第三大学的邀请，前往法国参观“中国抗战时期文学国际讨论会”。讨论会于十六至十九日举行。

讨论会结束后，随中国作家代表团访问了意大利。

七月七日回到北京。

七月二十三日，在诗刊社举办的“青年诗作者创作学习会”讲诗歌创作问题。

八月二十四日，应邀赴美国写作与访问四个月。

一九八〇年八月

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艾青，原名蒋海澄。

1910年 3月27日生于浙江省金华县山区一个小村子的地主家庭。

因迷信，被算命的说是“过父母”，放在同村的一个贫农妇女家里哺养。

1915年，先在本村私塾受学，然后到离村三华里的一个大村念完全小学，那是质量比较高的小学。

小学毕业后，到金华报考浙江省第七中学，因作文题为《苦旱记》，毫无生活经验。交了白卷没有考上。

在金华师范的附属小学补习一年。这一年里读了一些五四新文化运动之后的文章。开始对绘画发生兴趣。

1925年，考入金华（浙江）第七中学。

念初中的三年是反帝反封建的思想冲击最猛烈的三年。

数理化功课成绩不好。

兴趣集中在绘画上。

开始接触新文学的刊物。

1927年，北伐军路过金华，不久蒋介石叛变，轰轰烈烈的大革命被断送了。

1928年上学期毕业，夏天到杭州。

考入国立西湖艺术院绘画系，因素描进步很快，不久就受到院长林风眠的鼓励：“你在这儿学不到什么，到外国去吧。”

产生出国流浪的观念。

1929年，由家里出路费，到法国学画。住在郊区的一个叫“玫瑰村”里，没有上学。因^他不喜欢“学院派”的绘画，而热衷于现代画派——主要是后期印象派的绘画，只能进行自学。不久住在巴黎第五区（拉丁区），即蒙巴纳斯的一家画室画速写。

接触俄国文学。

接触法国现代诗。

在经济上经常断绝接济，曾在^{一个}中国漆的小工厂干细活（最后一道工序）。

1931年九·一八之后，日本侵略中国东北，家里经常以断绝接济相威胁，当时法国政府支持日军侵华。参加“反帝大同盟”，准备回国。

1932年1月28日上海发生抗日战争。同日在马赛上船回国。

一个月后到香港，国民党已和日本签订“淞沪协定”表示妥协。

回家不满一个月就离去。

5月到上海，以化名莪伽参加中国左翼美术家联盟。由一个文学青年的鼓动，在《北斗》上发表第一首诗“会合”。

成立“春地画会”。在第一次举行展览会时遇见鲁迅——他并没有认识我。

同年7月12日，法租界巡捕房搜捕了“春地画会”的十三个人。在看守所开始写诗。并以莪伽的笔名在《现代》上发表。

1933年1月14日，在看守所写“大堰河，我的保姆”，由律师秘密带出给友人，发表在“春光”上。

¹⁹³⁴这是我开始化名艾青的第一首诗。

由于参加斗争，提前执行。送进“上海第二特区监狱”。

坐满刑期三分之一，被押送到苏州监狱。

1935年10月刑满释放，在家住了一个多月。

1936年由亲戚介绍，在常州《武进女子师范》教了一个

学期的书。回上海，继续以写诗维持生活。由朋友们资助，自费出版第一本诗集《大堰河》，得到好评。

在《天下日报》编文艺副刊。

1937年7月爆发抗日战争。

开始长途旅行。难民式的生活。

由上海到杭州，在慈兰中学教书，不满一星期，冬天经金华到武汉4月写《向太阳》1938年由武汉到山西临汾，在民族革命大学挂名，山西吃紧，离开临汾到西安，在《抗日艺术队》当队长；1939年离西安南下到武汉，经衡山到桂林，在广西日报编副刊“南方”。

