

**A Brief Flowering: A Study of the  
Modern Chinese Magazine *Literary Renaissance***

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by

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## Abstract

The modern Chinese magazine *Literary Renaissance* 文藝復興 was published monthly in Shanghai between January 1946 and August 1949, edited by Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸 and Li Jianwu 李健吾. Its launch expressed widespread hopes for the revival of Chinese literature after the war and intentions of working towards that revival. The purpose of this study is to examine whether there was indeed a post-war Literary Renaissance reflected by the magazine.

Since the editors perceived a parallel between the European Renaissance and the envisaged revival of Chinese literature, various interpretations of the connection are looked at before the magazine's own literary philosophy is traced through the published editorials, reviews and theoretical articles.

Creative contributions are discussed according to genre, devoting a chapter each to poetry, short stories, novels and drama. In evaluating individual works, comparisons are sought with outstanding examples of literature from the previous decades, looking for changes and differences, and focusing on foreign or native influences. Where appropriate, the world outlook and allegiances of contributors are also looked into, trying to discover groupings and trends.

In the broad spectrum of poems several instances are found that are comparable in quality to pre-war poetry. Among the short stories two significant types of narratives emerge that present reality in a more complex and experimental manner. Of the three serialized novels, two have turned out to rank among the best of modern Chinese novels. The playscripts, however, while giving a glimpse of the previous theatre boom, reflect the post-war decline of drama. Finally, the findings in the various genres are brought together and the basic question of the study is answered.

Appendices include a chronology of selected events relevant to the period, reproductions of the evocative cover and content pages of the magazine, translations of two modernist short stories and biographies of significant contributors.

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## Chapter 1

### Literary Renaissance: the Magazine, the Literary Philosophy and the Purpose of this Study

#### Literary Renaissance: A factual introduction

In the cultural euphoria following the end of the Second World War, a magazine with the grand and hopeful title of *Literary Renaissance* (文藝復興) started publishing in January 1946 in Shanghai. The editors were the respected literary historian, critic and bibliophile, Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸 (1898-1958) and the successful playwright and literary critic, Li Jianwu 李健吾 (1906-1982).

Zheng Zhenduo had been a prominent member of the Literary Research Society (文學研究會) and the editor of that society's official organ, the *Short Story Monthly* (小說月報). He also edited a number of other literary publications: among others the *Literary Weekly* (文學週報), also controlled by the Literary Research Society; the Literature Magazine (文學雜誌), which took the place of the *Short Story Monthly* when it ceased publication in 1932; and the *Literature Quarterly* (文學季刊). His views on literature, in common with those of the Literary Research Society, were that literature should provide an accurate portrayal of the lives of real people and expose social problems in order to help bring about their improvement. To create such a new Chinese literature, the introduction and study of foreign literatures and the reassessment of traditional Chinese literature were necessary, and Zheng took part in these tasks with his publications. His *Outline of Literature* (文學大綱) appeared serialized in the *Short Story Monthly* between 1924-26; the *Illustrated History of Chinese Literature* (插圖本中國文學史) was published in 1932; he edited *World Literature Library* (世界文庫), a massive anthology of Chinese and world literature (1934), and published the *Short History of Russian Literature* (俄國文學史略) (1934), as well as several collections of critical essays on Chinese literature. His own particular interest lay in vernacular literature, the "literature of the people", which he held to be the source of all other Chinese literature of

worth. He collected and commented on early and rare editions of popular literature from the Song dynasty onwards. During his stay in Europe (1927-29) he was one of the first to do research on the *bianwen* 變文 texts in the Dunhuang manuscripts, which are the earliest extant examples of popular fiction writing in China. In 1938 he published the *History of Chinese Popular Literature* (中國俗文學史). During the Japanese occupation, living "in hibernation" in Shanghai, he hunted out treasures of vernacular literature which their owners were forced to sell, and saved them by either purchasing them himself or persuading the government to do so.<sup>1</sup>

Li Jianwu, the younger partner in the editorial team, had been associated with the theatre since his teens, first as an actor, later also, and more significantly, as a writer for the stage. His importance as a playwright in the 1930s was based on both his own plays, like *This Is Only Spring* (這不過是春天) (1939) and *Youth* (青春) (staged during the war, published in 1946), and on his adaptations. The latter included *Lies* (說謊集) (1935), adapted from G. B. Shaw's *How He Lied to Her Husband*; two historical plays, *Wang Deming* (王德明) and *A Shina* (阿史那), adapted versions of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Othello* respectively; and a series of adaptations of "well-made" French plays, mostly by Sardou. The majority of his plays were performed by the Shanghai Theatre Art Society (上海劇藝社) (f.1938), of which he was a founding member. As a literary critic his initial interests lay in nineteenth-century French literature, in particular the works of Flaubert, the study of which was inspired by what he felt was a need for realism in Chinese literature. He translated Flaubert's short stories and in 1937 published *A Critical Biography of Flaubert* (福樓拜評傳). His short stories, essays and book reviews were frequently published in contemporary literary magazines.<sup>2</sup>

According to Li Jianwu's later recollections, the initiator of the magazine was Zheng Zhenduo. His choice of Li as a joint editor, in Li's view, was based on the following three factors: he had not betrayed his friends and had not revealed his connection with Zheng, when under interrogation by the Japanese military police; his thinking was centre-right (中間偏右), and Zheng wanted to rally around the magazine a wide cross-section

of contributors and readers; and finally because Li did not belong to any particular grouping and had no prejudices which could lead to conflicts.<sup>3</sup>

*Literary Renaissance* was published by the Shanghai Publishing Company (上海出版公司) and backed financially by Qian Jiagui 錢家圭, through his bank (晉成錢莊). Further financial help was provided by the Golden City Bank (金城銀行), over which the writer Wang Xindi 王辛笛 had some control. Publishing funds being tight after the war, editorial conditions were difficult. The editors worked voluntarily, without payment. The magazine had no proper editorial office, the homes of the the editors and a small office at the Publishing Company served for this purpose, and manuscripts were moved around by an aspiring young writer-courier.<sup>4</sup> The price of the first monthly issue was 800元 (國幣), a high price according to the complaints of the readers, but one which still did not cover costs. With the second issue they brought out a popular version (普及本), printed on lower quality paper and priced at 1000元, while the original, better quality version (精印本) went up to 1200元. This two-version system only lasted as long as the next issue; thereafter the surviving one version rose in price from 1500元 in May 1946 to 30000元 by November 1947. Apart from the accelerating wage and price inflation, which kept pushing the price of the magazine up and readers away, publishing conditions were also difficult because of what they had to refer to vaguely as "interference or various hazards from outside".<sup>5</sup> Similar general statements about the worsening political situation and its effects on cultural life came up frequently in the editorial notes.<sup>6</sup>

Despite *Literary Renaissance* being a 'large format' (大型) publication, all the editorial work was done by Zheng Zhenduo and Li Jianwu. As for their division of labour, creative writings were, on the whole, the responsibility of Li Jianwu, while contributions on literary theory and Chinese literary history were handled by Zheng Zhenduo. The editorial notes ("編後", "編餘") were written by each editor in turn. Li Jianwu chose the "fillers" (補白), short quotations inserted in between contributions, and these were predominantly from French, but also from German and English writers and from Lu Xun 魯迅. It was also Li who selected the Renaissance paintings for the front covers of the magazine on the basis of their appropriateness to the contemporary



political situation. For the first volume (January-July 1946), during the period when negotiations between the Nationalists and the Communists were still going on, he chose Michelangelo's *Dawn*, to signify that with the victory, the people had woken up and there was now a future. The collapse of the negotiations, the start of full-scale civil war and the people's resentment are reflected in the cover to the second volume (August 1946-January 1947): *Anger* by Michelangelo. The third volume's cover (February-August 1947), Goya's *The Dream of Reason Produces Monsters*, (Caprices No.43), marks the dark situation of people in the Nationalist-controlled areas reaching the end of their tether.<sup>7</sup>

From the inaugural issue (創刊號) in January 1946 till the closing number (終刊號) in November 1947, the magazine brought out one issue a month, except for the three bi-monthly issues (1.3 March-April 1946; 3.1 February-March 1947; 4.2 October-November 1947). Six issues (期) made up one volume (卷), so from 1.1 to the closing number, 4.2, there were twenty issues altogether. Several issues were devoted to special topics. In 1.6 numerous contributors paid homage to writers who died during the eight years of the anti-Japanese War. Issues 2.1 and 3.3 were devoted to mourning the deaths of Wen Yiduo 聞一多 and Geng Jizhi 耿濟之, respectively. Issue 2.3 commemorated the tenth anniversary of Lu Xun's death, 3.5 marked the first anniversary of Wen Yiduo's assassination. 2.6 published writings from relatively unknown writers, 3.3 was a special issue on modern world literature, carrying translations from and critical essays on French, American, English, German and Soviet literature, and 3.4 was a special poetry number.

After the closing number, the magazine published three special issues devoted exclusively to Chinese literary research (中國文學研究號). While, due to their traditional subject matter, these issues are not part of the present study, the marked change of profile they represent prompts speculation about the cause of their publication.<sup>8</sup> It may have been prudent to turn to politically safer literary research in the face of growing government repression. Perhaps it is not just a coincidence that the magazine's closing number came out on the 1st of November 1947, five days after the Democratic League had been banned. Having finished editing the three issues on

traditional Chinese literary research, Zheng Zhenduo, like other leftist literary figures, went to Hong Kong, and these issues were published in his absence in September and December 1948 and the last one in August 1949, already after the Communist liberation of Shanghai.

### Different visions of Renaissance

The title of the magazine, together with the choice of Renaissance paintings for its covers and content pages, gives the impression of a special connection perceived or sought with the European Renaissance. As Zhou Zuoren 周作人 pointed out, the term 文藝復興 was imported from Japan and refers to the European Renaissance, even though it was the rebirth of the whole European culture and not just that of literature and arts.<sup>9</sup> The phrase appears frequently in Chinese literature from the beginning of the May Fourth Movement. In addition to its specific meaning, on some occasions the phrase is used in the strict sense to mean the revival either of literature and art or of the literary arts, whilst at other times it denotes, by analogy, any broad cultural revival.

The phrase was first used in 1915 by Huang Yuanyong 黃遠庸, a leading journalist of the day, who suggested the European Renaissance as the model for the New Culture Movement.<sup>10</sup> This theme was further expanded on by Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 and Hu Shi 胡適 in the magazine *New Youth* (新青年) and was later taken up by the Peking University undergraduate magazine *New Tide* (新潮), which carried the English subtitle "The Renaissance". As Hu Shi summarized in his American lectures on "The Chinese Renaissance", the students considered the May Fourth Movement similar to the European Renaissance in three respects:

First, it was a conscious movement to promote a new literature in the living language of the people to take the place of the classical literature of old. Second, it was a movement of conscious protest against many of the ideas and institutions in the traditional culture, and of conscious emancipation of the individual man and woman from the the bondage of the forces of tradition. It was a movement of reason versus tradition, freedom versus authority, and glorification of life and human values versus their suppression. And lastly, strangely enough, this new movement was led by men who knew their cultural heritage and tried to study it with the new methodology of

modern historical criticism and research. In that sense it was also a humanist movement.<sup>11</sup>

Hu Shi then goes on to say that it was the conscious recognition of these goals and mission that differentiated this movement from earlier periods in Chinese culture that may be termed "Renaissances" and the conscious element was the result of the contact with the civilization of the West. "Without the benefit of an intimate contact with the civilization of the West, there could not be the 'Chinese Renaissance'".<sup>12</sup> One may add that this movement also sought to attain very different things from previous renewals of cultural vitality. These former 'Renaissances' looked back to some purer and more vigorous past age, whereas around the end of the nineteenth century that vision was redirected forward towards new ideals that had never before been realized (e.g., by Kang Youwei 康有爲, Liang Qichao 梁啓超 and others).

For Hu Shi, Literary Renaissance in China was synonymous with Literary Revolution.<sup>13</sup> The aim of this Revolution was to create a "literature in the national language and a national language suitable for literature".<sup>14</sup> The latter was to be achieved by elevating the vernacular to the respectability of the national language on the strength of excellence of the plays and novels produced in that medium in the past centuries. As to the former, he suggested, as subjects for the new writer, "factory workers of both sexes, rickshaw pullers, farming people of the hinterland . . . domestic tragedies, marital sorrows, the position of women, the unsuitability of [current] educational practices".<sup>15</sup>

From the perspective of almost two decades on, Li Changzhi 李長之 had a different evaluation of the May Fourth Movement and a different vision of a Chinese Renaissance. He did not agree with referring to the May Fourth Movement as a Renaissance (文藝復興). He explains that the Renaissance was the awakening of the Greek culture, a fresh understanding by Europeans of their own cultural tradition and makes the point that the brilliance of the Renaissance was due to the deep-rootedness and the long-standing of that tradition.

But the May Fourth Movement was not like this. May I ask where was our cultural tradition? What was it we wanted to revive? More to the point, was it something Western or Chinese (leaving aside for the moment the question of thoroughness)?

What about the our understanding at that time of the Chinese cultural tradition? Or our attitude to it? Were we researching conscientiously and open-mindedly? Or did we stick labels on everything saying "feudal thinking" and threaten to overthrow "Confucius and Sons"?<sup>16</sup>

He puts the same point more bluntly elsewhere:

May Fourth [on the contrary] was not enough, it was only an enlightenment. It was too superficial, too elementary on the intellectual level, too much of a transplant, lacking in depth and prospects [*sic*], too indifferent towards the basic spirit of the nation.<sup>17</sup>

In discussing his idea of a Renaissance, Li Changzhi introduces two contrasting and connected terms. "Culture for National Defence" (國防文化), which consists of "the various cultural undertakings set up with national defence as the aim", and "National Defence of Culture" (文化國防), which means "looking at cultural values from a cultural point of view and taking the necessary protective measures". The former is the means to a nation's survival and therefore appropriate to China during the war against Japan, but he warns against forgetting the latter:

Only [concentrating on] "Culture for National Defence" can give rise to crimes against humanity, can show contempt for cultural values and consequently even "Culture for National Defence" itself can lose self-confidence, waver and exist in name only.<sup>18</sup>

The Renaissance he is hoping for, in contrast to May Fourth, which he likens to a flower picked from somebody else's garden and put into a vase, is a deeply rooted, long lasting movement, which is indigenous and therefore flourishing.

If we do not merely want again a flower in a vase, then we have to link up (but not exclusively) with the Chinese cultural tradition. Fighting to safeguard this cultural tradition of China is precisely what I mean by "National Defence of Culture".<sup>19</sup>

His prescription for the Chinese Renaissance is the right combination of indigenous tradition and outside influence. He looks at the various slogans adopted during the past century in the attempt to regain national self-confidence, then reinterprets them and finds something commendable in each of them.

"Chinese Learning for Substance" [中學爲體] is nothing but making the Chinese cultural tradition into the fundamental principle; "Western Learning for Use" [西學爲用] is nothing but adopting Western techniques for assistance. For example, in trying to understand traditional Chinese philosophy, we can systematize it by using Western analytical methods.<sup>20</sup>

"Wholesale Westernization" (全盤西化) in his definition indicates that "the absorption of Western culture cannot be in dribs and drabs [點點滴滴], absorption has to be whole, but this does not mean the obliteration of ourselves". "Chinese centrality" (中國本位), the slogan of the 1935 movement for the reconstruction of civilization on a Chinese base, is modified in Li's interpretation, in that it does not want to replace everything with indigenous things or to write off things outside China. Finally he synthesizes these three approaches and concludes:

...the present stage of the cultural movement is close to "Chinese for substance, Western for use" [中體西用], but exceeds it. It exceeds it in that we have truly discovered China's cultural substance and that while absorbing Western culture thoroughly and completely we do not forget ourselves. Culture is organic, one can not take only a portion of it. Culture is continuous, it can not be cut off from tradition. But it is also living and growing, it needs nourishment from the outside world just as it needs moisture and its soil of origin. Only if we speak about acceptance of tradition, about [a culture's] need for its soil of origin, can the present stage of the cultural movement in China become a Renaissance [文藝復興].<sup>21</sup>

A couple of years later Zhou Zuoren also put forward his views on the contemporary discussion about the idea of a Chinese Renaissance. Noting that the phrase 文藝復興 refers to and implies a parallel with the Renaissance in Europe, he analyzes the reasons for the vigour and achievements of the latter: "Since both inner vitality and outside influence were whole, the result was an even and not lopsided [偏於局部] development". There were immortal achievements in the fine arts, in literature, philosophy and theology. As to the question of a Renaissance in China, he maintains that it has to be whole and not partial (局部).

...China's New Cultural Movement of recent years can be said to have had the intention of making a speech but was unable to finish the writing. The reason is that the movement was lopsided, there were only a handful of literary people making an uproar, no activity in other fields; it was entirely isolated and one-sided [偏枯]. Even if it had not changed into a political and social movement, it would have been hard to hope for full development and success.<sup>22</sup>

A more specific difference, he notes, is that in the Europe of the Renaissance the outside influence, the classical civilization of Greece and Rome, though originally a national product, had long been dead and was not "backed by a national flag"; while in

modern China all outside influences came from strong countries; "although not necessarily a cultural aggression, these cultures still carried shadows of national flags". Moreover, the homocentric concept (人間本位), the main feature of Greek thought, permeated the multifarious fields of scholarship, arts and literature homogenously and thus could achieve good results; but he feels, recent times have been chaotic abroad too, ideas have been confused and extreme, making it difficult to select a suitable one to follow.<sup>23</sup> Setting out the necessary conditions for an all-embracing Renaissance in China he says:

...the innate traditions of our country are certainly not easy to change, but we must strive to overcome obvious shortcomings, like the eight-legged essay or the [former] examination-system mentality. . . . With regard to the influence of foreign cultures, we have to take in not only the present but we have to go back to their sources, to explore their classical origins and not just one country's culture either; we have to study several foreign languages, choose which is appropriate, strive for depth and breadth and get rid of the malpractices we live by.<sup>24</sup>

He thinks the failure, despite their sincerity, of those who took part in the New Culture Movement at the beginning of the Republic could serve as a lesson to make later generations more careful, and feels reluctant to abandon the dream of a Chinese Renaissance.

All these approaches to a Chinese Renaissance discussed so far take the European Renaissance as a specific historical reference. But how they defined the European Renaissance depended on how they construed the situation in China. Each writer stressed that aspect of the European Renaissance which he thought would be China's way to revival. For Hu Shi, it was a rebellion against tradition and authority, inspired by contact with outside cultures, bringing about a new literature in the language of the people. Li Changzhi saw a civilization renewing itself by turning back to and drawing on its own native tradition. For Zhou Zuoren it was a powerful outside influence activating the inner vitality. Their visions of a Chinese Renaissance were also connected with their evaluations of the May Fourth Movement. While for Hu Shi it had all the essential features of a Renaissance, Li Changzhi judged it to have failed because, unlike the

Renaissance, it tried to introduce alien influences and deny the indigenous tradition. Zhou Zuoren also considered May Fourth to have been different from the European Renaissance, but for the reasons of the limited field of the inner activity and of the superficial absorption of the outside influence.

Literary Renaissance according to *Literary Renaissance*

For the magazine *Literary Renaissance* the appeal of the chosen title was more general than specific. True, the cover designs and the content pages borrowed paintings and drawings from Renaissance masters, but the European movement was evoked to draw a rather faint parallel only. The editorial view on the subject was set forth by Zheng Zhenduo in "Inaugural Words" (發刊詞).(1.1.pp.5-7)

The European Renaissance [歐洲的文藝復興] ended the long, dark Middle Ages, opened up a new world, a new era, discovered "human beings", gradually walked towards democracy. In literature, just as in science, politics and economy, there was a new look [面貌], new ideals, stands, achievements.

At present, ahead of China also lies a period of "Literary Renaissance" [文藝復興]. Of course, literature, just as other things, must have a new look, a new ideal, a new stand, before it can have new achievements.(p.5)

The belief in the advent of a Literary Renaissance was based partly on the achievements of literature during the War of Resistance, the most important of which was seen to be that it "exposed all kinds of facts about the dark side [of life] and opened up a major road to a democratic China" and partly on the view that, after the surveillance and the restrictions of the occupation, victory had at last removed the obstacles to a new cultural flowering.

With the victory of the War of Resistance, our "Literary Renaissance" has started; the evil of the past has been washed away, a new situation is being established. We shall not simply carry on the unfinished work of the May Fourth Movement, but we should also work more energetically on the mission of the Literary Renaissance ahead; we do not merely write for the sake of writing, but we also feel that we should fit in with the overall direction of new China and write for democracy, for the great majority of the people.(p.6)

The editor then exhorts writers to continue with the responsibilities they fulfilled during the War of Resistance: to be the vanguard of the people, holding a torch leading

them in the darkness towards dawn and glory. The piece ends with the pledge that the magazine will do its utmost in working for the new China, for the Literary Renaissance and for the realization of democracy.(p.7)

The Literary Renaissance is seen here as part of the general renewal of life after the war. A remark to the same effect is made by Gu Zhongyi 顧仲彝, representative of the Social Bureau (社會局), at the founding meeting for the Shanghai branch of the Chinese National Association for Literature and Arts (中華全國文藝協會) on 17 December 1945. He hoped that the present meeting would be a historic one, not only for the renaissance of Chinese literature (中國文藝復興), but also for the renaissance of the whole nation (全國復興).<sup>25</sup>

In connection with the idea of a Literary Renaissance the editor too brings up the May Fourth Movement. In his evaluation, it "started as a literary revolution and became a political revolution".(p.6) Pledging to continue the unfinished work of May Fourth is therefore defining their goals as, at least partly, political. This ties in with their other intentions under the heading of Literary Renaissance: exposing social evils, working towards democracy and providing a lead for the people.

Having thus defined their Literary Renaissance, they did not refer to the phrase again, but discussed, that "new look, new ideal, new stand" which they thought literature must have "before it can have new achievements", focusing on the following: the role of art, the task of its creator, artistic freedom, definition of the target audience, the ways of performing the task of the artist, and the kinds of forms to be created. Let us then examine the composite literary philosophy of the magazine as it is reflected in the tenor of articles and reviews that touch on general issues.

#### The literary philosophy of *Literary Renaissance*

A view somewhat at variance with those in the editor's "Inaugural Words" is introduced in an essay by Arthur Koestler, the translation of which was published in the inaugural issue. Koestler holds that:



The artist is no leader; his mission is not to solve but to expose, not to preach but to demonstrate. . . . The healing, the teaching and preaching he must leave to others; but by exposing the truth by special means unavailable to them, he creates the emotional urge for healing.<sup>26</sup>

While accepting that the artist should concern himself with the ills of his time, this view considerably limits his role. Rejecting the role of the teacher and preacher, it also differs from the magazine's official requirement of writers to be the vanguard of the people, leaders of the democratic struggle. The difference in view, however, was not pointed out, and the essay was published probably because its basically utilitarian approach to art fitted in with the magazine's line.

In the same issue, a review by (Wang) Xindi (王)辛笛 of He Qifang's 何其芳 collection of poems, *Night Songs* (夜歌), comes up with more radical views.(1.2.pp.244-252) The poems were written after the transformation of the poet's thinking, following a visit to Yan'an. Repudiating his earlier romantic preoccupations, He Qifang now wants to make his poems become whips to lash out at the back of the unreasonable society (p.247) and fighting his earlier individualistic tendencies he says:

Let the desires of the masses become my wish,  
And the strength of the masses grow in my body.(p.250)

Xindi approves of the poet's abandonment of the "art-for-art's-sake" attitude, which in his view is nothing but an "art-for-the-individual's-sake" stand. And as for the fruits of the poet's transformation, the reviewer welcomes their simple, unadorned form, contrasting it with the flowery style of the poet's former, "decadent" life.(p.244) On the whole, the review follows the Yan'an line on art, requiring the artist to be a social fighter (close to Koestler's rejected preacher), to identify with the masses and to simplify his art.

A reinforcement and an expansion of the editorial standpoint comes in the next editorial of Zheng Zhenduo, "Welcome 'Literature Day'" (迎「文藝節」).(1.4.p.384)

He discusses the special significance of making the Fourth of May into "Literature Day":

. . . [it] makes clear the inseparability of literary work from the political and ideological movement. Writers must not daydream, locking themselves up in [their] ivory towers. You may wish to be far away from the political tide, to live in seclusion in a great city or a small town, making writing your profession and declaring yourself pure and lofty, but "politics" will overlook no act, no breath of you; it will drag you to walk; if you do

not walk forward, then you'll have to retreat. If you remember the restrictions, the censorship and the revisions your writing was subjected to during the War of Resistance and the Occupation, you will realize how greatly politics affects you. If you do not forge ahead, fighting for democracy, for freedom of writing, then you will certainly suffer endless indignation and oppression, boundless restrictions and control. "Thought" is the life of a literary work; a great writer is also a great thinker; . . . Therefore, writers always stand at the front of the ideological movement, becoming its vanguard and its core. During the European Renaissance artists, like Michelangelo and Dante, were [also] the vanguard, the core.(pp.384-385)

Zheng's urging of writers to fight for democracy in order to safeguard their own freedom in writing, recalls one of the resolutions passed at the founding meeting for the Shanghai branch of the Chinese National Association for Literature and Arts on 17 December 1945. It urges the government to remove all kinds of censorship and to restore the freedom of speech and of the press in Shanghai.<sup>27</sup> It seems that in the intervening five months the hope of favourable government measures evaporated, forcing a more militant stand on writers in protecting their interests.

That censorship and artistic freedom were current concerns of writers may be further illustrated by the choice of "fillers" quoting Marx on these subjects (see "Censorship" [檢查] 1.2.p.147 and "Freedom" [自由] 1.3.p.279).

The concept of artistic freedom also features in Chen Yanqiao's 陳煙橋 extensive study "On Art's Prosperity and Political Freedom" (論藝術的興盛與政治的自由). (1.4.p.460-473) In answer to the question what are the circumstances in which the arts flourish, Chen quotes Mme de Staël's opinion, that a free political system is the foundation of the arts' prosperity, and then proceeds to illustrate this theory with historical facts from ancient Greece to the French Revolution. In doing so he also points out the shortcomings of the various political set-ups with regard to the artist's position, the better to contrast them with the ideal state of his beliefs.

[We have] real freedom of the arts, when [art] is liberated from all restrictions and shared by the broad masses of the people - that is to say that when the masses have the good fortune of enjoying art and the need to be moved by art's noble expressions, only then is there hope for the flourishing of art without restrictions.(p.472)

This art must be realistic in order to rouse the masses to fight, and artistic creation has to answer the demands of the people, of realizing democracy. In case these may be taken for new kinds of restrictions, he explains:

In a free political organization, artists enjoy the same rights as the people do. The new demands of the people on the artist do not fetter him, even less do they coerce him to be untrue to himself; on the contrary, [since] these demands spring from the artist's beloved land, they make him a real artist - the people bestowed upon the artist a hitherto undreamed-of freedom.(pp.472-473)

Chen sees a pressing need in the China of his day for giving artists this freedom, because the country "needs art to inspire people to progress and to strengthen their resolve" and because only thus can artists fulfill the responsibility of "upholding and leading the present struggle against the remains of Fascism, against poverty and famine, and for the realization of a paradise of freedom".(p.473)

Starting from the usually undisputed view that political freedom is a desirable (though not always necessary) condition of the arts' prosperity, Chen proceeds to impose political demands on the artist, while, in a characteristic Communist paradox, calling it freedom. Thus, despite the impression of liberality, the article simply reiterates the demand that the artist has to be the leader of the people's political and social struggle.

The artist's connection with the people is an important motif in Li Jianwu's editorial, "For 'Poets' Day'" (爲「詩人節」) (1.5.pp.512-514), which welcomes the changing of the day of the Dragonboat Festival (端午節), a popular remembrance of Qu Yuan 屈原, into "Poets' Day". In Li's view, one of the reasons for Qu Yuan's long lasting fame was that he took already existing things from the people and incorporated them into his own works (e.g., *Nine Songs* [九歌]). Then, remarking on the impasse both old and new poetry have come to, he urges poets to seek appropriate forms from among the people:

From among the people: because all art, if it is to be art, has to have a broad base and has to assimilate the essence of the feelings of million lives... Every time art or literature had achievements, it embodied the demands of the people. Talents arose precisely to answer this urgent demand. . . . Qu Yuan emerged in this way, similarly to Yuan drama and Ming-Qing novels.(p.513)

A meeting held on the 22 April 1946 in Chongqing is given a lengthy (though non-verbatim) account by Mei Lin 梅林 in "On the 'Re-examination of Eight Years of

Resistance Literature" (關於「抗戰八年文藝檢討」).(1.5.pp.587-591) The two main subjects put forward under the general heading were the views and standpoints of writers and the form and content of writings. In his introduction Tian Han 田漢 also raised the questions of how to strengthen the political and artistic nature of literature and how to popularize. After reports about the state of the novel, of poetry, and of drama during the War of Resistance, Yang Hui 楊晦 gave his views on literary theory. He felt that almost all forms coming from abroad since the May Fourth Movement had been colonialistic, the form and content of writings showed the attitude of the conqueror, and readers at large had not been able to relate to them. If Chinese literature was to have a future, it had to go through the stage of national forms, and not rush ahead impatiently. Forms more acceptable to the reading public had to be developed and filled with new content in order to expand readership and increase political influence.(p.589) On the same subject, Zang Yunyuan 臧雲遠 interposed the remark that Yan'an has solved the problem in *Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art* (「文藝座談會上的談話」). (pp.589-590)

Next, Guo Moruo 郭沫若 pointed out that since most writers connected with the new literature were children of landlords and capitalists, their writings could not cast off a certain condescending, preaching flavour. Even when they adopted the new world outlook, they got isolated from the people because the forms of their writings were unfamiliar. As for national forms, he felt, on the basis of his Soviet experiences, the necessity of many different styles, old and new, existing side by side. But the principal thing was democratic content, because China was in a period of striving for peace and democracy. He acknowledged, however, that for the sake of the future, China must learn from the advanced things coming from abroad.(p.590)

Finally, the discussion was summed up by Tian Han with a long list of conclusions:

- Literary work during the peaceful democratic movement is the heir to the realism of May Fourth literature. It starts with the people, ends with the people and forever serves the people.

- All writers with a sense of purpose, living in the present misery of China, regardless of the cliques they once belonged to, will eventually step on the realist road, serve the people and even die for them.
- New Chinese literature is inseparable from the Revolutionary Movement of China.
- The debate on eternal or transient topics has no use for our realist work. Attitudes of praising the former are reactionary.
- A writer has to give voice to his sense of justice, courageously and unreservedly. If not, there are problems with his consciousness and world view.

About form he had these to say:

- Too much Europeanization is certainly no good, but we have to learn from the masterpieces of the world to enrich the language of our new literature.
- There is no harm in many forms co-existing; the main criterion is whether the content is useful to the urgent demands of the Chinese people.
- We must not be too arbitrary with or indiscriminately scornful of old literature.
- We have to ensure that readers or audiences understand more immediately the content and subject of works, but that does not mean the exclusion of progressive new forms of expression.(p.591)

The overall tenor of the meeting, despite a few mildly divergent views, is very close to the Maoist literary principles, which are in fact directly referred to by one speaker.

Popularization, the promotion of national forms, the creation of a content that increases political influence and the need for writers to serve the people by giving voice to injustices are all aspects of a literature that is required to further political aims.

We have seen that Chen Yinqiao's study above defines the function of art as "rousing the masses to fight", in other words, as propaganda. But these are two different concepts for Yu Guanying 俞冠英. In a review of Wu Zuxiang's 吳組緇 novel *Mountain Torrent* (山洪) (1.5.pp.633-663), he says:

This book is naturally "Resistance Literature"; the purpose of its writing can be said to be propaganda. But propaganda is not to the detriment [妨害] of art, [as] this book can at once testify. The considerable strength of patriotic feeling this book has aroused in readers is its achievement as propaganda, and the distinctive and vivid description of peasant life is its achievement as art.(p.633)

A view that at least acknowledges the existence of non-utilitarian forms of art though denying their relevance to the China of the day is presented by Xu Chi 徐遲 in "Problems Brought Back from Chongqing" (從重慶帶回來的問題).(2.2.pp.187-189) He divides art into luxury (奢侈) art and essential (必需) art. Essential art is the kind which is necessary for a nation's survival. Xu quotes the Rice-Sprout Song Dance (秧歌舞) as an

example; when this art form was sponsored in the last few years of the war, increasing production, raising of cultural standards and resisting the invaders were necessary for the nation's survival; these became the topics of Rice-Sprout Songs.<sup>28</sup> Noting the presence everywhere of vulgar, inferior, pornographic publications (not even luxury literature, he says) on coming back to Shanghai, he applies his theory to the current situation:

Our survival is threatened at the moment, the call is on for writers to create essential art. We have the task of fighting for democracy, we need to create art that is fighting for democracy. If it sounds like a parroted dogmatic slogan, then I put it more concretely: we need to create art that is against the secret police [特務]. I come from Chongqing, I saw the secret police on the rampage, disregarding the law, destroying order. Today, when we want to fight for democracy, we immediately run into the secret police. To oppose the secret police is essential at present for our survival. In our present juncture of life and death this is the central task of literature.(p.188)

To change luxury art into essential art, first the answer to the question "For whom?" has to be found. Xu quotes the conclusion to what he calls "Problems of Literature and Art" (文藝問題) (i.e. Mao Zedong's speech at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art; though unacknowledged) that "For whom?" is the fundamental question of principle and that everything else, like popularization and raising of standards, is of secondary importance; and the answer is that literature should be primarily for the workers, peasants and soldiers and only secondarily for the petty bourgeoisie.(p.188)

That literature should be for the masses is already regarded as a basic premise by Jiang Tianzuo 蔣天佐 when he turns his attention to one of those problems of secondary importance in "Speaking of Popularization: Remembering Lu Xun" (論大眾化問題紀念魯迅).(2.3,pp.283-286). Jiang lists the achievements of popularization in the last decade: in creative practice, the observation and depiction of life at grass-roots level, the use of the spoken language and the creation of pieces easy for the masses to take in have become more widespread. In theory, popularization as the necessary road for literature to take has become generally undisputed and the principles and the means of putting it into practice have been worked out. Popularization, he explains, is not simplification, and that the "masses" (大眾) in popularization should mean "the great masses of the

people" (人民大眾), not just the workers, peasants and labouring people, although they are the backbone.(p.283)

In concluding his essay he offers a few general observations about modern Chinese literature, in which he sees the basic antithesis of old and new forms at the height of the May Fourth era change, after the seizure of Shenyang by the Japanese in 1931, into the conflict of progressive and reactionary forms.

In essence, a conflict between the prospects of national liberation and democratic freedom on the one hand, and colonialism, national subjugation and genocide on the other. This conflict still exists today; despite the victory gained after the eight years of war, the crisis is not over yet.(p.286)

He then goes on to put popularization into the political context:

Between literatures just as between human beings, there exists the relation of dominator and dominated. This relationship of dominance exists not only in national literature but also in international literature. Internationally, occidental forms have an undeniable dominance over oriental forms. As for our country, the struggle between the democratic, free, mass literature and the comprador, semi-feudalistic literature is still at a stalemate, undecided, the relationship of dominance has not yet been established. . . . On the basis of the above, it can be said: the popularization movement is in essence a struggle for the dominant position in the realm of literature.(p.286)

The way the artist has to go about his task and the kind of work he should create is defined by Lao Xin 勞辛 in his review of Zang Kejia's 臧克家 collection *Poems of Ten Years* (十年詩選).(2.5.pp.535-540) From the criticism of the shortcomings of Zang's poems Lao Xin's theories emerge. With some exception the poems are judged "not to be to the liking of the people" and "to be lacking in the feelings of the masses" (which, incidentally, would have mortified Zang, who always set great store by being the people's poet and who had gained the name 'peasant-poet' 農民詩人 for himself). Their not reflecting the changes in the countryside is blamed on the lack of democratic policies for safeguarding literary creation. However, even reflecting reality is not enough in itself, there are further requirements facing the poet. Talking about the poem "Tears, Sweat, Pearls" (淚珠,汗珠,珍珠), though the reviewer concedes that it destroys the mythical image of this ancient oriental country, he thinks the poet's rational acknowledgement that the existing system of exploitation is the bane of Chinese society is not deep enough.

The poet's accusations, he says, have a "humanistic" (人道主義) quality about them; they describe "actual 'truth'" (現實的"真"). Instead, he should, "on the basis of the social function of literature, tell [them] about the ideals of life and the belief in the struggle. Expressing this artistic 'truth' is the only creative method of realism".(p.539) Realism in Lao Xin's definition, it seems, is not the objective portrayal of life, but a description of it as one would have it, interpreted and transformed according to an ideological theory, i.e., Socialist Realism.<sup>29</sup>

Aspects of realism and truth come up again in Hong Zhong's 洪鐘 review of Sha Ding's 沙汀 novel, "*Breaking Through the Cordon*" (「闖關」).(2.6.pp.759-763) The reviewer praises the novel for dealing skillfully and organically with the demands of realism: the creation of typical characters in typical situations.(p.760) Since typical characters and situations are arrived at by declaring certain chosen features dominant, at the expense of unfitting individual or particular ones, the realism that demands them is of the same variety as Lao Xin's: a presentation of a preconceived, doctored reality.

Considering the worth of the novel, Hong Zhong takes up an argument with the literary theory behind the views of Li Changzhi, who, in an earlier review, has judged the novel dull and mediocre.

The basic task of criticism is to make clear what the subject of a work is. It has to penetrate the web of artistic forms within the work to find out where that subject resides, and point out the innate character of society [portrayed] in the work, which has been transformed into images and story. Only if one is able to grasp the "truth" of the innate character of society, can one grasp "goodness" in social development and create the "beauty" of artistic images. . . . Mr. Li maintains that the effect of aesthetic perception has greater artistic value than that of reality, and that ideally, art must accord with the concept of beauty. Mr. Li places the three concepts of truth, goodness and beauty on a par with one another, and regards them as independent entities. But according to the scientific theory of art [*sic*], both rational and perceptual knowledge necessarily originate from reality. Goodness and beauty are only attributes of, forms of expressions of truth, and can only be regarded as produced by truth on a certain level. Recognition of a given truth determines the recognition of beauty and goodness. Only after recognizing truth can beauty and goodness be grasped clearly.(p.761)

Hong's giving prominence to truth in the triptich of truth, goodness and beauty, often regarded as inseparable, is not fundamentally different from Li Changzhi's prizing of



beauty, but that does not mean that if a work is judged "true" it will also necessarily be good and beautiful. Furthermore, the "truth" must be a perceived truth, not a belief.

In the review "Ma Fantuo's *Mountain Songs* and Zang Kejia's *Treasure*" (「馬凡陀的山歌」和臧克家的「寶貝兒」) (pp.509-512) Lao Xin returns to the premise that writers have to create works that appeal to the masses. To this end their writings have to be made national and popular in form. An obvious source for inspiration or imitation are folk songs, which are the people's own things and are simple and clear in form of expression. From the point of raising artistic standards, however, he feels that old forms, are not to be relied on exclusively, as they often retain a feudal flavour.

Zhao Shuli's 趙樹理 book, *Rhymes of Li Youcai* (李有才板話), an actual example of putting the theory of popularization into practice, is hailed by Yang Wengeng 楊文耕 in his review of the same title (3.6.pp.766-768) as an inspiration to the Chinese literary world. As Yang says, Chinese writers had been brandishing for years slogans like "Popularization" (大衆化, 通俗化) and "Literature should serve the people" (文藝應該爲人民服務), but there had been a discrepancy between theory and practice. At last in *Rhymes of Li Youcai* the language of the peasants and the atmosphere of the real countryside got represented. Yet, despite its declared achievements, the book can not avoid the usual fate of works written to a prescription: of being criticized for not going far enough, for falling short of the ideal. The reviewer remarks, that the stories in the book "only show the implementation of the policies of marriage revolution and land reform in the liberated areas, and hardly raise the problem of even more widespread hardship and oppression suffered by peasants".(p.768)

After all the above, often repetitive, views concordant with the Maoist theory on literature and art, three reviews by Tang Shi 唐湜, published in the last three issues of the magazine, provide a welcome change of approach. Not only do they eschew terms such as popularization, struggle and exploitation, but their points of reference and fields of comparison are also different: European, mainly English, literature, theories, writers. "Star-rain" (「星雨集」) (4.1.pp.95-96), a review of Chen Jingrong's 陳敬容 prose-poem collection, starts off with an account of Virginia Woolf's views on masculine and

feminine style in literature, inspired by Coleridge's words on the androgynous nature of great minds, and then it proceeds to examine Chen's prose-poems for feminine suggestive power and rougher masculine flavour.<sup>30</sup> While such an examination has not much direct bearing on literary philosophy, it shows an approach to literature from a non-pragmatic viewpoint. Principles of Tang's literary philosophy get expressed more clearly in the last paragraph of the review, where, à propos of some newspapers' criticism of women poets, he has the following to say:

. . . We each of us should have freedom to create our own form and style, based on individual disposition; there is no need to follow others or force others to share one's road. Just as Mrs. Woolf pointed out, mentioning that the Fascists held meetings on how to develop Italian Fascist fiction and poetry: it is rather doubtful whether poetry can be hatched in an incubator. Italian Fascist poetry was a monster-infant, which could not have had a long life. We can, and what is more, we must create our own works, on the basis of our own, individual artistic conscience. There is no need to affect a tone and strike a pose, to shout the slogan of "revolution", while wearing white gloves.(p.96)

In contrast to previous contributions, here artistic freedom is not qualified in any way, the creation of literary works is determined solely by artistic conscience and individual disposition. Literary prescriptions and their enforcements are held to be ineffectual and counter-productive. The last sentence seems to be referring to the incongruity of middle class intellectuals striking a revolutionary pose, with the thrust running counter to the Maoist line: not popularization, but "individualization".