自费出版诗集“北方”。

1939年冬天到湖南新宁县，受聘于“衡山乡村师范”，一学期即离去。

1939年与戴望舒一同主编诗刊《顶点》。

1940年初到重庆受聘于陶行知主持的育才学校，先住草街子，后因受特务威胁，迁至重庆张家花园（文协会址）。

在“北碚”第一次遇见周恩来，周恩来曾到育才做过报告。

1941年1月皖南发生事变，新四军遭受国民党的伏击。

第三次反共高潮。有特务跟踪。

得周恩来的资助，化装为“绥蒙自治长官公署”的“高级参谋”潜逃，经过49个哨站的验查，抵达延安。

受到中共中央总书记张闻天的夸奖。

住文艺界抗敌协会延安分会（杨家岭）。一个夜晚，第一次会
会见毛泽东主席。

11月，被选为陕甘宁边区参议会参议员，写“毛泽东”。

1941年在延安主编《诗刊》。

1942年3月11日发表“了解作者，尊重作家”。

1942年5月2日至23日，参加由毛泽东召集的“延安文艺工作者座谈会”。

参加中国共产党。（已失去准确时间）

1944年11月30日参加陕甘宁边区劳模代表大会。

得到毛泽东题字的“模范工作者”奖状，中央党校的“为人民服务的模范”的奖状。

1945年8月日本无条件投降。

9月20日(中秋节)

率领五十余人组成的“华北文艺工作团”，由延安出发，取道山西，步行近五十天到达察哈尔、张家口。1946年，文艺工作团并入“华北联合大学”，作为“文艺学院”，任副院长。

解放战争爆发，张家口放弃，“华北联合大学”迁到冀中、冀南。

1947年48年华北联合大学在农村配合土地改革运动。

1949年2月，随军进入北京。

在军事管制委员会文化接管委员会工作，接管中央美术学院。

参加筹备全国文艺代表大会中国文学工作者协会工作。

7月，全国文艺工作者联合会成立，被选为委员。

中国文学工作者协会成立，选为理事。

中国美术工作者协会成立，选为理事。

第一届全国政治协商会议侯补委员。

10月，“人民文学”创刊，任副主编。

1950年7月随中共中央宣传工作代表团访问苏联四个月。

1952年3月，“人民文学”编委改组。留任编委。

1953年7月，退出“人民文学”编委。

回老家，搜集浙东抗日战争事迹，写长诗“藏枪记”。

1954年6月，受智利众议院议长的邀请，赴智利祝贺诗人聂鲁达五十寿辰。取道欧洲——经莫斯科、布拉格、维也纳、日内瓦、里斯本，非洲达卡到拉丁美洲。

9月9日返抵北京。

10月往舟山群岛，根据民间传说写成长诗“黑馒”。

1957年1月“诗刊”创刊，任编委，“收获”编委。

3月到上海杭州，5月返京。

8月反右斗争中，被划为“右派分子”。

1958年开除党籍，开除一切职务。受到诗歌界的“围剿”。所有著作列为禁书。

4月，下放到黑龙江国营农场，在某场的示范林场当副场长。

1959年10月调新疆生产建设兵团石河子垦区。

1961年11月17日列入“人民日报”发表摘掉“右派帽子”名单中。仍留新疆石河子垦区。

1966年，文化大革命，下放到一个团场的一个连队。

1971年9月，林彪叛国。

1972年春调回石河子。经垦区医院眼科检查，发现左眼因患白内障失明已有四五年之久。

1973年春天经申请批准到北京治疗眼睛，经四个月无效回新疆。

1975年春天第二次批准回北京治眼——一直住下没有回去。

1976年10月，“四人帮”垮台。文革期间，所有冤案、错案开始平反。

1978年4月30日，上海文汇报发表相隔二十年之久的第一首诗“红旗”。随之发表了大量的新作。陆续收到大量读者来信。

1978年10月，随作家参观访问团到大庆、鞍钢。

1978年11月25日，在北京工人体育馆举行诗歌朗诵会上，《在浪尖上》一诗，得到强大的反响。

1979年2月，由二十二名诗人组成的学习访问团任团长，到海南岛、湛江、广州、上海等海港参观访问。

4月，得中组部经复查认为错划后批准：“恢复党籍·恢复工资待遇、恢复政治名誉。”

6月，全国政协列为增补委员。

同时，随中国人民友好协会代表团访问西德、奥地利、意大利。三国都有报导。取道南斯拉夫回国。

8~9月到哈尔滨一个月。哈尔滨文联并为之举行“艾青诗作朗诵会”——反应强烈。

10月30日至11月15日，举行第四届全国文艺工作者代表大会，及第四届作家代表大会。会议结束时，被选为全国文联委员，作家协会副主席。

戶口迂回北京。

“艾青诗选”重新出版。