The next review by Tang Shi, "Lu Ling and his *Courtship*" (路翎與他的「求愛」) (4.2.pp.189-192), weighs straight in with a discourse on the subjective and individual nature of a work of art. Following on from this, the task of art, in this case fiction, also gets re-defined:

. . . I do not want to fetter the spirit of a young and promising writer by using "Plot", "Character" [and such terms], commonly used by critics. These have already become dispensable in modern fiction. The task of modern fiction is simply to express the reality of life. What is the reality of life? As Mrs. Woolf said in "Modern Fiction", it is simply the myriad impressions received by an ordinary mind in an ordinary day - the trivial, the fantastic, the evanescent, engraved with the sharpness of steel. These come from all sides, an incessant rain of minute particles. "Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end". Just as William Blake

put it: the world in a grain of sand; these drops are finite but contain the infinite. Life does not necessarily agree with rigid logic, conscious life is only an extremely small and indeterminant part of it. Therefore, to explore human nature, one has to explore that hidden, half- or unconscious part: the deeper we dig, the better. The reason Lu Ling has great prospects is exactly because he is not tied up by the perspective of vulgar "logic", only "revealing" a few superficial and isolated phenomena in human life, with so-called "social or political significance". In his writings he captures a few simple things, but does not isolate them from the complicated net of human life; he only strikes one key, but calls forth many harmonious sounds, mute [*sic*] but strong; an enlightenment, but transparent, capable of many explanations. . . . Comparing Cheng Zaozhi's 程造之 novels with his, Cheng appears impoverished and pitiable, without life or enthusiasm. Because Cheng manufactures (not creates, but mechanically makes up) fiction by using "social" logic and a vulgar, skin-deep way of looking at things. (pp.189-190)

According to Tang, the reality of life which fiction has to express is not only the objective, social or political reality, but also the individual reality, and its major and decisive part, the sub-conscious. While on the evidence of the above passage Tang Shi appears to be raising the banner of the psychoanalytic school of fiction, he ideally wishes for its synthesis with what he calls "documentary" or "news" (新聞主義) style. In the review of Christopher Isherwood's novel *Prater Violet* (紫羅蘭姑娘) (3.6.pp.763-766), he explains that in works of the former school, characters get isolated from time and society, and become blurred and indistinct. This would be remedied by the latter style's direct, clear reflection of social reality, by putting the characters into a social context. What Tang is railing against in the review of Lu Ling's novel, is the one-sidedness and the superficiality of certain works purporting to describe reality.

From the editorials, reviews and theoretical essays above, it is evident that the magazine's literary philosophy, which sets out the "new look, new ideal, new stand" necessary to achieve a Literary Renaissance, is on the whole in the spirit of Mao's 1942 *Yan'an Talks on Literature and Art*. In the light of Li Jianwu's later remarks, that the magazine received the backing of the (Communist) Party and that Zheng Zhenduo always had ways of establishing contact with the underground leaders of the Party, this is perhaps not surprising.<sup>31</sup> As Zheng was responsible for the editing of articles on art

theory, the inclusion of the three conspicuously discordant reviews by Tang Shi might be due to his (Zheng's) having had to leave Shanghai.

We have seen that despite the suggestion in the title and in the cover designs of Renaissance paintings, there were no particular analogies sought with the European Renaissance and the connection was not the central thought of the magazine.<sup>32</sup> While the title could be taken to signify a general anticipation for an upsurge in literature, the paintings gave the impression of some connection with outside cultures, which was not justified. The reason for making such an impression may have been to encourage liberal intellectuals, in the spirit of Zheng's intention to gather a wide spectrum of contributors, and in keeping with the objective of the United Front, for which Zheng Zhenduo was a committed, though non-Party member, activist.<sup>33</sup> After the destruction of the war, the magazine was generally seen as a focal point for writers to play their part in the rebirth of the nation, hence the stress on working for the general good.

#### Purpose and approach of study

The expression of hope for a literary revival, embodied by the title of the magazine and spelled out in the "Inaugural Words" of Zheng Zhenduo, invites the questions: was that hope realized; was there indeed such a revival, such a Literary Renaissance after the war and before the Communist unification? The purpose of this study is to answer these questions, to examine whether the works published in the magazine constituted, or were part of, a Literary Renaissance.

In this examination we have two possible courses to take. One is to rely on their own definition of Literary Renaissance and evaluate the contributions against their requirements for it. This basically would mean measuring degrees of compliance with prescriptions for socially committed literature - that is, applying political and not literary standards.

The other approach, based on the notions of renewal, improvement and development, would compare the works in the magazine with the best of their predecessors in the

thirties and early forties, looking for differences, changes, continuities and discontinuities. Implicit in this approach are general and objective standards of literary excellence, applied to both sides of the comparison. It is this approach which the present study will take. In particular, since modern Chinese literature from its inception has taken nourishment from foreign literatures, the examination will focus on imported themes and techniques used, and on inspiration, in form and content, coming from native sources. It will, where appropriate, also look into the world outlook and allegiances of contributors, and try to discover groupings and trends. The discussion will be divided according to genres, devoting a chapter each to poetry, short stories, novels and drama. Finally, weighing it all up, an answer to the basic question of this study will be attempted.

## Chapter 2

### Poetry

The magazine published about 130 poems by more than 60 authors. On average each issue contained 3 or 4 poems and there was a special poetry edition in Vol.3, No.4, June 1947, to celebrate Poets' Day, the fifth day of the fifth lunar month.

The editors did not have a high opinion of the poems submitted and chosen for publication. As Li Jianwu remarked in the editorial note to the special poetry issue, they felt that on the whole the poems were written to a formula, in feelings, vocabulary and form, lacked individual voices and resembled more speechification than poetry.<sup>1</sup> It was not just poems in *Literary Renaissance* though, but contemporary poetry in general that Li was dissatisfied with; writing on other occasions in his capacity as a literary critic, he expressed the view that modern poetry since the May Fourth Movement had not found its own road yet.<sup>2</sup> Holding up Qu Yuan as an example for taking forms and subjects from the people, and incorporating them into his own work, Li felt that writers of modern poetry had to "condense a more solid form from among the people", their art had to "absorb the essence of the feelings of million lives" and "embody the demands of the masses".<sup>3</sup> Thus the future of modern poetry he saw in popularization, in making the voice of the people its own voice and he quoted the following guidelines by Lu Xun on poetry:

Poetry must have a form, must be easy to remember, to understand, to sing, must be pleasant to listen to, but its form must not be rigid. It has to have rhyme, not necessarily according to the old ones, just to read smoothly.<sup>4</sup>

By reiterating these demands, Li seemed to have disregarded the declared aim and actual achievements of poets like Ai Qing 艾青 in speaking for the masses. Even in the case of a poet like Tian Jian 田间, who consciously strove for popularization, Li felt the vocabulary and form to be that of a literary man and not popularized enough.<sup>5</sup>

The overall views of Li Jianwu, echoing clearly the Yan'an directives on literature, appear to clash with his critical remarks about particular poems in *Literary Renaissance*

and elsewhere. Formulistic writing, lack of individual voice, speechifications and a literary flavour would seem to be the natural (if not inevitable) consequences of writers from different backgrounds trying to adopt a popular voice and write about a pre-limited range of subjects, to achieve a pre-determined effect. Li may have subscribed to the general, politically motivated theory, but seemed to have been unable to approve its practical results.

The critical writings of Lao Xin, another frequent contributor of book reviews to *Literary Renaissance*, display a similar underlying conviction, but are expressed in more militant terms and without a hint of Li's ambivalent attitude. The task of modern poetry, he states, is to fight for democracy. To this end it has to become the people's art, be understood and liked by the people. Folk songs and ballads are offered as suitable nourishment and Lu Xun's views on poetry are again evoked for guidance.<sup>6</sup>

Determined by these extra-literary requirements, Lao Xin's preferred aesthetic quality in poetry is "rough and rugged beauty" (粗獷美), characterized by heroicness (豪邁), sturdiness (勁健) and expansiveness (雄渾). Typical examples of it he finds in the poetry of Tian Jian and Zang Kejia. This is contrasted with exquisiteness and delicacy, such as displayed in the poem "Void" (空) by Yuan Kejia 袁可嘉, which is criticized as a new variety of "flowers in the wind, moon on the snow" (風花雪月) poems, for being "contrary to the spirit of the age" and for "covering up rotten thoughts with flowery diction".<sup>7</sup>

Tang Shi, the third main poetry critic in *Literary Renaissance* and himself a poet, saw characteristics in the contemporary Chinese poetic scene similar or parallel to that of modern international poetry. It seemed to him that modern poetry could be divided into two categories. One category includes self-exploring, psychoanalytic poetry and "poems on objects" (詠物詩) which make use of the topic to express the poet's ideas; they are "dignified and elegant in stance, and borrow external objects as mirrors to discover the self or to state complicated feelings". The other includes humorous light poems (輕鬆詩) and descriptive poems (浮繪詩) which depict characters or satirize reality; they "make charcoal-sketch-like drawings using the style of folk songs; their form is light and

pleasing, they are often taken up and quoted by city folk". The former is exemplified by W. H. Auden, the latter by the American poets E. L. Masters, Carl Sandburg and E. A. Robinson.<sup>8</sup> In another review by Tang, Auden as an example is joined by T. S. Eliot, and the poetry they represent is termed metaphysical (形而上的), while the other side, exemplified by Masters, Sandburg and Frost, is called, somewhat disparagingly, newspaper or journalistic literature (報章文學 or 新聞主義的作品).<sup>9</sup> On both occasions, the works of the poets whose collections are reviewed (Du Yunxie 杜運燮 and Wang Xindi) are described as occupying various points on the continuum between these two poles.

Talking more specifically about contemporary Chinese poetry, Tang discerns two parallel tides towards modernity:

One consists of the painstaking work of Mu Dan [穆旦], Du Yunxie and others, a group of conscious modernists, whose tutors are T. S. Eliot, Auden and Spender. In temperament, they are reserved and dignified, what they want to express and get through is only their own individuality; perhaps, they also intentionally magnify their own self. They are to some extent modern Hamlets, suffering forever in the search for and in the destruction of the balance between the self and the world. But also, they often get stimulation from this world, only in these stimulations the appearance of the world gets dissolved like magma. . . .

The other consists of the resolute and courageous advances of Lü Yuan [綠原] and his circle. Their move towards the modernization of poetry is unconscious, from life to poetry, a natural sublimation. They learnt from Lu Xun's Nietzschean intellectual style, from his uprightness, courage and pride; in life they move consciously towards the struggle. Unrestrained in temperament, they have the valour and self-confidence of a Don Quixote, and want to throw themselves into this world, attacking life in its depth. But they too display a prominent and distinctive individuality, are a little overstated, and similarly contemplate everything through the body's sense organs and the "sensuality" [Bian Zhilin's 卞之琳 trans.] of life [用身體的感官與生活的'肉感'思想一切].<sup>10</sup>

Tang sees the development of modern Chinese poetry in the complementary existence and mutual influence of these two movements, the conscious and the natural.

The duality that Tang Shi describes in these examples gives a more comprehensive account of the Chinese poetic scene and includes at the same time more simplistic divisions of poetry (like individual vs. social, artistic form vs. realistic content). On one side is self-exploring and contemplative poetry, focusing on the individual, on the



universal in human life, and on the connection between them; on the other side is narrative and descriptive poetry written with pragmatic intent, focusing on the actual social and political reality. The distinction in form then follows from their underlying orientations: the concentration required by the former to capture elusive thoughts makes the style more refined, while for the latter, the extra-literary effect striven for defines a clear, pleasing, humorous or folk-song style.

Turning now to the poems in *Literary Renaissance*, we can find among them most of the characteristic groups that were sorted into dual divisions by these three critics above. But they arrange themselves more into a spectrum than into two opposite camps. As the result of the Sino-Japanese war, when intellectuals fleeing from Japanese advances came face to face with the depressing conditions in the interior of China, there were very few poets who did not show awareness of, or concern about, the reality around them. Besides, almost all poets would have agreed with generally and vaguely worded objectives, such as "writing for democracy, for the great majority of the people". Concern about social problems, rather than being a criterion of demarcation, was a motif present in most poems of the magazine. The difference seems to be in the degree of its dominance on the poem or, looking from another angle, in the transformation into poetic form of the ideas, feelings and experiences that the poet wanted to express. From overtly political pieces, through descriptive and satirical poems, to pensive philosophical poems, this spectrum is also one of largely increasing indirectness, condensation, depth and concern with language. In discussing the poems, this more or less graduated arrangement will be followed, concentrating on types, thematic or stylistic, of poems, instead of poets, though the two often overlap.

On one end of the spectrum we find poems which expound or illustrate the Communist ideology. Topics here include: the closeness of the poet to the common people, his singing about the hardship of the poor toiling masses, his calling them to fight and offering his songs as vanguards to their struggle,<sup>11</sup> the brotherhood of workers and peasants,<sup>12</sup> the call of the people for democracy,<sup>13</sup> the glorification of work and the necessity of tempering for people to become useful in life and revolution.<sup>14</sup> While some

of these themes may be detectable in other poems too, what sets these apart is that the ideological point intended completely and exclusively rules the poem: it is presented in the raw, without any accompanying thoughts or attempts at its transformation. The images employed are either stereotypes, like "enveloping darkness" and "impending thunder" for harsh social conditions and the predicted revolution respectively; or specifically Communist ones, like tempering in the furnace of the world or the symbol of the hammer and sickle. They use bombastic phrases, such as "eternal happiness of mankind", "everlasting friendship of all nations of the world", repetitions, either exact or slightly modified, and parallel constructions; all intensifying the impact of the message. They tend to be long poems, without definite structure, rhyme or rhythm. In many cases the title describes the poem adequately, needing nothing else to be said. In summary, Bian Zhilin's sarcastic comments, made in the mid-thirties, about some poets, would seem extremely appropriate here:

. . . you are just now setting out to write a poem; the subject matter, you have determined, is to be the peasantry going through hell on earth. If you have not deeply felt much of anything, what are you to do? No matter - don't you already have a certain general notion of modern economics? Just give an explanation of your ideal reason for their having fallen into that tragic state (of course it should be written as separate lines, with a few rhymes); depict their suffering (remember, it's "suffering"! ) in the most detailed of sweeping statements and generalities, using plenty of obvious metaphors; use some flowery phrases, count up the lines - you already have quite a few, you can stop. And yet, it must be said, you have been too pessimistic. So now, please, get out the cock that crows at dawn, and make your final conclusion with a dramatic phrase like "a Red Sun has surged forth in the East!".<sup>15</sup>

A number of poems, still basically political in theme, show various, more subtle ways of treating their subjects. In Qing Bo's 青勃 poem, "I Am a Son of Peasants" (我是農人的兒子) (2.5.p.478), the poet's role and his involvement in the revolutionary struggle are described with strong, vivid metaphors. The first two stanzas of the poem read as follows:

The great hand of the sower  
From the distressed land  
From the side of my weeping mother  
Gathered me up and scattered me on the land of struggle

The hooves of the rich trampled on my head  
I put forth roots into the deep earth  
The golden sticks of the sun knocked on my window  
I sent out tender shoots towards the world of men

播種的大手  
把我從多災多難的田野  
從哭泣的母親身邊  
抓起來，散在鬥爭的土地上

財主的蹄子在我的頭上踩着  
我伸出根扎在深厚的地下  
太陽的金手杖敲打着我的門窗  
向人間，我吐出鮮嫩的芽

Having come from "potato coloured hamlets", his involvement is as inevitable as a certain crop growing from a certain seed; he wants to "open a red flower" for the poor peasants. Though the poem then ends with a slogan-like conclusion, the freshness of the opening image distinguishes it from many similar attempts.

The hope in the future and the forecast of deliverance, another standard theme, is expressed with dramatic contrasts in Qing Bo's "Suffering China Has a Tomorrow" (苦難的中國有明天) (3.4.p.446):

In frozen days  
    There is a fire  
On moon-black nights  
    There is a lamp  
In the desert  
    There are camels  
Under the ground  
    There are seeds  
Within the dyke  
    There is a torrent  
Under the whip  
    There is a roar  
The insulted  
    Has his hatred  
The poor  
    Have backbone  
The weeping sky  
    Has echoing thunder  
The shivering winter  
    Has spring dreams  
Places watered with blood and sweat

Have everlasting flowers  
Suffering China  
Has a tomorrow

凍結的日子  
有火  
月黑夜  
有燈  
沙原上  
有駱駝  
土地下面  
有種子  
堤岸裏頭  
有激流  
鞭子底下  
有咆哮  
被污辱的  
有仇恨  
窮苦的人  
有骨頭  
哭泣的天空  
有響雷  
打抖的冬天  
有春夢  
血汗灌溉的地方  
有不凋的花  
苦難的中國  
有明天

While the rhythm is different, on the whole the poem reminds one of Tian Jian's 'drumbeat verses', written during the war, mainly on patriotic themes, with short lines and a throbbing tempo, aiming to stir up the feelings of the audience. In Qing Bo's poem the simple short sentences, the rhythm of the couplets, and the repeated structure, with the sole verb (有 'has/there is'), enable the poem to fulfill the requirements of having to be "easy to remember, to understand, to sing" and give it the flavour of 'publicly declaimed poetry' (朗誦詩).

'Publicly declaimed poetry' was born at the beginning of the Sino-Japanese war, out of the initial enthusiasm to express and disseminate patriotic and combative sentiments.

It had to be easily understandable by hearing, which meant the use of the spoken language, attention to rhythm and a turn to traditional folk-song patterns.<sup>16</sup>

Instances of such poems are the "Street Verses" (街頭散曲) (1.2.pp.172-173) by Ren Jun 任鈞, one of the first advocates of 'publicly declaimed poetry'. 散曲 was a type of verse popular in the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties, with tonal patterns modelled on tunes drawn from folk-songs. Here is the second of the "Street Verses", called "Monkey and Man" (猴兒和人):

There are two chains here:  
One is fastening the monkey,  
The other, fastening the monkey keeper.

The monkey is controlled by the chain:  
It leaps and jumps in high spirits,  
But still has to get into a red robe,  
Put on a mask,  
And assuming airs  
March with stately steps.....

The monkey keeper,  
Is also controlled by the chain:  
He beats the gong,  
Talks,  
Hums a song -  
While driving the monkey to perform,  
He still has to put on a smiling face  
And bow continuously to the spectators.

There are two chains here:  
One is controlling the monkey,  
The other, controlling the monkey keeper;  
The difference is simply:  
One chain is visible,  
The other cannot be seen;  
One chain is made of iron,  
The other is formed by life...

這裏有兩條鐵鏈：  
一條拴着猴兒，  
另一條拴着耍猴兒的人。

猴兒在鐵鏈的控制下面：  
興高采烈地蹦蹦跳跳，

還要穿上紅袍，  
戴上假面，  
裝模作樣地  
    趟着方步走路....

耍猴兒的人  
    也在鐵鏈的控制下面：  
敲着鑼，  
說着話，  
哼着歌——  
一邊驅使着猴兒做戲，  
一邊還要裝出一副笑容  
    不斷地向觀眾打躬作揖。

這裡有兩條鐵鏈：  
    一條控制着猴兒，  
    另一條控制着耍猴兒的人；  
不同的只是：  
    一條看得到，  
    另一條看不到；  
    一條是鐵打的，  
    另一條卻由「生活」所構成.....

The pattern, seen in Qing Bo's "Suffering China Has a Tomorrow", of a succession of closed couplets, with parallel syntax, expressing contrasts of some kinds, was frequently employed in political poems, as the setting up of opposites and the rhythm of repetition increase the agitational effect. A typical example of this is the beginning of the poem "Manifesto" (宣言), from the "Angry Lyrics" (憤怒的抒情詩) of Du Danxiang 杜丹鄉 (1.6.p.720):

You have a whip,  
    I have a will!  
The bayonet is yours,  
    The ideals are mine!

你有鞭子，  
    我有意志！  
刺刀是你的，  
    理想是我的！

The sustained use of this device throughout a longer poem can be found in the "Guerilla Song" (游擊隊歌) of Du Yunxie, written at the end of the war.(1.2.pp.154-155)

In the context of the soldiers' mocking the enemy to boost their own courage, the use of the contrasting couplets feels appropriate, but the language and the concepts used are not those of the ordinary soldiers, and so betray the underlying didactic purpose. The poem reads as follows:

In the sound of your laughter,  
    Trembles fear;  
In the oily creases of your smile,  
    Are deeply carved worries;  
In the forcibly upheld pride,  
    Crawls servility;  
In the dissatisfied satisfaction,  
    Marches tragedy.

Your weakness,  
    Is our very road;  
The power used for doing evil,  
    Is our concrete;  
Sumptuous banquets of red meat,  
    Quicken our footsteps;  
The cluster of great mansions,  
    Are our very indictment.

The night distresses you,  
    But it encourages us;  
The wind scares you,  
    But it calms us;  
Stars jeer at you;  
    But they blow kisses to us;  
Grass and trees keep watch on you,  
    But they guide us.

We draw up plans;  
    You are having nightmares;  
We wait to set out,  
    You argue in meetings;  
We only need to fire a shot,  
    And your sight blurs, head swims,  
Then we open our mouths and curse,  
    And what follows is our laughter.

你們的笑聲裏，  
    顫抖着恐懼；  
油膩的笑紋裏，  
    深刻着憂慮；

硬撐的驕傲裏，  
    匍匐着卑偃；  
不滿足的滿足裏，  
    正進行着悲劇。

你們的弱點，  
    就是我們的路；  
用以作惡的威權，  
    是我們的三合土；  
紅血肥肉的盛筵，  
    加快我們的腳步；  
櫛比的大樓房，  
    就是我們的控告書。

夜苦惱你們，  
    而鼓勵我們；  
風凶嚇你們，  
    而鎮靜我們；  
星子嘲笑你們，  
    而「飛吻」我們；  
草木監視你們，  
    而引導我們。

我們擬計劃，  
    你們在作噩夢；  
我們等候「出發」，  
    你們在開會辯論；  
我們只要打一發，  
    你們就眼花頭昏；  
於是我們才開口罵，  
    而後是我們的笑聲。

Zang Kejia's "Hand-to-hand Fight" (肉搏) (3.4.p.441) employs this device more successfully. The brevity of the poem prevents the boredom of repetition, the contrasts are striking almost to the point of being paradoxes and the extremeness of the situation is expressed by pared-down abstractions:

Numbness,  
Has perceptions of stabbing pain;  
Temporary refuge,  
Has crawled out of its den;  
Patience,  
Has lost its last strength;  
Life,



Is fighting hand-to-hand in the front line!  
(It is also the last line!)

麻木，  
有了刺痛的感覺；  
苟安，  
爬出了它的老窩；  
忍耐，  
失掉了最後的力量；  
生命，  
在第一線上肉搏！  
「也是最後的一線！」

Prominent among the political poems is a group that is usually referred to as 'satirical poems' 諷刺詩.<sup>17</sup> There is accounting for the 刺 part of the phrase, meaning 'to stab', as these poems were used as sharp weapons to attack their targets: oppression, police surveillance, corruption, poverty and exploitation. The character 諷 would then imply that the censure is brought about by indirect means, by derision or by the difference between the surface expression and the intended meaning, but this is not always the case; often such a poem merely consists of a list of tendentiously phrased descriptions or a string of direct accusations. Calling them 'satirical' thus seems to be based on their function rather than on their use of irony as a means of expression.

A case in point is Tian Di's 田地 long poem, which classifies itself in the title as "A Satirical Poem of Shanghai" (上海的諷刺詩). (3.6,pp.703-708) Modelled on Carl Sandburg's "Chicago", it is an exhaustive panorama of the city, its inhabitants from all walks of life, from the rich to those sleeping on the streets, from all trades, professions and businesses, at various times of the day and night. The juxtaposition of passages describing opposite sides of the social divide has an undoubtedly provocative effect, but there is little irony or satire in it to justify the title.

Strongly worded phrases and exaggerated metaphors are characteristic features of these satirical poems. "Hell and Nightmare" (地獄和惡夢) (3.5.p.579) by Ren Jun is a good example:

I want to breath freely,  
But somebody pinches my nostrils;  
I want to sing to my heart's content,

But somebody grips at my throat;  
I want to stride forward,  
But somebody pins down my legs,  
So I can't move any more;  
I raise my head,  
And see around me  
    Countless ferocious dark shadows flickering...  
Heavens!  
Where am I after all? -  
In hell?  
Or in a nightmare?

Then, somebody seems to answer:  
"You are definitely not in hell,  
And not having a nightmare either!  
Really, can't you see? -  
You live in no other than  
An absolutely free, happy country".

我要自由呼吸，  
卻有人捏住了我的鼻孔；  
我要盡情歌唱，  
卻有人扼住了我的喉嚨；  
我要大步向前，  
卻有人拖住了我的雙腿，  
再也無法走動；  
我抬頭一望，  
就看見週遭有着  
    無數凜惡的黑影幢幢……

天呀！  
我究竟是在甚麼地方呢？—  
是在地獄裏頭？  
還是在做着惡夢？

這時候，仿佛有誰在回答我了：  
「你決不是在地獄裏呀，  
也並沒有做着甚麼惡夢！  
難道你真的不明白嗎？  
你正不折不扣地生活在啊，  
生活在一個自由幸福的國家裏中！」

At the beginning of the poem, we see again the use of the contrasting couplets, which make perceptible the atmosphere of oppression and terror. Then the rhetorical question,

with highly coloured metaphors, sums up the feelings of the speaker and the ironical reply with the contrary exaggeration confirms it.

Similar in subject, tone of phrasing and impoverishment of vocabulary, but without the ironical evaluation is Ji Yuan's 紀原 "Black Eyes" (黑色的眼) (4.1.p.66), in which surveillance and persecution are symbolised by the watchful eye. The first two stanzas read as follows:

Black eyes  
Stare at me,  
Behind the black eyes  
Is hidden a black sword.

I walk on the street,  
Those black eyes  
Note the line of my vision-  
I see  
Men whipped till the blood stops flowing,  
I see  
The whip used for beating,  
I see  
Lawful massacre,  
I see  
Human faces uglier than pigs.

黑色的眼  
盯住我，  
黑眼的後面  
藏着一把黑色的劍。

我走在街上，  
那黑色的眼  
就注意我底視線—  
我看見了  
抽盡了血的人，  
我看見了  
用來打人的皮鞭，  
我看見了  
奉公守法的屠殺，  
我看見了  
比豬還要醜的人臉。

The third and fourth stanzas, in structure parallel to the second, describe how his conversations when with friends and his thoughts when alone are also taken note of. The fifth stanza then, in a framing counterpart to the first, concludes:

Then those black eyes  
Having learned who I am,  
Stick into my chest  
That black sword!

那黑色的眼  
知道了我是誰，  
就在我底胸前  
插上了那把黑色的劍！

Though its range of focus is more extended and its target less specific, the critical tone and the use of the hyperbolic descriptions connect the poem "Fatherland" (祖國) by Yu Mingchuan 俞銘傳 (1.1.p.38) to the above group of satirical poems. It depicts the decline and the state of his country and ends with stating the necessity for change.

Marco Polo's Golden Country  
Is a mysterious coral island,  
Wringing out dry the brain of adventurers.

It lets the sultan's storehouse be locked under ground,  
Flying locusts sweep away the flowers and leaves,  
Bedbugs multiply on human blood.

Bragging about a five-thousand-year-long life,  
The moss-terrapin hibernates in the mud,  
Excessive lime settles in its bones.  
Since the last *qilin* was hit by a hunter's arrow,  
In the nest of the phoenix,  
Reverse-feathered black chicks have been hatched.

In the Confucian temple of the Golden Mean  
Idols who rectified names in the extreme, are worshipped;  
And the classics, full of aphorisms,  
Are taken as the scapegoat for life.

The pigtail of Ah Q, who sneaked away to find fortune,  
Is it like the wings of the Goddess of Peace?  
The begonia leaf  
Enchanting the pastoral poet  
Is in fact a Spanish bullring.

The oranges of Huainan became the bitter fruit of Huaibei,  
And history is still a photographic negative:  
Dictatorship acts behind the words of democracy,  
Rousseau's name explains away debauchery,  
Scientific theory is used as capital for making money,  
Religion has built the Dragon Gate of this world,  
Opium poppies bloom everywhere in cities and villages.

The pines on the Five Mountains  
Are not dead yet not alive;  
Rice and wheat, generation after generation,  
Vitality has already been extracted from the fields;  
To make the soil fertile  
It needs the overflow of a deluge.

馬哥孛羅的黃金國  
是一個神秘的珊瑚島  
絞盡冒險家的腦汁。

讓蘇丹的倉庫鎖在地下，  
飛蝗掃蕩了花和葉，  
臭蟲藉人血而繁殖。

夸耀着五千年的壽命，  
綠毛龜在泥濘裏冬眠，  
骨骼中沉澱了過分的石灰：  
自從麒麟的末裔中了獵人的箭，  
鳳凰的巢裏  
孵出到毛的黑雞：

中庸的聖廟裏供奉  
極端的正名的偶像；  
寫滿格言的經典  
做了生活的替罪羊。

溜之大吉的阿Q的辮子  
像不像和平女神的翅膀？  
田園詩人神往的  
秋海棠的葉子  
原是西班牙的鬥牛場。

淮南的橘變成了淮北的枳，  
而且歷史還是一張底片：  
民主和獨裁演着雙簧，  
盧騷的名字解釋了荒淫，

科學的理論用作發財的本錢，  
宗教建築了現世的龍門，  
罌粟花開遍都市與鄉村。

五岳上的松柏  
不死也不生；  
稻麥一代又一代，  
田地中的元氣已經拔光：  
爲着土質的肥沃，  
需要一次洪水的泛濫。

The ruthlessness of the land, its self-deluding, ossified civilization and irrelevant idolatry are described by strikingly unexpected metaphors and associations. Some of the images are taken from Chinese mythology and history, some establish connections with foreign cultures. The links at beginning of the fifth stanza are difficult to trace: Ah Q, the archetypal Chinaman from Lu Xun's story, coiled his pigtail on his head in pretending to be a revolutionary, but how do the wings of the Goddess of Peace relate to it? In the last three lines of the stanza, comes the realization that China, represented by the begonia leaf, has been reduced to a bloody battleground.<sup>18</sup> The sixth stanza illustrates how imports of foreign influence turned into "bitter fruit"<sup>19</sup> in China - concepts and theories abused and travestied, only the opium-poppies flourishing - yet history is still not seen for what it is really like. The final image of the flood, which is to restore vitality to the land, is the usual standby for revolution.

"Fatherland" is not an isolated instance among Yu Mingchuan's poems of reference to non-Chinese history as a way of interpretation. In his poem "Mourning My Teacher Wen Yiduo" (悼聞一多師) (3.5.p.539) the cruelty of rulers is described as follows:

In the Middle Ages, by dragging foxes' tails  
They hastened the creation of prairie fires;  
Nero on his balcony laughed,  
"Finally I have burned up the whole of Rome!"

中世紀拖着狐狸的尾巴  
加速度製造燎原的火災；  
尼祿在陽臺上喜笑顏開，  
「到底燒遍了整個的羅馬！」

With the second stanza the poem returns to more familiar ground and then pays homage to the poet who chose the right path:

Bureaucrats' capital piled up to build tall mansions,  
Butchers dream of shaking the four seas with their might;  
The people's body is squeezed out to become dry firewood;  
"Not enough! Put another yoke on them!"

Isn't truth the aim of poetry?  
Isn't it reality that learning has to follow?  
So you walked out of the Palace of Art

Joyfully joined the crowd on the street,  
Displaying your daring in the struggle:  
"Having come out, I do not intend to go back!"

官僚資本堆砌高樓大廈，  
屠夫們在夢想威震四海；  
人民的身體榨成了枯柴；  
「不夠！脖子上還要勒一把！」

詩歌的目標豈不是真理？  
學術豈不以現實為皈依？  
於是你走出了藝術之宮

欣欣然參加街頭的群眾，  
在鬥爭中發揮你的魄力：  
「出了門，就不打算回去的！」

The last line of the poem takes Wen Yiduo's last words after leaving his home and before his assassination, to serve as a general statement of political intention. Though Wen Yiduo is praised for walking out of the "Palace of Art" and joining the struggle, his student's casting of the poem into sonnet form is likely to be a reflection of Wen's earlier preoccupations with poetic form. All the lines contain ten syllables, and can be divided into four feet, except the last lines of the tercets which divide into three; the quatrains employ an ABBA, the tercets a near CCD rhyme scheme. The rhetoric, however is ready-made and comes from political tracts.

Thematically connected to this last poem is Tang Shi's "The Deep Sleeper" (沉睡者) (2.6.pp.681-682) which is a criticism or self-criticism of the poet's Art-for-Art's-sake attitude.

The deep sleeper has raised himself up from a dream  
Up and down, to and fro paces in the still night  
In his eyes hovering a devout smile  
On his pallid cheeks painted the land in his dream

He dreamt he was a white bird on the sea  
Skimming the surface amid the singing of the waves  
For the ocean of his time he should have left some sound  
But feared the surging waves would drown his gleaming white wings

Then with a heaven soaring cry, he flew up to the curtain of white clouds  
Reciting Homer's Epic, chanting Shakespeare's Sonnet  
Letting Carlyle's hero adorn his own accents  
And making Nietzsche's Superman his spiritual crown

But solid life can not be replaced by adornment  
The ruthless struggle can not forgive the dwarf-in-deeds  
The deep sleeper raised himself up from a dream  
At the window of black night he waits for the dawn in vain

沉睡者從夢裏欠身起來  
在沉寂的夜裏來去徘徊  
眸子裏流蕩着虔誠的微笑  
蒼白的面頰上畫着夢裏的山河

夢見化身為海上的白鳥  
在海濤的歌唱裏掠過水面  
該給這時間的海洋留下甚麼音響  
卻怕光潔白羽為洶涌的波浪淹沒

於是沖天一鳴，縱身在白雲的帷幕間  
朗誦荷馬的Epic，又高吟沙士比亞的Sonnet  
加栗爾的英雄裝飾自己的口吻  
又拿尼采的超人作精神的冠冕

而堅實的生命卻不能以裝飾代替  
殘酷的鬥爭也不會饒恕行動的矮子  
沉睡者從夢裏欠身起來  
在黑夜的窗口白等待着黎明

In the metaphoric dream of the poet-intellectual, the need to leave some response to the age is rejected for fear of contamination, which results in lofty detachment and singing of irrelevant topics. The abrupt moral comment in the last stanza then breaks the



metaphor to some extent: though the poet is awakened, since still unenlightened, his waiting is in vain.

For a contrast we might recall the inevitableness of the peasant-poet's involvement in the struggle in Qing Bo's "I am a Son of Peasants" (see above, p.33). There we see how the distress of the land leads the poet to commit himself on the side of the poor peasants, and the conclusion, though sloganlike, grows organically out of the rest of the poem.

"The Deep Sleeper"'s approach to the stand the poet should take up when faced with life, is seen again in Xindi's "Palm" (手掌).(2.1.p.68) The rambling, unpunctuated poem first describes various characteristics of this palm, then takes it to task for existing in a "half-awake dream":

The only unfortunate thing is you have a kind of "white hand" master  
Like a naughty schoolboy  
You have acquired too many bad habits  
For fear of growing callouses  
You cannot push a cart, wield a scull, shoulder an axe, work a plough  
Forever suspended in a half-awake dream  
You could never understand the sweet joy after work  
This is entirely due to pampering  
From now on I must take care not to let you become bedevilled  
Becoming an instrument of obsession  
From now on I'll beat you daily with all my might  
To beat you is to cherish you, educate you  
Until you firmly embrace the new ideal  
And believe no more in those ten dishonest  
Overnimble  
Antenna-like fingers  
Which belong to you yet are entirely unlike you

唯一不幸的 你有一個「白手」類的主人  
你已如頑皮的小學生  
養成了太多的壞習慣  
爲的怕皮肉生繭  
你不會推車搖櫓荷斧牽犁  
永遠吊在半醒的夢里  
你從不能懂勞作後甜甜的愉快  
這完全是由於嬌縱  
從今我須當心不許你更壞到中邪  
被派作風魔的工具  
從今我要天天拼命地打你

打你就是愛你教育你  
直到你堅定地懷抱起新理想  
不再篤信那十個不誠實的  
過於靈巧的  
屬於你而又完全不像你的  
屬於你而又完全不像你的  
觸須似的手指

While the message is the same, the language used by Xindi, in contrast with the conventional rhetoric of the preceding poems, is deliberately commonplace and the grammar deliberately loose and conversational.

Turning from pampered life to "embracing the new ideal" was in fact the transformation which the poet went through in his own artistic life. Xindi, whose earlier, delicate and impressionistic poems were published in the collection *Pearls and Shells* (珠貝集) in 1935, expressed this transformation by a change in his attitude towards the cuckoo:

Twenty years ago I thought  
You were singing of eternal love  
Now twenty years later  
I know individual love is too insignificant  
The meaning of your singing has changed  
Every sound of yours is telling  
That the hardship of the people has no limits

二十年前我當你  
是在歌唱永恆的愛情  
於今二十年後  
我知道個人的愛情太渺小  
你聲音的內涵變了  
你一聲聲是在訴說  
人民的苦難無邊<sup>20</sup>

This change was not an individual occurrence. With the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, the worsening military, political and economic situation and their first-hand experience of depressing social conditions in the interior, many intellectuals became dissatisfied with the Nationalist government's handling of the war, and abandoning their apolitical stance, turned, figuratively or actually, towards the Communist-controlled areas in the North-west. Among Xindi's literary friends, Bian Zhilin and He Qifang, two contributors to the anthology *The Han Garden* (漢園集) (pub. 1936), trod just such



paths. After their visit to Yan'an in 1938, they published *Letters of Comfort* (慰勞信) and *Night Songs* (夜歌) respectively, collections which were inspired by what they had seen in the Communist areas, and which were strikingly different from their earlier works.

Whether this turning to "solid life", this embracing of the "new ideal" had been the result of a sudden transformation or the deliberately cultivated product of the poets' social conscience, its fruits were usually problematic. There could be incongruity between the intended ideological point and the rest of the poem (see for example Tang Shi, p.46 above); the poet could be criticised for the shallowness of his political knowledge and for not having steeped himself enough in the life of the masses,<sup>21</sup> or the poet could castigate himself for not measuring up to ideological requirements.<sup>22</sup> All this might be a reflection of the discrepancy between the avowed political ideals and the innermost thinking of the intellectual-poet.

Due probably to their actual experiences in the war, no such discrepancy between the surface and the depth is detectable in the works of Du Yunxie and Mu Dan. They both served in Burma as members of the Chinese Expeditionary Force at the end of the war and their poems exhibit shared themes and motifs.

Du Yunxie's poems portray the war in a restrained manner, without gory details or exaggerated sentiments. They often take the form of a dramatic monologue, with an imaginatively conceived background situation. There is also a tendency to create for each poem a different form which matches the dramatic situation. In "Guerilla Song" seen above (p.37), apart from the use of the closed couplets expressing the contrast between the guerillas and the enemy, the clear structure of the stanzas, the rhyme at the end of each couplet and the self-propelling rhythm of the poem, all fit in with the idea of a marching song.

In "Dead Soldier Abandoned by the Road" (被遺棄在路旁的死老總) (1.2.pp.156-157) the rambling, undivided structure and the jolting, stumbling rhythm of the short lines reflect well the repetitive ravings of the dead soldier:

Give me a grave,  
A black steamed bun-like grave,

Even a flat one will do,  
Like a small vegetable plot,  
Or like a pile of dung,  
All will do, all will do,  
As long as there is a grave,  
As long as I'm not exposed  
Like a heap of ox bones;  
Because I am afraid of dogs  
From childhood I've been afraid of dogs,  
I fear tickling, most fear tickling,  
My mother knew it very well,  
I was afraid of the dogs licking me,  
My whole body would come out in a rash,  
Eyes red, tears starting;  
I was afraid to see dogs fighting,  
That sound was really too frightful,  
Specially when fighting for a bone,  
Their sharp white teeth were too frightful,  
If one was tugging at the meat,  
And another was pulling at the bone,  
With blood flowing like tears in the middle,  
I would throw up and faint at once;  
I also fear the wilderness,  
With only the wind and the grass,  
With wild beasts all round hunting for food;  
They are not afraid of blood,  
They all laugh strangely,  
Specially when they have drunk blood;  
They also gnaw on bones,  
With even sharper teeth,  
They are a greater threat than dogs;  
I'm also afraid of black birds,  
Those birds big as roosters,  
They don't just scare one at night from the trees,  
Their beaks are also fiendishly sharp...  
I am afraid, I am afraid,  
The wind has run away,  
The fallen leaves have run away,  
The dust has run away,  
The trees shaking their heads and struggling  
Also want to take to their heels,  
Oh, give me a grave,  
Any few lumps of earth.  
Any few lumps of earth.

給我一個墓，  
黑饅頭般的墓，  
平的也可以，

像個小菜圃，  
或者像一堆糞土，  
都可以，都可以，  
只要有個墓，  
只要不暴露  
像一堆牛骨，  
因為我怕狗，  
從小就怕狗，  
我怕癢，最怕癢，  
我母親最清楚，  
我怕狗舐我，  
舐了滿身起疙癢，  
眼睛紅，想哭；  
我怕看狗打架，  
那聲音實在太可怕，  
尤其為一根骨頭打架，  
尖白的牙齒太可怕，  
假如是一隻拖着肉，  
一隻拉着骨，  
血在中間眼淚般流，  
那我就要立刻暈吐；  
我還怕曠野，  
只有風和草的曠野，  
野獸四處覓食：  
他們都不怕血，  
都笑得蹊蹊，  
尤其要是喝了血；  
他們也嚼骨頭，  
用更尖的牙齒，  
比狗是更大的威脅；  
我還怕黑鳥，  
那公雞一般大的鳥，  
除在夜裏樹上嚇人，  
他們的鑿子也尖得巧妙.....  
我怕，我怕，  
風跑掉了，  
落葉也跑了，  
塵土也跑了，  
樹木正搖頭掙扎，  
也要拔腿而跑，  
啊，給我一個墓，  
隨便幾顆土。  
隨便幾顆土。

The similes used for describing the grave and the horrors that the soldier fears he will be exposed to if left unburied are all taken from the rural scene. This at once establishes the speaker as a countryman and brings out the terribleness of the war by showing him unable to defend himself in the environment he belongs to. His present helplessness resurrects in him similar feelings from his past, and make him re-live the most vivid fears of his childhood. His paranoid fear, compounded by delirium, then infects the wind, the leaves and the dust, and as a result they run away, leaving him utterly abandoned. By linking the soldier's present situation with his past experiences, he is given a specific character, identity and his plight is made more directly felt by the reader. The poem, according to its author, shows the influence of Auden's light verse and expresses deep feelings by using humour and irony. He also claims to have used the method of psychoanalysis in the poem, which presumably refers to the delving into the soldier's psyche and to the trigger-connection between present events and past traumas.<sup>23</sup>

The other side of the war, from the perspective of a Japanese soldier, is presented in Du Yunxie's "The Ghost Cries at Night in the Forest" (林中鬼夜哭).(1.2.pp.155-156) Unusually, the enemy is portrayed sympathetically (though admittedly in death), as a human being, with feelings of sadness, affections and remorse:

Death is the most meaningful time of my life,  
And also the happiest:  
Finally I have freedom.  
The crimes will remain forever, but at last there is a chance  
To declare to you loudly: we are friends.

The cherry blossoms are the eyes that still sadden me most,  
Together with the white hair of Mount Fuji,  
They have made me forget about hell.  
They can't see me any more, and I can only cry;  
But they continue to cheer on my wife and children.

They all want to live, awaiting humiliation,  
The arrival of the last judgement one day:  
Only then can Japan have a great reunion.  
Ah, you all must forgive a dead man who can cry,  
One day perhaps we will startle you.

Suddenly I begin to like the crying in the quiet night,

Because I need an echo: because the police  
Would not let me have the habit of enjoying solitude.  
Ah, don't come out on a moonlit night, we can't bear  
Any more the sighing of loved ones on the distant shore.

Death is my last need, no further wish have I,  
Though I would still like to see,  
If mankind will become wiser from now on.  
But, ah, a cold wind stirs, making the branches and leaves tremble and weep  
I still can't loiter groaning alone in the night.

死是我一生最有意義的時候，  
也是最快樂的：  
終於有了自由。  
罪惡要永在，但究竟有機會  
大聲地向你們說我們是朋友。

櫻花還是最使我傷感的眼睛，  
連富士山的白髮，  
它們曾教我忘記地獄。  
它們已看不見我；而我只能哭；  
它們還繼續鼓勵我的妻子兒女。

他們是都要活着，等待恥辱，  
為一天最後的審判到臨：  
那時候日本才有大團圓。  
啊，你們都要原諒會哭的死人，  
有一天我們也許要使你們驚嘆。

我忽然喜歡起靜夜的哭聲，  
因為我需要回聲：因為警察  
不讓我有享受寂寞的習慣。  
啊，你們不要在月夜出來，我們不堪  
再聽嘆息着家人在遙遠遙遠的海邊。

死就是我最後的需要，再沒有願望，  
雖然也還想看看  
人類是不是從此聰明。  
但是，啊，吹起冷風，讓枝葉顫慄啞泣，  
我還是不能一個人在夜裏徘徊呻吟。

The poem is organized into a definite, regular structure, with rhyme at the ends of the third and fifth lines of each stanza. If we contrast it with the unstructured ramblings of "Dead Soldier Abandoned by the Road", a poem with a very similar dramatic situation,

we get the impression that the poem's structural form itself, in addition to the words and phrases, is used to characterize the speaker, hinting at the more regimented, disciplined nature of the society he comes from. According to the poet, this poem too uses the psychoanalytic method, expressing the tragedy of the war of occupation through the anguished voice of a ghost of the occupying army.<sup>24</sup>

One of the recurring subjects of patriotic poems, the paying of homage to fallen soldiers, receives a grand, philosophical treatment in Du Yunxie's "Nameless Heroes" (無名英雄) (1.2.p.157):

Simply a phenomenon, like the compass of Heaven and Earth,  
The motion of the seasons, the vastness of oceans...  
Like all that is great, you have no names,  
Only actions and achievements left behind.

You are recognized on the pages of mankind's  
Victorious history, in the depth of all hearts;  
Sincerely respected, day after day  
Cleansed by grateful tears, sparkling with

Endless light, keeping watch from on high to see  
That mankind has a bright future;  
The makers of history will be buried even deeper  
In history, and then blaze, giving warmth to successors.

It is you who are the life of history,  
Human dignity's glorious incarnation.  
Immeasurably great, you have no names;  
Only things that have names can be forgotten.

只是現象，如天地的覆載，  
四時的運行，海洋的遼闊.....  
如一切最偉大的，沒有名字，  
只有行動，與遺留的成果。

你們被認出在人類勝利的  
史頁裏，在所有的心靈深處：  
被誠摯地崇敬，一天天  
為感激的眼淚所洗滌，而閃出

無盡的光芒，而高高照見  
人類有一個光明的未來：  
建造歷史的要更深地被埋在



歷史里，而後燃燒，給後來者以溫暖。

啊，你們才是歷史的生命，  
人性莊嚴的光榮的化身。  
太偉大的，都沒有名字，  
有名字的才會被人忘記。

The heroes, their existence and deeds, are regarded as part of the way of the universe, the *Dao*; nameless, unforgettable and eternal. There are references to the Daoist classic, the *道德經*: the classical phrase 無名 'nameless; having no name' in the title and its modern equivalent 沒有名字 in the first and last stanzas, are allusions to the line 道常而無名 "Tao [Dao] is eternal, but has no name"<sup>25</sup> and the breadth of vision of the first few lines is reminiscent that of 道可道，非常道，名可名，非常名 "The Way that can be told of is not an Unvarying Way; the names that can be named are not unvarying names".<sup>26</sup> The suggestion in the last stanza, that it is precisely because they have no names, that they will be remembered, is again in keeping with the paradoxical style of Daoist utterances, while incorporating at the same time the Darwinian/Marxian view of the march of history. According to Du's recollections, the poem, written on the 10th of August 1945, expresses his own view of history and his gratitude to the countless heroes of the anti-Japanese war. He also remembers that while writing this solemn ode, cast in a strict form, he had in mind the style of the great masters of European Renaissance.<sup>27</sup>

In contrast with these poems by Du Yunxie, which mostly focus on a particular situation presented through the subjective voice, Mu Dan's "Peasant Soldiers" (農民兵) (1.6.pp.717-718) gives a general picture seen objectively from a distance:

(1)  
They do not know they are most likeable,  
Only hear the officer say they are too stupid,  
Just when dogs, cats and rich people have their meals,  
The officer sends them to keep guard at the gates.

They only came to town to make a fool of themselves,  
Then abandoned the family land to lie fallow,  
The law of the state wants them to give up freedom:  
They carry firewood, rice, build houses, just as before.

They do not know that a new idea has come either,

People all look at them anxiously-  
The future world they can not comprehend,  
What do they want to do? That, though, is quite clear.

Carrying their own small worlds:  
Officers known, hunger unknown,  
As long as they are alive, they might as well wander,  
Looking bewildered at all kinds of strange things.

(2)

They are workmen but have no wages,  
They make profit yet have no right to enjoy it,  
They are springtime but have no seeds,  
They are plotted against yet have never complained.

Only behind this facade of silence,  
Could our cities then turn corrupt.  
They march forward and with bodies cast off by us  
Receive the wounds of the twentieth century.

As a happy past has never been theirs,  
The present injustice is even more obvious;  
We in fact want to make them, with chains and hunger,  
To concentrate on and believe a promise.

He who was nurtured by them all along  
Now shakes his head and advocates benevolence  
But if one day the truth blows up  
All of us will then be disgraced.

(一)

不知道自己是最可愛的人，  
只聽長官說他們太愚笨，  
當富人和貓狗正在用餐，  
是長官派他們看守着大門。

不過到城裏來出一出醜，  
因而拋下家裏的田地荒蕪，  
國家的法律要他們捐出自由：  
同樣是挑柴，挑米，修蓋房屋。

也不知道新來了意義，  
大家都焦急的向他們注目——  
未來的世界他們聽不懂，  
還要做甚麼？倒比較清楚。

帶着自己小小的天地：

已知的長官和未知的飢苦，  
只要不死，他們還可以雲遊，  
看各種新奇帶一點糊塗。

(二)

他們是工人而沒有勞資，  
他們取得而無權享受，  
他們是春天而沒有種子，  
他們被謀害從未曾控訴。

在這一片沉默的後面，  
我們的城市才得以腐爛，  
他們向前以我們遺棄的軀體  
去迎受二十世紀的殺傷。

美麗的過去從不是他們的，  
現在的不平更爲顯然，  
而我們竟想以鎮練和飢餓  
要他們集中相信一個諾言。

那一向都受他們培養的  
如今已搖頭要提倡慈善，  
但若有一天真理爆炸，  
我們就都要丟光了臉面。

The poem describes, explains, interprets and draws a conclusion. Everything is stated clearly, directly and logically, as if in an argument, where even slight obscurities and ambiguities can not be hazarded. Yet there is a strong feeling of indignation shining through the studied detachment. The impression given is that of controlled anger, conveyed partly by the closely wrought structure and partly by the unemotional, almost unpoetical language.

The tone of "Peasant Soldiers" reminds one of the beginning of sonnet No.XVIII from W. H. Auden's "In Time of War", a sonnet cycle of twenty-seven, fourteen of which were written in and about China in 1938.

Far from the heart of culture he was used:  
Abandoned by his general and his lice,  
Under a padded quilt he closed his eyes  
And vanished. He will not be introduced

When this campaign is tidied into books:

No vital knowledge perished in his skull;  
His jokes were stale; like wartime, he was dull;  
His name is lost for ever like his looks.<sup>28</sup>

The focusing away from the particular can also be seen in Mu Dan's "Double Seven" (七七) (1.6.p.716), which is a direct address to either a personified abstract concept or a person representing an abstract concept. The title denotes the seven-week period after a person's death, during which funeral rites are observed.

You were the god whom we have invited,  
We thought you stood for justice,  
Police truncheons, hose pipes, demonstrations and petitions,  
Were only because of your arrival.

You were our most longed for uncle,  
We pestered you, wanting to hear you speak;  
Those who opposed you, since you had already arrived,  
Borrowed our words to welcome you.

Who would have known by the time you settled down,  
We would be thinner day by day,  
You distributed your presents carelessly,  
And we were the ones ordered about the most strenuously.

Who will inherit your property,  
Though still can not be said for certain,  
They are the descendants you are most proud of,  
And of our bitterness there will be no trace left.

你是我們請來的大神，  
我們以為你最主持公平，  
警棍，水龍，和示威請願，  
不過是爲了你的來臨。

你是我們最渴望的叔父，  
我們吵着要聽你講話，  
他們反對的，既然你已來到，  
借用我們的話來向你歡迎。

誰知道等你長期住下來，  
我們卻一天比一天消瘦，  
你把禮品胡亂的分給，  
而盡力使喚的卻是我們。

你的產業將由誰承繼，

雖然現在還不能確定，  
他們顯然是你得意的子孫，  
而我們的苦衷將無跡可存。

On the surface the poem looks like a straightforward elegy, but the references to police truncheons and likes, as well as the contrasting of 'they' and 'we', point to a connection with the political sphere. The poem therefore is something of a political allegory, even though we can not identify that abstract concept (democracy?) or that idolised person (Sun Yatsen?) the speaker became disappointed in. As with the previous poem of Mu Dan, here we have again a strongly felt emotion - bitter disappointment in an ideal - as the foundation of the poem, harnessed into a condensed form.

A different facet of Mu Dan's poetry is revealed in his long poem "Song of the Forest" (森林之歌). (1.6.pp.718-719) It is based on a personal experience in Burma, when he lost his way in the primitive forest of the Hukang 虎康 valley and wandering for a week without food and water, he got close to death. The poem is in the form of a dialogue between the Forest and Man. Man, having left civilization and his enemies, enters the Forest and soon feels surrounded and suffocated. The Forest, vast, mysterious and menacing, welcomes the Man, wants to embrace him and dissolve him in itself. In its lure of Man, the Forest describes the impending death as something beautiful, as another dream replacing the one already gone, as becoming part of a long life after leaving the illusory world of struggles. The images describing the beauty of the decaying body are reminiscent of the eighteenth-century English Romantic poets' fondness of the macabre. The last section of the poem is a memorial song (祭歌) to the soldiers who died passing through the forest.

While these three poems of Mu Dan display some characteristics of his style, such as the mood of indignation, of bitterness, the tendency to be definite and condensed, and a fondness of personification, they do not do justice to his reputation as a Modernist. This reputation was earned, among others, by complex poems reflecting the anguished and tortured state of mind of young Chinese intellectuals during the war, by love-lyrics blending the sensuous with the metaphysical, and by his original use of the language, on the level of both character combination and the creation of startling images. It has been

pointed out that, compared to his teachers Feng Zhi 馮之 and Bian Zhilin, he had very little to do with the classical Chinese tradition and that his imagery, conceits and diction show strong Western affinities.<sup>29</sup>

Descriptions of social and political conditions very frequently employ metaphors taken from the natural world. Favourite ones are winter and darkness for oppression, spring and light for liberation. In Fang Jing's 方敬 "Winter Song"(冬歌) and "Spring Song" (春歌) these overworked images - already in fact half-dead metaphors - are used as foundation stones on which to build new layers of connections. The first of these poems, "Winter Song" (3.4.pp.434-435), reads as follows:

High mountains, lofty peaks, range upon range of walls,  
Such a large natural prison!  
If you had wings, where would you like to fly,  
Do you yearn for the plain and the ocean?

Truth is an imprisoned guest,  
The deceitful old tunes are played vigorously;  
The realm of the primaeval spirit  
Is, like the naked, hungry people, destitute.

The long, long winter never fades away,  
Silent *datura*<sup>30</sup>, silent indications,  
Darkness tightly seals in the universe, the window,  
And suffocates the soul.

Timely rain and wind having been kept out,  
This stagnant water has not stirred for thousand years;  
Allowing dishonest power, iron shackles,  
To sing the praises of this long winter.

高山峻嶺，重疊的牆，  
偌大一座天然的牢房，  
你有翅膀，想往哪裏飛，  
你渴望的是平原與海洋？

真理是被拘禁的來賓，  
誑騙的老調彈得起勁  
原始的精神的領域，  
無衣無食的人民一般赤貧。

長長的冬天永不消逝，

無聲的曼陀羅，無聲的啓示，  
陰暗嚴封着天宇，窗戶，  
還把人的心房與靈府堵死。

遮住了外來的時雨時風，  
這死水千年動也不動，  
任不正的權力，鐵打的枷鎖  
把這長長的冬天歌頌。

The title of the poem would automatically make one expect a start with a winter scene, leading on to analogous or contrasting images, in the tradition of the *xing* 興 motif of classical Chinese poetry. However, this initial step is elided here, the connection is taken for granted, and the winter pictured is the winter of society. As well as the usual procedure of projecting natural phenomena onto social conditions (long winter, timely rain, darkness, stagnant water), here we also find the reverse. The poet's feelings of oppression make him project a feature of society onto nature, describing it with a metaphor of a social institution (prison). The sense of gloom colours his perception of the natural world, to the point of seeing, in a kind of cosmic extrapolation, the darkness of social winter encroaching on the universe.

This poem's companion piece, "Spring Song" (3.4.p.434), starts off with the description of the reviving effects the warm spring breeze has on the flowers, the leaves and the pond, only to contrast it with its ineffectuality on the human world:

But it can not blow dry the tears in the eyes,  
That undescribable pain,  
Can not blow dry the good honest sweat  
On the bent back,  
That unending flow of bitterness.

但它吹不乾眼邊的淚珠，  
那寫不盡的痛苦，  
吹不乾呵，壓彎了的  
背脊上善良的汗，  
那流不完的辛酸。

Though spring has come, everything is still the same as it was during the winter. The reason is given in the last two lines:

Spring, season when evil is on the offensive,

Is just propagating thoughts of death and hatred!

春天，罪惡進攻的季節，  
正繁殖着死與仇恨的思想。

This is a reiteration of a thought occurring in "Winter Song", the social world affecting the natural; evil (necessarily social) is preventing the natural healing work of spring.

Around this point in the spectrum of poems a more philosophical approach is becoming apparent; attempts are made to treat subjects in a detached way, to see beyond them and to try to incorporate them into an overall scheme. These poems represent "a process of cognition, of discerning a relationship thus far unknown between mankind and the world, or a tool for discovering oneself and the world".<sup>31</sup> Du Yunxie's "Nameless Heroes", Mu Dan's and Fang Jing's poems were already steps in this direction.

Sha Lei's 沙蕾 "Process" (過程) (3.4.pp.432-433) treats the recurring theme of the artist's mission in this vein. The poem reads as follows:

From the limitless to the limitless-  
Universe, world, human life,  
From primitive ignorance  
To final peace,  
Art's perfection, love, ideals  
Achieve their proper forms.

But now we are advancing  
On a tragic course,  
Cruelty, distortion, treachery,  
Deprive us of the joys of Art's palace,  
Love is murdered; peace, perfection  
Are cut in two, like our broken hearts.

We cry out, shrill and crude,  
The blood, which could be used to create joy,  
We give to the struggle,  
Our completeness is lost in limitation;  
We, a tragic generation,  
Can only regard life as a process,  
Looking towards the future, we soak into it,  
But as a part that completes the infinite.

從無限到無限——  
宇宙，世界，人生，  
從原始的蒙昧



到最後的和平，  
藝術的完美，愛，理想  
完成它應有的形象。

而現在，我們行進  
於一個悲慘的過程，  
殘暴，歪曲，奸詐，  
剝奪我們藝術之宮的歡欣，  
愛被殘殺，和平，完美  
被割裂，如我們破碎的心。

我們呼號，淒厲又粗暴，  
我們將可以用來創造  
歡樂的血液付與鬥爭，  
在有限中消失我們的完整；  
我們，悲慘的一代，  
生命只能作為過程，  
我們翹望着未來，滲入，  
而作為完成無限的部分。

Unusually, the turning from beauty, love and ideals to the struggle is understood here to be forced on the poet's generation by the realities of the age; it is not a result of intellectual realization of solidarity or revolutionary romantic affinity (as in Tang Shi's "Deep Sleeper" or Qing Bo's "I Am a Son of Peasants", seen above). He and his contemporaries are victims of a cruel age in which they are prevented from realizing themselves, their work and ideals. They can only go part of the way and hope the future will complete the work.

The philosophical approach to life is also reflected in Cheng Hexi's 程鶴西 "Travellers" (幾個旅行者) (3.3.p.379), which has to do with the wandering, homeless state of man and with the idea of belonging.

The snail moves carrying its house  
But the wild goose flying in formation makes you think it is a passerby  
Like the daily seen postman  
You do not know where he lives  
The swallow clearly nests on your roofbeam  
Yet you see him come and go every year  
Arriving south of the river from the north  
You see the ones there fly to even more southerly places  
You can not walk through all the paths of the globe  
Year after year even more an uninvited guest

Only by the brazier can you doze off with ease  
Friends coming home for the New Year  
Have brought with them Spring again

蝸牛走路帶着它的屋  
排字的雁卻令人想它是個過路者  
像天天見面的郵差  
你不知道他在哪裏住  
燕子分明在你的梁上作巢  
你還是見他年年的來去  
等從冀北到江南  
又看見那裏的飛向更南的南方了  
地球上的路你將嘆走不盡  
一年年更是不速的客  
爐火旁邊才好打一個盹  
回家過年的朋友  
又帶來一個春天了

The snail is a frequently used Buddhist symbol for man as a being without a home, without a place of belonging. In contrast, the wild goose, in traditional Chinese poetry the bringer of letters from faraway loved ones or the symbol of same, and the swallow are both creatures that return to their "homes" every year. In this respect, man seems to resemble them when going home to celebrate the New Year, but since for human beings the concept of home involves more than familiarity with a physical place, his long absences make him more and more an "uninvited guest". There is also here the idea of pursuing spring further and further afield, only to find that it is always one step away. Finally it is brought to one's doorstep by returning friends.

The thoughts of travelling and returning home are touched upon again in Cheng Hexi's "Sitting at Night" (夜坐) (3.3.p.379), which appears to take off from the last two lines of "Travellers", even though the overall tone is quietly nostalgic, rather than philosophical:

Coming back from the South  
As if I have truly become a man of winter  
The sky is overcast  
A charcoal fire is warming my memory  
Here and there  
Charcoal is always made of oak  
They have similar warmth too

Like a faithful friend  
Bringing news of far and near  
We are the watchmen of this cold night  
Wishing happiness to our beloved  
Hoping that into your dreams  
Will intrude not a trace of a chill

從南方回來  
彷彿真是冬天的人了  
天是陰沉的  
一爐炭火溫暖着我的記憶  
這裏那裏  
炭總是櫟樹的  
它們也有同樣的溫暖  
如一個忠實的朋友  
帶來遠遠近近的消息  
我們是這寒夜的守候者  
祝福親愛的人  
願你們的夢里  
不侵進一絲的寒意

The connection between the warm South and the cold winter night scene is established by the charcoal fire. The splendid line "A charcoal fire is warming my memory" is both a metaphor for the thought-connection created by the sight of similar objects and a reference that the association also arose through the similarity of thermal sensations, the fire recreating the warmth of the South. Both of these poems by Hexi are reminiscent of Feng Zhi's sonnets in their philosophical approach, tone and development of theme, even though the form employed is a loose thirteen-liner instead of the more disciplined sonnet.

Reflection on eternal human problems does not necessarily preclude, as leftist theoreticians would have us believe, awareness of the actual social reality. Their combination appears in Shen Ao's 申奧 sectional poem, "Jottings of a Winter Night" (冬夜抄).(3.4.pp.405-406) The first two sections, records of the poet's nocturnal contemplation are as follows:

1. Winter Night

The joyous evening is over;  
Banquet, music, dance, clamour,  
All the multitudinous sounds have gone to sleep.

Storm beats this silent city.

Like a battered boat,  
I am stranded on the shoal of the night.  
A long nightmare makes me afraid;  
Opening my drowsy eyes  
I stare out of the window,  
Listening closely for the footsteps of dawn.

## 2. Insomnia

Disappointment in love causes me no pain,  
But insomnia makes me vexed.  
Like it or not,  
Past matters well up forever in your mind.  
Is it repentance, sadness, grief?  
Yesterday is just like a grave,  
You forever go on commiserating with yourself.  
And tomorrow, like a vast, misty ocean,  
Stretches in front of you  
Making you perplexed.  
Dreaming is being awake,  
Wakefulness is dreaming.  
Human life is truly like a lonely boat,  
Swaying to and fro between shores of life and death.

Ah, when did I discover  
That my bed is like an island?  
Froth of memory  
Surging on all sides.

## 1. 冬夜

歡樂的夜過去了；  
宴飲，音樂，舞蹈，喧嚷，  
一切煩雜的聲音都已入眠  
暴風雨敲打着這寂寞的城。

我像一隻破爛的船，  
擱淺在夜的灘河上。  
冗長的噩夢使我驚悸，  
張大着朦朧的眼，  
向窗外凝望，  
我諦聽着黎明的腳步。

## 2. 失眠

失戀並不使我痛苦，  
但失眠卻使我煩惱。  
不管你願意不願意，

一些往事總涌上心頭。  
是懺悔，淒傷，悲哀？  
一個昨天就是一座墳墓，  
你永遠在憑吊自己。  
而明天像遼闊的幽霧瀾漫的海洋，  
橫亙在你前面  
使你迷惘。  
夢着就是醒着；  
醒着就是夢着；  
人生真像一隻孤舟，  
在生與死的兩岸間擺來擺去。

啊！甚麼時候發現  
我的床像一個島嶼？  
記憶的泡沫，  
在四周奔騰。

Possibly inspired by the actual storm raging outside, the riotous succession of similies and metaphors that describe the poet's feelings make extensive use of images connected with water, rivers and oceans. The poet himself is seen as a boat run aground, the past wells up in his mind, the future is like a mysterious ocean, his bed an island surrounded by froth and memory, and human life is a boat ferrying between life and death. This last simile has suggestions of the Buddhist notion of reincarnation, while the lines "Dreaming is being awake, / Wakefulness is dreaming" is a reference through Zhuangzi's butterfly dream to the unreliability of our consciousness of reality. The watery imagery also has metaphysical overtones, conceiving time as a fluid medium with human life floating on it.

The third and last section of the poem turns to the critical description of the city mentioned at the beginning of the poem:

3. Awakening  
Opening its sleepy eyes  
The city is turning over again.  
First the bugler with a metallic sound  
Wakes up the dawn.  
Newspaper boys, with shrill voices  
Bring copies of sadness for people.  
Rubbing swollen eyes, shopkeepers  
Open up shops stuffed full of American goods.  
Workers dragging their over-tired bodies  
Go on shift.

Applying rouge and powder  
Women sell their youth again.  
White-capped policemen  
Drive away peddlars, beat up ricksha pullers;  
In restaurants and tea houses,  
Clamouring voices  
Argue again about the price of a soul.  
Military cars, sedans, jeeps  
Collide in all directions again.  
Evil grows again in secrecy;  
Ah, this city is like a rusty engine,  
Revolving jerkily.  
Its pulse  
Is starting to beat again violently.

### 3. 醒

城市又張開惺忪的眼  
在翻身了。  
號手首先以金屬的聲音，  
喚醒一個黎明。  
報童壓尖着嗓子，  
爲人們帶來一份憂鬱。  
商人抹抹浮腫的眼，  
打開充塞着美國貨的店門。  
工人拖着爲疲倦壓倒的身軀，  
走上班去。  
婦女又在塗脂抹粉，  
出賣自己的青春。  
帶白帽的警察，  
又在驅逐小販，毆打車夫，  
酒館裏，茶樓裏，  
又喧噪着人聲，  
爭議着一個靈魂的價目。  
軍車，轎車，吉甫，  
又在橫衝直撞。  
罪惡又在潛隱中滋長；  
呵，這城市像一個發鏽的引擎，  
不和諧地旋轉。  
它的脈博，  
又開始劇烈的跳動。

This section is strongly reminiscent of the so called 'satirical poems', in particular "A Satirical Poem of Shanghai" by Tian Di, mentioned above (p.40), but here the political

message is not so strident as to exclude images such as the bugler's waking up the dawn and the newspaper boys delivering copies of sadness.

Another example of the display of social consciousness within the framework of philosophical contemplation is "The Logic-Addict's Spring" (邏輯病者的春天) by Chen Jingrong 陳敬容.(3.4.pp.442-444) The first of the five sections of this long poem reads as follows:

(1)  
The fastest flowing water  
Seems motionless;  
The swift revolving wheel  
Appears to be still;  
A too uproariously laughing face  
Resembles crying;  
Too dazzling a light,  
Like darkness,  
Makes you unable to see.

Perfection amounts to a flaw.  
Fullness equals void.  
The largest is the smallest.  
Zero is like the infinite.

Though more and more ancient, this world  
Seems forever new;  
Rummaging through grandmother's trunks,  
We can open a smart fashion boutique.

流得最快的水  
像不在流；  
轉得飛快的輪子  
像不在轉；  
笑得太厲害的臉孔  
就像在哭；  
太強烈的光耀眼，  
讓你像在黑暗中一樣  
看不見。

完整等於缺陷。  
飽和等於空虛。  
最大等於最小。  
零等於無限。

終是古老又古老，這世界  
卻仿佛永遠新鮮：  
把老祖母的箱籠翻出來  
可以開一個漂亮的時裝店。

The paradoxes listed here and especially the oxymorons in the second stanza clearly echo Daoist pronouncements. For comparison, here is part of Chapter XLV of the *道德經*:

What is most perfect seems to have something missing;  
Yet its use is unimpaired.  
What is most full seems empty;  
Yet its use will never fail.  
What is most straight seems crooked;  
The greatest skill seems like clumsiness,  
The greatest eloquence like stuttering.<sup>32</sup>

Apart from the paradoxes which are favourite devices for expressing mysteries, the underlying thoughts of the section, like the illusory contradictions of the world, the identity of opposites and the relativity of attributes are all basic tenets of Daoist philosophy.<sup>33</sup>

The relativity of old and new leads on to thoughts of the eternal sameness and the permanent renewal of nature in the second section:

(2)  
Many forms, postures, marks and sounds  
We have long since grown tired of.  
But you never grow old, you blue sky!  
Warm spring morning,  
Bombers circle in the sunshine.

Nature is a big hospital,  
Spring is the doctor, sunshine the medicine,  
Making all weary souls revive,  
Bringing withered plants to life again.

The days heartlessly pile upon our backs  
Thousand tirednesses, myriad fatigues;  
But spring has come, we too would like to  
Stretch and yawn a time and two.

Though there is boundless green in our imagination,  
But water, ah, water,



We harbour, just as before,  
An inexhaustible thirst.

多少形象，姿勢，符號和聲音，  
我們早已厭倦。噢，  
你倒是一直不老呵，這個藍天！  
溫暖的春天的晨朝，  
陽光下有轟炸機盤旋。

自然是一座大病院，  
春天是醫生，陽光是藥，  
叫一切疲病的靈魂更生，  
叫枯死的草木復活。

我們有一千個倦怠，一萬個累，  
日子無情地往背脊上堆；  
春天來了，也想  
伸一伸懶腰，打兩個呵欠。

盡管想像裏有無邊的綠，  
可是水舊懷抱着呵，  
我們依渴。  
不盡的渴。

The usual notion of spring as a season of revival is metaphorized here using words taken from the realm of society (hospital, doctor, medicine); a device we have seen in Fang Jing's "Winter Song" (see p.61, above). Moreover, the mentioning of bombers when in the nature description we would expect birds, reminds one of lines from Fang's "Spring Song": "Spring, season when evil is on the offensive, / Is just propagating thoughts of death and hatred". Incidentally, both poems were written in the spring of 1947, when the worsening civil war made the situation look desperate, but in Chen's poem, spring is still seen as a healer, despite the contrast between fantasized greenness and actual thirst.

Water as a life-giving substance is again alluded to in section three, which has to do with our lives and our attitudes to it:

(3)  
We live our life,  
Eat, drink, work, sleep,

Laugh and cry when appropriate,  
Not resent in the least the unexpected.

The turtledove cries sadly on a fine day,  
Calling to the wind and rain.  
Pitiful, most pitiful is hope,  
Sometimes dying of thirst in despair.

Having built fortifications of will,  
You then hesitate;  
Forgiving  
As well as hating yourself.

生活在生活裏，  
吃喝，工作，睡眠；  
有所謂而笑，有所謂而哭.....  
一點都不嫌突兀。

斑鳩在晴天悲鳴，  
呼喚着風風雨雨。  
可憐，可憐，最可憐是希望。  
有時就渴死在絕望裏。

築起意志的壁壘，  
然後再徘徊；  
你竟怨着  
又痛恨着你自己。

We take life passively, as it comes, let hope thirst to death and even after having made resolutions we fail to carry them out.

Section four returns, after some sleepless night thoughts, to the arrival of spring:

(4)  
In my slumber a strong wind blows suddenly,  
Carrying a dog's barking;  
When the wind calms down  
Somebody's heavy gate shuts ponderously;  
Just as if I have been locked out of sleep,  
To listen alone  
To the distant sound of a speeding train.

Ah, the cold current from Siberia  
Has already gone –

Then, it is real spring now?

Yes, don't you see  
The sunshine has started to soften,  
The willows are trailing their threads,  
The earth has grown green hair,  
Even the wind is drunk.

We only wait for the sound of thunder.  
Thunder, the first one of the spring,  
Will startle awake the sleeping insects;  
It should be a real thunder,  
And not just a cough of a  
Rheumy sky.

(四)

睡夢裏忽然刮大風，  
夾帶着一片犬吠，  
風靜後誰家的一扇  
沉重的門，沉重地關上了，  
仿佛就是我，被關在  
睡眠之外，獨聽遠遠地  
一列火車急馳的聲音。

呵，咳，西伯利亞的  
寒流，早已過去——

那末現在是真正的  
春天？是呵，你不見  
陽光已開始軟綿，  
楊柳垂了絲，  
大地生了綠頭，  
連風也喝醉了酒？

我們只等待雷聲。  
雷，春天的第一陣雷，  
將會驚醒蟲豸們的瞌睡；  
它應該是真正的鳴雷，  
而不僅僅是這個天空的  
傷了風的咳嗽。

The night atmosphere and the poet's feelings of being excluded are conveyed effectively by the sounds of the night. Then, despite the outward signs, doubts arise about the arrival of "real spring" and thunder is felt necessary for its real advent. The awakening of insects, caused by the first thunder of spring, refers to the third of the solar

terms in the traditional Chinese calendar, but the overall impression is that it is the allegorical, rather than the literal, meanings of spring and thunder that are intended here.

More concrete problems of contemporary society are mentioned in the last section:

(5)

Children's Day; at the celebration  
A few lucky children decked in bright array,  
Salute, recite speeches, receive prizes;  
And in factories countless child workers,  
With eight, ten or more hours of  
Hard work destroy their health.

Cheating and lies are in fact related;  
Spring, we know you have  
Enough evanescent flowers.  
Memorial meeting, chilling *suona* blows,  
But we, the living, have no time  
To shed tears all the time.

We are tiny sardines  
In a modern metropolis;  
Clothes, food, shelter, transport,  
It is all a jostle! Without a squeeze you won't get in.  
Birds, beasts, insects and fish  
Receive none of our care;  
Even sorrows, joys, partings and meetings have become commonplace;  
All has been squeezed, driven out,  
Become blank space.

Come today, yesterday's dreams cause no more disappointment,  
Hills and streams have lost their bridge of dreams;  
Clear-and-Bright Festival or Mid-Autumn,  
Hard, after all, to control the wind or the moon.

We forever have words to say, things to do,  
Behind every ending is a beginning again.  
If you ever stop completely,  
Willing or not, that is death itself.

(五)

兒童節，有幾個幸運兒童，  
在紀念會上裝束輝煌，  
行禮，背講演詞，受獎；  
而無數童工在工廠裏，  
被八小時，十小時以上的  
苦工，摧毀着健康。

欺騙和謊話原是一家，  
春天，我們知道你有  
夠多的短暫的花。  
追悼會，淒涼的喇叭在吹，  
我們活着的，都沒有工夫  
一逕流眼淚。

我們是現代都市裏  
眇小的沙丁魚，  
無論衣食住行，  
全是個擠！不擠容不下你。  
鳥獸蟲魚全分不到  
我們的關心，就是  
悲歡離合，也都很平常，  
一切被擠放逐，  
成了空白。

昨天夢到今朝已引不起惆悵，  
山山水水，失去了夢中橋梁；  
清明或是中秋，  
總難管風雨和月亮。

永遠有話要說，有事要做；  
每一個終結後面有一個開始。  
一旦你如果完全停住，  
不管願不願，那就是死。

The poet's concern about social issues - the contrast between the hypocritical official ceremony and the reality of child labour, and the pressure of life in modern cities - is voiced in a philosophical tone, with only faint political overtones. It also has a universal, as opposed to a particularly Chinese feel to it; the rush, the squeeze, the worries and the devaluation of life could be that of any modern metropolis in the world. The last two stanzas of the poem, picking up some of the earlier strands of thoughts, summarize the poet's attitude to life: having given up yesterday's dreams and caring no more about traditional poetic preoccupations, she is to keep on going, embarking on fresh starts without ceasing.

Whether the appearance of socially relevant thoughts was the result of Chen's own internal development or the reflection of the politicization of poets due to the

deteriorating external conditions, it makes "The Logic-Addict's Spring" notably different from the three pensive, lyrical poems of Chen published less than a year earlier and written towards the end of the war. The first of these poems, "The Ponderer" (沉思者) (1.5.p.558), reads as follows:

You, brave boatman  
On the river of time,  
Stirring up waves unceasingly  
On the still water.

Which white bird are you looking for –  
Which one, as they fly past circling low?  
It seems you also try to make out your own reflection  
In that many-faced water.

Faraway green hills, emerald trees,  
Ancient, swaying wind and rain...

The air, in accord with your silence,  
Is azure;

You are a swift nebulous circle  
Skimming over the mist of your own thoughts.

將平靜的水面  
不斷地激起波紋，  
你，時間河流中的  
勇敢的划手。

你尋覓着哪一隻白鳥——  
哪一隻，當它們低翔而過？  
又好像你在辨識自己的影子  
從那多態的水中。

遙遠的青山，碧樹，  
古老的，飄搖的風雨...

空氣因你的沉默  
而蔚藍；

你是迅疾的星雲環  
掠過自己思想的雲霧。

On first reading, our picturing of the boatman on the river is unsettled by the concluding obscure observations. As we start unravelling the poem we find the concrete picture enriched with a layer of interconnected figures of thought. The metaphors in the first stanza imply the concept of thoughts as waves on the river of time, stirred up by the boatman-ponderer. Looking into the water is looking into time, where one can recognize oneself and also see ancient scenes. The lines "The air, in accord with your silence, / Is azure;" are possibly an expression of the speaker's inner tranquility affecting, being transferred to the surrounding nature. In the last couplet "the mist of your own thoughts" links up with the concept of thoughts as waves on the river; the phrase "skimming over" establishes a metaphoric connection with the low-flying birds, which are in turn seen as a "swift nebulous circle".

"Candle-lit Night" (燭火燃照的夜) (1.5.pp.558-559), the second of these poems, is more immediately comprehensible.

The candle lit behind the gauze curtain,  
Like distant words,  
Illuminates the dark room of my heart  
Opening a warm window for it:

From there comes slowly  
A moon giddy with hope,  
From there come leaping  
Stars with a grudge against tomorrow.

And I am an unquiet river,  
Carrying suffering, carrying joy,  
Covering my surface with radiance,  
And strumming on my own strings  
A tune of somniloquy and fever.

Mimicking the cry of the cuckoo  
I call to the spring: Hey, rain,  
Rain, sprinkle on me  
Your glittering pearls of water!

Hidden inside them  
Are countless green infant springs,  
For my solemn, reverent heart  
They will plant warm green flames.

從紗帘內燃照的燭火，  
像是些遙遠的語言，  
輝耀我心靈的幽室  
給它開一個溫暖的窗子：

從那兒姍姍地走來  
一個昏眩於希望的月亮，  
從那兒跳躍着走來  
一些和明天賭氣的星星。

而我是一條不安靜的河流，  
帶着痛苦，帶着歡欣，  
將一些光輝鋪滿我的水面，  
又在我自己的琴弦上  
彈奏熱病和夢囈的曲子。

我學着杜鵑的鳴聲  
向春呼喚：哦，雨，  
雨呵，灑給我你那些  
晶圓的晶圓的水珠！

它們隱含着無數個  
幼小的青色的春天，  
將會給我肅穆的心  
植上些溫暖的青色火焰。

The opening scene of a candle shining from behind the gauze curtain reminds one of scenes from poems by Du Mu 杜牧 or Li Shangyin 李商隱. Its purpose here, however, is not to bring out the intimate, secluded atmosphere of lovers' meeting but to open up the dark closed-in room of the poet's soul to the outside world. It is a world that is both full of hope and unpredictable, in which the poet sings as if asleep or delirious. Some of the images used in the previous two poems return again, pointing to their central position in Chen's imagery. The river becomes the poet herself; water, the symbol of revival and regeneration, turns up in the form of raindrops containing "green infant springs" and greenness reappears not just as an attribute or symbol of spring but as an adjective for flame, adding to the conventional epithet the sense of something like full of hope or enthusiasm.



Another aspect of Chen's water imagery can be seen in "Rainy Season" (雨季)

(1.5.p.559):

The faraway mansion window lit up,  
In the starless night the sound of a flute floated;  
Oh, wanderer, your memories  
Together with your hopes  
Tumble into a boundless sea.

Rainy season.  
A frozen, mute-silent hand  
Quietly  
Wiped spring away  
From every rooftop.

Round water-pearls  
Rolling on round lotus leaves;  
Oh Earth,  
To your solid silence  
I hand over the joy of life.

遠遠的樓窗亮了  
無星的夜裏裊出簫聲；  
流浪人呵你的回憶  
和你的希望一齊  
跌入一個蒼茫的海裏。

雨季。  
凝凍的啞默的  
手，悄悄的  
從每一個屋頂上  
將春天抹去。

圓圓的水珠  
溜滾圓圓的荷葉上；  
大地呵  
我將生命的歡欣  
付與你堅實的沉默。

The night scene painted in the first stanza establishes an atmosphere of sadness and lost hopes. Added to this is the chilly, almost menacing silence of the rainy season, personified by the giant hand. But despite having been dissociated from spring and

become an element of this cheerless season, water for Chen still represents exuberance and joy, the positive sides of life.

The last three poems of Chen Jingrong show a similarity in tone, gentleness of mood and feminine optimism with the poems of Bing Xin 冰心 from the twenties. However, the full range of Chen's poems from this period reveals a much more complex and extended poetic world, which encompasses the world of nature, of dreams, memories and imagination, of social consciousness and of philosophical and mystic contemplation. She employs complicated imagery and a multiplicity of forms, and her poetry on the whole is more intellectual than her lyrical predecessor's.<sup>34</sup>

In Chen's poems a series of concrete, visual images are used to capture or illustrate metaphorically some abstract thoughts. In contrast, a series of mainly auditory images in Su Jinsan's 蘇金傘 "Outside the Window" (窗外) (3.4.pp.426-427) serve as 'objective correlatives', as means of expressing the author-speaker's personal feelings. The poem reads as follows:

The window and I woke up together.  
Outside:  
Horsehooves going past clip-clop  
With the sound of a woman's sobbing  
And the noise of a child's hat-bell.

A broken-sounded *suona*  
Coming past blowing mournfully.  
The same tearful tune  
I can't make it out if it's a burial  
Or a wedding.

The midday sun  
Shines warm and bright on the window paper,  
Leaning against the window outside  
Somebody is basking in the sun;  
The tousled hair is projected onto the paper.  
The tremble of the body  
Through the window lattice  
Is transmitted onto mine.

The fortunetelling gong of the blind man  
Beats his own chilling fate.  
The bamboo cane that is his sense of touch

Probes unceasingly the sides of the road.  
I thought I'd ask about tomorrow's lot,  
But the darkness before his eyes is greater than mine;  
Let me go out and lead him instead!

If I make a hole in the window paper,  
I will see the frozen blue sky,  
I can let out my thoughts and daydreams  
To fly like soft-feathered doves above.  
But I fear that frightening eye  
Will peep through the window,  
----That eye which always pursues me.

During the night,  
The burrowless wind  
Scurries up and down the street  
And snaps its tail against my window.  
A song in the distance,  
----A song I like.  
But it has already become the food of the wind,  
Gobbled up word after word.

I want to go out  
And rescue a song or two;  
I want to lift my voice  
To cheer them on,  
But having just opened the door  
I tumble right into somebody's arms.

窗子和我一同醒來。  
外邊：  
馬蹄得得走過，  
帶着女人的啜泣聲，  
和孩子的帽鈴響。

破音的噴吶，  
嗚嗚啦啦吹過來。  
同樣令人哭泣的調子，  
我辨不出是在埋人——  
還是在娶親。

午陽  
明暖的照在窗紙上，  
有一個人  
靠在窗外曬暖，  
窗紙上映着那蓬亂的頭髮。  
身子的顫慄，

通過窗櫺，  
傳到我身上。

瞎子的算命鑼，  
敲着自己清冷的命運。  
作為觸覺的竹竿，  
在路兩邊不停的探索。  
我想問問明天的遭遇，  
但他眼前比我還黑，  
還是讓我出去牽牽他！

假如我在窗紙上戮一個小洞，  
我將看見凝藍的天，  
並可以放出我的思念和遐想，  
像軟毛的鴿子在上面飛翔。  
但我怕那可怖的眼  
又窺進窗子來，  
——那時時追尋着我的眼睛。

夜裏  
失窠的風，  
在大街上來回竄動，  
又朝我窗子丟尾巴。  
遠處有歌聲，  
——那是一隻我喜歡的歌。  
但已作了風的食物，  
一個字一個字在被吞噬。

我要走出來，  
搶救兩首歌；  
我要發出聲音  
助助威。  
但我剛開開門，  
就已跌進別人的膀臂。

While ostensibly the poem is the record of a day's happenings outside the auditor's room, the attention focuses just as much on his reactions to those sounds. Everything that passes by outside is first screened by the window paper, then filtered through the interpretation of his mood. In come a sorrowful tune, crying, the chilling sound of a gong; the wind is thought of as a burrowless rodent, gobbling up the song the poet likes. Attempts to connect with the outside world, to break out from the melancholy, from the

passively receptive into a more active attitude, result, either in actuality or in his imagination, in something terrifying.

Nearing the end of our spectrum, the poems are becoming overwhelmingly pensive in mood or metaphysical in theme, and show affinities with some poems by Feng Zhi and Bian Zhilin, poets sometimes referred to as "metaphysical".<sup>35</sup> The poem "Moments" (瞬間) (2.6.pp.678-679) by Fang Yuchen 方宇晨, for instance, can be linked with Feng Zhi's Sonnet No.1. Fang's poem reads as follows:

You often remember a patterned umbrella floating past outside the window,  
But I always recall a night of conversation in the rustic inn.  
These beautiful moments we experience very rarely,  
And the past ones have already become a light mist, a fog.

We treasure the morning dew, the flower-buds on a spring day.  
Shooting stars and rainbows are all just as short lived.  
If human life is a stretch in a journey, we must know how to  
Love the oasis in the desert and warmth in the human world.

你常記住窗外飄過的一把花洋傘，  
我卻老回憶起野店裏的一夕寒暄。  
這些美麗的瞬間我們經歷的全很少，  
而過去的又已經化爲霧，化爲輕煙。

我們珍惜朝露，珍惜春日裏的花朶。  
一顆流星與一彎長虹全一般地短暫。  
人生如若是一段旅程，我們該懂得  
愛沙漠中的綠原和人世間的溫暖。

Beautiful moments are treasured, both on actual experience and on recall, for providing respites in the journey of human life. They are preserved intact, while the events around them fade, recede into oblivion. The poem displays a passive disposition, which makes the most of what befalls the subject. It is this fundamentally receptive, enduring attitude to life that reminds us of the thoughts expressed in the first two stanzas of Feng Zhi's sonnet:

We prepare to receive into our depths  
Those unexpected miracles,  
During endless years suddenly  
A shooting star emerges, a sudden gale rises:

Our lives in those instants,  
Are like in the first embrace,  
Before our eyes, past sorrows and joys suddenly  
Congeal into a firm and unchanging shape.

我們準備着深深地領受  
那些意想不到的奇跡，  
在漫長的歲月裏忽然有  
彗星的出現，狂風乍起：

我們的生命在這一瞬間，  
彷彿在第一次的擁抱裏  
過去的悲歡忽然在眼前  
凝結成屹然不動的形體。<sup>36</sup>

The two poems also have in common the idea of the importance of certain special instances in our lives, even if their roles are different in the two cases: for Feng Zhi these moments are miracles which define and interpret our pasts for us, while for Fang they are inspiring experiences or memories. The shared image of (though different expressions for) the shooting star is more symbolic in Feng's sonnet than in Fang's poem.

Feng Zhi's influence is detectable in another one of Fang Yuchen's poems, called "Roads" (路).(2.6.p.678) At a three-road junction the speaker asks a friend which one of the roads leads to the big city, to a country town, to a mountain village, and in his thoughts characterizes these places by the people's footwear or lack of it. Then he goes on to muse about the existence of roads everywhere: in the sea, in the forest, in the sky, even in our hearts:

There are roads in our hearts too,  
Footprints on them, deeply  
Imprinted; time can't erase them,  
Showers can't wash them away; at midnight  
Listen closely to the footfalls:  
Some are faraway now, some are still near.

你我底心坎裏也有路，  
路上有足跡，深深地  
印下了，時光磨不掉，  
急雨沖不跑，半夜裏  
仔細地聽一聽腳步聲：  
有的遠了，有的還近。

This concept of our memories of people as footprints on roads in our hearts is closely connected with passages in Feng Zhi's Sonnet No.17, "Paths of the Open Country" (原野的小路):

On the plains of our minds  
There are also many winding small paths,  
But where most of the travellers who  
Once walked on these paths have gone, one doesn't know.

Lonely children, white haired couples,  
Some young men and women,  
And friends now dead, they all

Have trodden out these roads for us;  
We remember their steps  
Lest these paths are laid to waste.

在我們心靈的原野裏  
也有幾條宛轉的小路，  
但曾經在路上走過的  
行人多半已不知去處：

寂寞的兒童，白髮的夫婦，  
還有些年紀青青的男女，  
還有死去的朋友，他們都

給我們踏出來這些道路；  
我們紀念着他們的步履  
不要荒蕪了這幾條小路。<sup>37</sup>

While the position of many poems in our spectrum could be changed slightly with some justification, the last two poems, by Yuan Kejia, occupy their places firmly and unchallengably, on the strength of both subject matter and form of expression. The poet's concern is about the individual and about the universally human, expressed in polished phrases and structures, earning him leftist criticism like "covering up rotten thoughts with flowery diction".(see p.30 above) In their mood, their obscurity and their occasional attempts at metrical regularity, they are close to the pre-war poems of Bian Zhilin, who was Yuan's teacher at the South-west Associated University in Kunming.

The first of these poems, "The Silent Bell" (沉鐘) (3.4.p.435), reads as follows:

Let me be silent in time and space,  
Like a huge encrusted bell of an old temple;  
Bearing the weight of three thousand years,  
Listening to the rushing wind and rain outside;

Throwing billows against the tall pines,  
Returning the boundless to the firmament;  
I am a huge, still bell,  
Still like the frozen blue.

Life falls off its stem in suffering,  
Pain lets deadly stillness to torture;  
I am a firmly planted banner,  
Taking in the wild wind of all directions.

讓我沉默於時空，  
如古寺鏽綠的洪鐘；  
負馱三千載沉重，  
聽窗外風雨匆匆；

把波瀾擲給高松，  
把無垠還諸蒼穹；  
我是沉寂的洪鐘，  
沉寂如藍色凝凍；

生命脫蒂於苦痛，  
苦痛任死寂煎烘；  
我是站定的旌旗，  
收容八方的野風！

The title in the original brings into mind the literary periodical of the same title from the twenties, which took its name from Gerhart Hauptmann's play "Die Versunkene Glocke", but here it is meanings of 沉 other than 'sunken' that are intended. The character forms part of three compounds in the poem, all attributes of the bell: silent 沉默, heavy 沉重 and still 沉寂. Poetic identification with the bell appears to be an expression of the longing for a silent and inactive state under the weight of the past. The enigmatic first couplet of the last stanza may be a hint at the reason for such a longing, but it is not clear whether, in the poet's view, suffering makes life mature and ripe or that it acts as a blight or frost, making the life-fruit fall off its stem. In either case, the life-fruit having been separated from the life-tree, there is no further development or growth possible. The last couplet of the poem brings in a new metaphor for the poet; the banner,



standing up to the tug of wind from all sides. The image of the banner, a stock symbol of progressive forces in the late 1940s, feels somewhat unconnected with the rest of the poem, which might have been the reason for the substitution of "I am a huge, encrusted bell" for the penultimate line in a later version.<sup>38</sup> This substitution also makes complete the unity of the *-ong* rhyme, with suggestions of the bell-sound, throughout the poem; broken previously by 旌旗. The later change to 'bell' brings its problems, however, as it is flags that catch the winds (such a figure also appears in Feng Zhi's sonnets). All the lines divide into three sense-units or feet, two bisyllabic and one trisyllabic, except the second line, which has one bisyllabic and two trisyllabic feet.

The second of Yuan Kejia's poems published in *Literary Renaissance* is "Void" (空).(3.4.pp.435-436) We might recall that this was the poem held up by Lao Xin as the representative example of "demoralized, painted and powdered pieces of works" which have nothing in common with the fighting spirit of the age and simply pour out individual sorrows of loneliness and isolation.<sup>39</sup> Granted, there is no explicit concern about the immediately pressing problems of the age, but the preoccupations of the poem would surely have been shared by a number of the poet's contemporaries and could be regarded as more abstract voicings of concrete problems. The poem reads:

Water wrapped me with a sheet of softness,  
My dripping body soaked through,  
Drooping branches kissed me, wind came to hug,  
My boat, flag, my hand?

How much tide can my hands grasp,  
To emulate the shell's fine polishing by water?  
Morning and evening tides bore out a mysterious hollow,  
The better to take in seismic waves and landslides?

The small shell takes its shape from the waves,  
Pouring into hollows to make them transparent;  
But I have drowned myself in the colourless deep,  
At night I am startled by my footsteps in this world of dust.

水包我用一片柔，  
濕淋淋渾身浸透；  
垂枝吻我風來撲，  
我底船呢，旗呢，我底手？

我底手能掌握多少潮涌，  
學小貝殼水磨得玲瓏？  
晨潮晚汐穿一犀靈空，  
好收容海嘯山崩？

小貝殼取形於波紋，  
鑄空靈爲透明；  
我乃自溺在無色的深沉，  
夜驚於塵世自己底足音。

The opening stanza conjures up the picture of a person, drenched, passing through a thicket by the water's edge in a boat. Reading on, the appearance of the central image of the shell suggests the shared theme of permeating, penetrating water. In taking the small shell as his model and wishing to submit to the polishing, moulding force of the tidal waves, the poet's object is to be able to "take in seismic waves and landslides". A similar metaphor, using even the same verb, occurs at the end of "The Silent Bell". These expressions could be taken to refer generally to the vicissitudes of life or specifically to contemporary political upheavals, should such an interpretation be needed. However, the impenetrable surroundings the poet finds himself in prevent him from emulating the shell.

Thematically, in its imagery and even in the choice of phrases, "Void" shows a strong connection with Bian Zhilin's poem "The White Shell" (白螺殼). In the first two stanzas Bian observes the moulding work of the sea and the analogous forces in human life:

Perforated white shell, you;  
No fine dust is settling in your hollows,  
But leaking out into my hand  
Are thousand kinds of feelings.  
Waves surge in my palm.  
I admire your divine work,  
Your cleverness, ocean;  
You are precise enough to pierce a pearl!  
Yet I cannot endure either  
This obsessive cleanliness of yours, ah!

Look, how this lake of misty rain,  
Like water, soaks me through,  
As if soaking a feather.  
I am like a small mansion,

Pierced by the wind, pierced by willow catkins,  
By swallows shuttling back and forth;  
Perhaps there are rare books in the mansion,  
Their leaves knitted through by "silver fish"  
From the word "love" to the word "grief"!

空靈的白螺殼，你，  
孔眼裏不留纖塵，  
漏到了我的手裏  
卻有一千種感情：  
掌心裏波濤洶涌，  
我感嘆你的神工，  
你的慧心啊，大海，  
你細到可以穿珠！  
可是我也禁不住：  
你這個潔癖啊，唉！

請看這一湖煙雨  
水一樣把我浸透，  
像浸透一片鳥羽。  
我仿佛一所小樓  
風穿過，柳絮穿過，  
燕子穿過像穿梭，  
樓中也許有珍本，  
書葉給銀魚穿織，  
從愛字通到哀字！<sup>40</sup>

This juxtaposition leads to the merging of the speaker's identity with that of the white shell:

Delicate? white shell, I?  
The ocean delivered me onto the shore,  
...

玲瓏嗎，白螺殼，我？  
大海送我到海灘，  
...<sup>41</sup>

Though the phenomenon of penetrating, wearing away is interpreted differently by the two poets - for Bian, its significance lies in producing purity and refinement, while for Yuan, in enabling its patient to cope better with the encroaching forces of nature and society - "Void" seems to be a remake, a variation on certain parts of Bian's more complex poem.

In attempting to give a summary of the poems discussed above, the setting up of yet another dual division seems necessary. There appears to be a distinction between poems which argue a point and want to convince an audience, and poems which could be regarded as 'thinking on paper'. To the former, polemical group, belong poems at the beginning of our spectrum; works of Qing Bo, Ren Jun, Zang Kejia, Tian Di and Ji Yuan; their ranks include 'publicly declaimed poems' and satirical poems. In arguing their mostly ideological and political points they extensively employ rhetorical figures: repetitions, parallelisms, contrasts and rhetorical questions. Of the tropes, they are fond of the hyperbole, exaggerated metaphors and public symbols, sometimes overworked. Their style is usually clear and easily accessible.

To the second, contemplative group, belong poems by Du Yunxie, Mu Dan, Fang Jing, Sha Lei, Cheng Hexi, Chen Jingrong, Su Jinsan, Fang Yuchen and Yuan Kejia, with works of Yu Mingchuan, Tang Shi and Xindi forming a bridge between the two groups. These explore the inner self of the poet and aspects of human life and the universe, in a philosophical tone and an implicit, veiled style. Thoughts and emotions are expressed through the 'objective correlative' of external scenes, sensations and objects. The imagery and symbols used are often taken from Buddhism and Daoism, or are private and personal in nature. Sometimes they take up themes initiated by Chinese poets of the thirties and early forties.

Six poets from this second group - Chen Jingrong, Du Yunxie, Mu Dan, Tang Shi, Xindi and Yuan Kejia - belonged to what later came to be known as the 'Nine Leaves' (九葉) group of poets.<sup>42</sup> They were graduates of, or, in the case of Chen Jingrong self-taught in, foreign languages, and were familiar with Western literature, in particular with the works of Post-Symbolist and Modernist poets, like R. M. Rilke, T. S. Eliot and W. H. Auden. Their works were an amalgamation of self-expression and sensitive resonance with the age, and of the influence of traditional Chinese and modern Western poetry.<sup>43</sup>

"We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but out of the quarrel with ourself, poetry", observed W. B. Yeats. This distinction would appear strikingly appropriate for

our two groups of poems, and would lead to the discounting, as poems in the qualitative sense, of those in the first. But the traditional Chinese view of poetry always included poems that "quarrelled with others" and, as Du Fu's poems on social injustice prove, such a motive does not necessarily prevent the product being poetry. To quote James J. Y. Liu's definition, poetry is an exploration of both the internal and external aspects of the poet's world, and of the language. The internal world includes the thoughts, memories, sensations, emotions and fantasies of the poet, while the external includes objects and scenes as well as events and actions. Exploring new worlds of experience also means searching for new words, expressions and images to convey to the reader the not-yet-experienced. In judging a poem, we need to ask if it explores a special world of its own, and what kind of a world it is; and secondly, to ask if the language is appropriate to the new experience, if it is used in a novel sense.<sup>44</sup>

Examined against this benchmark, poems of the first group come up short. Their content is rarely original or even personally arrived at. The internal world is largely ignored, and instead of the exploration of the external, they offer descriptions, expositions or arguments about nothing particularly new. As for their exploration of language, the use of rhetorical figures, though suited to the poems' agitational purpose, consists mainly of the special arrangement of words and as such does not enrich the language with new shades of meanings or previously unthought-of associations. In serving the extra-literary purpose, the language shies away from the unusual, the not immediately comprehensible and the unnecessarily ornamented.

Poems in the second group come closer to Liu's definition. Even in cases when a poem clearly enlarges on some current political tenet (as in Tang Shi's "The Deep Sleeper" or Xindi's "Palm"), there are personal touches in the presentation of the idea and an individual use of the language. A distinctive individuality is a general characteristic of these poems: the personal world of experience, which we are shown, and its link with the contemporary and the eternal outside world, are unique and identifiable in most poems. Whether the prompting experience of the poem comes from the inside or from the outside world of the poet, its exploration usually involves the other:

feelings and sensations are made conveyable by their linking with external scenes or objects, and descriptions of the outside world are filled out by the infusion of emotions.

The uniqueness of the poetic worlds explored is matched by individuality in the language of the poems. This is manifested both in the overall impression a poem makes, and in the choice of expressions, new and special images, symbols and associations. Instances like the sentence "Truth is an imprisoned guest" by Fang Jing, Chen Jingrong's raindrops which hide "countless green infant springs" or her "moon giddy with hope", Yuan Kejia's line "Life falls off its stem in suffering" or Su Jinsan's "burrowless wind" scurrying up and down the street all strike us with their freshness and concise appropriateness, and all bear the mark of their creators.

Having measured the poems against a kind of absolute standard, we also need to examine whether they indeed can be regarded as part of a cultural revival, the hope of which was expressed so fervently in the launching manifesto of the magazine. In "Inaugural Words" (1.1.pp.5-7) Zheng Zhenduo saw the war as a period of cultural hibernation and hoped that with its cessation writers would be free again from restrictions to continue the Literary Revolution of the May Fourth Movement and embark on a Literary Renaissance. Judging from subsequent editorial remarks, the editors themselves did not think this hope had been realized.<sup>45</sup> In terms of numbers their opinion appears justified. Of the poems published in *Literary Renaissance*, the ones remarkable enough in any way to be discussed above, form about one quarter and not all of them can stand comparison with the mature and artistically inventive pre-war poetry of Dai Wangshu 戴望舒, Feng Zhi and Bian Zhilin. Particularly, poems from the beginning of the spectrum, with their limited worlds and stereotyped use of language, fall short of their standard.

Among the second group of poems though, there can be found several instances of comparable quality or of promise. To name the most obvious examples: Du Yunxie's restrained tones drawing poetry out of war scenes, Mu Dan's lively, imaginative treatment of current social problems, the philosophical lyrics of Cheng Hexi, influenced

by Buddhist and traditional Chinese imagery, Chen Jingrong's mixture of poetic, philosophical and social sensibilities, and Yuan Kejia's cryptic, mysterious poems.

Compared to the pre-war poetry, the influence of Western poetry on these poems is less evident, which may be due to war-produced isolation or to the influence having been by then more thoroughly digested. Inspiration more frequently comes from native sources: from philosophy, classical poetry or even modern poetry. There is less preoccupation with the technical aspects of poetry, with prosody, musicality and rhyme, and most of the poetic effects are carried by the images instead. Reality around the poets gets represented more often and directly in their poems.

The differences from pre-war poetry mainly stem from the difference in the overall social and political conditions. In the mid-thirties, as politics did not intrude so much into their lives and livelihood was relatively secure, poets could afford to concentrate on artistic experiments. The war years then produced a deterioration in their circumstances, sharpened their social sensibilities and left little time for stylistic concerns. After the ending of the Sino-Japanese War and the short-lived Nationalist-Communist truce, the civil war was, in a sense, the prolongation of the war situation. The times called for a tune different from that allowed by the mid-thirties. On the whole, the poets in our second group, with the 'Nine Leaves' group of poets as their core, responded to this call and produced works prompted by their social consciences, while at the same time not abandoning artistic standards. We can only speculate, that if they had had more time for development, if politics had not interfered, the strong promise their works showed could have blossomed into a veritable Renaissance.

## Chapter 3

### Short Stories

The magazine published some 110 short stories and three medium length stories or novellas. Thematically, they can be divided into five main groups: stories dealing with the war, with political issues, with social themes, with the moral problems of intellectuals, and stories presenting character portraits.

#### Topics

As might be expected after the eight years of the War of Resistance, followed shortly by the resumed civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists, one of the largest thematic group of stories deals with the war and its effects on the people. The setting is mostly the countryside, the time either the anti-Japanese War or the civil war, with some stories spanning both. The war theme is explored from the angles of both the called-up peasants and those left behind in the village. From the peasant-soldiers' (農民兵) point of view we see the disillusionment with army life, the deprivations leading to illness and hallucinations, the horror of the battles, injuries, maiming. A return to their villages, on sick leave or after desertion, however, is not a solution for these soldiers either: they are quickly engulfed in the maelstrom of their relatives' lives.<sup>1</sup>

The misery brought to the people by the war usually starts off with forced government call-ups, taking away workhands (often the only ones in the family capable of supporting their livelihood). What ensues is a descent into poverty and destitution, compounded in many cases by war-inflated demands of taxes and grain requisitions, and abuse of power by local government officials. The careless or intentional damage, done to people's crops and property by soldiers who are billeted in their houses, and burning and looting by troops that pass through the village are further sub-themes.<sup>2</sup>



Almost all the war-stories concentrate on the plight of the victims, with the notable exceptions of two stories on paranoid and gun-mad Japanese soldiers.<sup>3</sup> The perpetrators of the atrocities are the Japanese, the troops of the Nanjing puppet-regime (和平隊), the special detachment units of the government (特工隊), the 惠民隊 guerillas or the training regiments (補訓團). Japanese troops are by no means judged the worst of them and in stories set after the end of the war the impression given is that the situation was slightly better during the Japanese occupation.

Stories dealing with political issues can be broken up into several sub-themes. The civil war appears here again, but instead of the war aspect, the focus is on the moral reprehensibility of fighting against one's compatriots.<sup>4</sup> Embezzlement and collusion in local government, corruption in the village and in prison, are presented as the norm, the discovery and punishment of misdeeds are rare, and there is only one instance of hope of change suggested in the metaphoric shape of a coming storm.<sup>5</sup> In the social conflict stories the underdogs - orphans, widows, poor horseherds - are described as bullied and maltreated by people higher up on the social ladder, without having recourse to any help or remedy.<sup>6</sup> However, in stories dealing specifically with the exploitation of peasants by landlords and village headmen, events in some cases lead to a revolt by the villagers and, in one particular solution, going up into the mountains to join the bandits is seen.<sup>7</sup>

A considerable number of stories on political issues verge on straightforward Communist propaganda. Among others we are given the unselfish, self-sacrificing devotion of soldiers to the people and of the people to the cause, exemplary episodes from the life of Communist troops, contrast in the lives of peasants between the period under the Japanese occupation and after the Communist liberation, cases of people seeing the light, standing up and joining the Communist side, and even a thinly disguised political treatise on China's problems, with overlavish praise of the Soviet Union.<sup>8</sup>

Social themes are explored in a great number and a wide variety of stories. People's turning to crime - petty theft, opium smuggling - is ascribed to the pressures of poverty and the destruction brought on by the war.<sup>9</sup> There are chronicles of maltreatment of daughters, sons and daughters-in-law, ranging from neglect in favour of a pig, to cruelty

and deprivations driving a child-bride mad.<sup>10</sup> Frenzy and madness - caused by family and social pressures, by sexual frustration, or by the dehumanizing effects of war - are described in their developments with chilling detachment and precision.<sup>11</sup> Love and marriage are important sub-themes in this group; in particular, romantic relationships thwarted by traditional customs, courtship problems and marital troubles.<sup>12</sup> Stories focusing on other intra-family relationships depict those between brothers, between mother and adopted son, and aspects of lives of daughters-in-law.<sup>13</sup>

Within the stories that take up as their theme the moral problems of intellectuals, a prominent sub-theme is the conflict between survival and integrity. The cost of artistic, personal and moral integrity of the breadwinner is largely paid by his dependants, and the question arises whether he has the moral right to stick to his ideals while sacrificing his family.<sup>14</sup> In one story the protagonist's inner conflict is caused by the sexual attraction and the intellectual aversion he feels towards his wife, in another the discrepancy between the avowed progressive ideas and the opportunistic actions of a character is shown up.<sup>15</sup> The intellectual's conscience may be troubled by using the services of small children, and by the dubious effect and value of missionary work, of spreading alien culture and ideas among national minorities.<sup>16</sup>

In stories presenting character portraits, the subject is either a friend, an acquaintance or a former colleague of the narrator, and the story has an autobiographical element to it, or the person is depicted for his or her particular behaviour, character trait, development or life history.<sup>17</sup>

The best of stories defy thematic categorization; more than one theme is explored or the theme is simply life.

### Structure

The structure of the majority of stories is chronological, the time sequence only occasionally disturbed by flashbacks or authorial exposition of antecedents. One story starts off with the concluding scene, then, going back to the beginning of events, unfolds

in chronological order.<sup>18</sup> Some stories are divided into unmarked, numbered or titled sections, indicating temporal or topical changes in the narrative.<sup>19</sup> A variant of these sectional stories employs a diary-like form, consisting of a series of daily, weekly or monthly recollections, though undated.<sup>20</sup> The letter form is used in a couple of instances, somewhat unconvincingly in view of the impersonal tone and superfluous information.<sup>21</sup> Two narratives present a story-within-a-story: in one a folk legend explaining the reasons for the sufferings of humanity is told by an old man the narrator meets in his wanderings, in the other a symbolic tale of darkness and coming storm is told by a hermit, in a dream-vision of the narrator.<sup>22</sup>

An interesting combination of loose sectional structure and cinematographic technique occurs in A Zhan's 阿湛 "Song of Recollections" (回想曲).(3.4.pp.491-496) The piece is divided into an introduction, four titled sections and a coda. The first and the last of these describe the narrator's drifting in and out of sleep, the four middle sections are close-ups of scenes from his memory, unconnected, but for the repertory of the same three characters. The indeterminate time and place setting of the scenes and the lack of information about the figures in them result in a film-like quality, a mozaic of images and sounds.

An even looser, almost fluid structure can be found in Wang Zengqi's 汪曾祺 "Revenge" (復仇) (1.4.pp.394-398), in which some paragraphs or sections could easily be interchanged without upsetting the whole story. The organizing principle appears to be association through words, images, colours and smells, as flights of imagination and recollections mingle with reality. In between the starting and the closing scenes, which are in their proper chronological order, discourse time and time narrated is often unclear or ambiguous.

#### Narrative points of view

The perspectives from which the stories are told are to a considerable extent connected with their subject matter. Reflecting the need for a large canvas of life, most

stories that deal with the war, with political issues and social problems employ the third person, omniscient narrator. This narrator is usually unintrusive or impersonal, presenting the actions, speeches and thoughts of characters without giving comments or making overt judgements on them. One of the best instances of this treatment is Mao Dun's 茅盾 "A Man of Standards" (一個夠程度的人) (1.1.pp.40-50), in which the author's opinion of the self-appointed, moral preacher who bullies people is brought out by the juxtaposition of his actions and speeches, and by the mocking description throughout the story of an "irreverent" fly's behaviour towards this "extraordinary" man. Presentation of events by the impersonal narrator is especially successful when his detachment contrasts with the reader's emotional reaction. In "Idiot" (癡) by Ai Mingzhi 艾明之 (2.3.pp.356-361), for example, the barbarous treatment and resulting madness of a child daughter-in-law are made more chilling by the dramatic, unsentimental narration. In some stories though, the narrator does intrude; either by taking on features of the storyteller in traditional vernacular tales, by addressing the audience and using stock phrases such as 說時遲那時快; or by interpreting events and evaluating characters in passages of narratorial commentary inserted into the unfolding plot. A typical example of the former is A Zhan's "In Order to Divide the Household" (爲了分家的緣故) (4.1.pp.34-42), a story reminiscent in tone and language of the old style vernacular fiction 通俗小說; of the latter is "Cat" (貓) by Qian Zhongshu 錢鐘書 (1.1.pp.64-90), in which the comments include tangential remarks on human nature or on the international political situation.

The third person limited point of view, with the narration confined to the experiences and thoughts of a single or a very few characters, comes up in stories concentrating on personal relationships or on the psychological state of characters.<sup>23</sup>

The first person narrator is naturally employed in personal reminiscences and character-portraits of friends or acquaintances. In most cases the narrator is either a minor participant or a fortuitous witness and apart from the opening passages stating his connection with events and characters, the story appears little different from one told by the third person, impersonal narrator, except for the more limited scope of narratorial

information.<sup>24</sup> The narrator who is also the central character of the story occurs rarely, and only in one such instance are the possibilities of entering the character's inner world explored to the full. In Wang Zengqi's "The Bell of the Primary School" (小學校的鐘聲) (1.2.pp.210-216) the combination of the first person narration and the interior monologues of the "I" character results in a riddle as to the times of narration, of plot and of recollections, compounded by the non-specific time reference of Chinese verbs.

The majority of stories are written in an objective, realistic mode, without experimentation in style or remarkable treatment of material. The observing gaze is from the middle distance, neither too far nor too near, and the description stays close to the surface of a limited area. A small number of stories however, form exceptions to these overall characteristics. They distinguish themselves by either stepping back to gain an overview and regarding the world with an ironical attitude, or going closer and delving into the psyche of the main character. Accordingly, these stories can be divided into two groups: one consisting of narratives in the ironical mode, the other of character-centred narratives.

#### Narratives in the ironical mode

The perceptible manifestations of this mode are various: instances of verbal irony, a mocking sceptical tone, irony of events, behavioural and situational irony, and absurdly exaggerated but seemingly realistic accounts. But at the foundation of all these narratives lies an awareness of a discrepancy or incongruity between appearance and reality, a disillusionment, a detachment, a way of viewing human existence as absurd. There is no emotional identification with the characters and there is a slight feel of didacticism about these narratives, a detectable purpose of censuring certain types of people or behaviour. Stories by Fan Quan 范泉, Shi Tuo 師陀, Mao Dun, and Yang Jiang 楊絳 display aspects of an ironic way of seeing and presenting things, but the best representative of this group is "Cat" by Qian Zhongshu.

Both of Fan Quan's stories are about Japanese in China. The eponymous hero of the first one, "Yamamoto Yasutaro" (山本安太郎) (2.4.pp.363-365), trafficks in drugs, supported by his armed gang of eight Koreans. Having got rich, married, and had a child, he is now worried about his safety and lives in constant fear of guerilla attacks. On arriving at a small town, he selects the safest place to station his men and orders the destruction of the neighbouring houses to prevent bombs being thrown at them from there. Suspecting an attack one night, he guns down by mistake forty-odd inhabitants of the town. Before long, he judges the place unsafe and moves his men on, repeating it two more times after the razing of each neighbourhood. On their last stopping point, they build fortifications and a brick road for a quick getaway, which means the demolition of further houses for their building material. When finally the guerilla attack comes and they have used up their last ammunition, they escape by truck on the newly built road, leaving the town behind as a virtual waste land. The story ends with a statistical summary of the devastation caused.

The narrative achieves its impact by the contrast between the cool, objective style of the description and what the reader feels the improbably exaggerated degree of the main character's paranoia. Whether this degree is indeed exaggerated or whether it is true to life is irrelevant in this instance; what matters is its deviation from normal, reasonable behaviour. While the cool narrative style hides the author's opinion, the degree of this deviation reveals it. The tension between the two results in an ironical overtone.

Fan Quan's second story is entitled "Inoue Yutaka" (井上豊).(3.6.pp.727-732) After several years of training at a military academy, Inoue throws himself into the fighting in China with zeal. At first he still has pangs of conscience on seeing people killed, but his instructor's words about Chinese "pigs" who killed Japanese soldiers fortify him. Killing Chinese becomes the goal of his life, he fires his field gun with maddeningly increasing fervour, mechanically, oblivious to everything. In his letters home he keeps count of the number of Chinese they killed (*sic*) and repeats his determination to wipe out the Chinese with the culture of Great Japan. His unit sweeps through China, finally setting their sights on Chongqing. In this battle however, he is wounded and left crippled in one foot.

When the war ends he returns to his home in Korea, but finds neither his parents and sister nor employment. Day after day he roams the streets, roaring, shouting, imitating the sound of his canon, as he used to in battle. Eventually he finds his "ideally suited" profession: pushing a dung cart, which he imagines to be a gun. Soon after, comes the newspaper report of his death: he jumped into the sea on discovering that the dung cart had the same number as his former gun.

Until the final ironic twist in the form of the dung cart, the narrative appears a closely observed study of increasing gun-craziness. At the same time there is a feeling of uncertainty as to whether it can be taken at face value, despite the fact that such a course of mental deterioration is not impossible. The introduction of the dung cart and Inoue's subsequent suicide then feel like poetic justice and they resolve the uncertainty about the realistic nature of the narrative and make it seem symbolic.

Shi Tuo's "Three Unimportant People" (三個小人物) (1.2.pp.190-201) is set in Orchard City 果園城 and follows the fates of Hu Fengge 胡鳳格 and his sister, Fengying 鳳英, offsprings of a long-established, once wealthy family; and of Xiao Zhang 小張, son of the family's gatekeeper. When they are still small, Xiao Zhang is allowed to attend school with Fengge and escort Fengying to and back from school. He regards her as a fairy and admires her, but his dirty appearance and runny nose only cause disgust in her. At the age of sixteen Fengge goes to the provincial capital to study, but in the two years before his schooling is stopped by the Northern Expedition, he only learns whoring and gambling. Not long after the peasant uprising breaks out, the rebels occupy Orchard City and ransack the houses of the rich. Xiao Zhang leaves home to join them, despite his father's opposition. When the Hu family returns from hiding in the countryside, Madame Hu blames Xiao Zhang for the damage done to their house and kicks his father out. Back at the family mansion, Fengge spends the remaining of the family wealth in four years on lavish parties and gambling. Falling on hard times, he becomes the mediator between rich, local families and bandits who kidnap people for ransom. In one of his transactions, due to his greed and dishonesty, he is shot. Meanwhile, his sister elopes from school with a teacher, who soon after deserts her. Saved by their mother

from being forced by Fengge to commit suicide, Fengying hides in a relative's house, and when Fengge dies she becomes a prostitute, famous for many miles around Orchard City. After some years Xiao Zhang comes back on a secret mission, dressed richly as a merchant, and accidentally hears Fengying's singing. He realizes where the fairy of his dreams has fallen, listens for a while and then continues on his way.

"Three Unimportant People" was the last of the eighteen short stories focusing on Orchard City that Shi Tuo wrote between 1938 and 1946, and published in the collection *Records of Orchard City* (果園城記). This small town, partly modelled on the author's native place, is representative of every small country town in China. It is a quiet, self-contained place, whose inhabitants live according to age-old traditional customs and beliefs. The time setting of the stories spans the period from the last years of the Qing Dynasty to the mid-thirties and as time goes on the town's fortunes decline imperceptibly, as the result of internal dynamics and of the influence of outside events.<sup>25</sup>

The third person narrator of "Three Unimportant People" is a variant of the storyteller of traditional vernacular stories (說書人), with added features tending towards the self-conscious narrator. The three main characters are formally introduced at the beginning, the narration is propelled forward by contact making phrases and rhetorical questions, and the narrator often comments ironically on the characters' actions. The impression of an account of real events is conveyed by such proofs of veracity as the quotation of a notice from the local paper about the birthday party of Madame Hu. There are also recurrent narratorial remarks referring directly to the writing of the story, e.g.: "You have to admit that I put the phrase 'satisfy a craving' [過癮] in the most appropriate place; I have deliberated for a long time before using it here".(p.194) In narratorial tone the story is rather reminiscent of "A Trifling Love Story" (稀松的戀愛故事) by Zhang Tianyi 張天翼. At the end the narrator's attitude is revealed more explicitly:

. . . And my story also ends here. I do not write that this hero goes in and rescues his beauty after countless hardships, because this would be unrealistic. To live ten years in our age is equivalent to a hundred years of our ancestors' lives; now even our two



heroes themselves - these two survivors of calamities - can not remember their feelings at the time. Even if they met, what good would result from it?(p.201)

While striving not to deviate from reality, the narrator also hints at the made-up nature of the story. This creates a retroactive suspicion in the reader and a puzzlement as to its artifice and reality. What originally might have seemed the irony of natural events - the reversal of fortunes between the Hu siblings and Xiao Zhang - now takes on the suggestion of an authorial meting out of justice.

With the use of the self-effacing narrator in Mao Dun's "A Man of Standards" (1.1.pp.40-50) the irony becomes more indirect, chiefly lodged in the descriptions of the characters and in the weave of the plot.

On a hot, sunless, oppressive day crowds jostle to get aboard a steamer, and for seats. Among the people closely packed on benches, a man lies sleeping, his leather-shod feet resting on the bench, occupying another place. Spotting the "gap" in the crowd of heads, a middle-aged woman with a little girl fights her way over and asks the man to sit up. The man contemptuously looks them up and down, makes an insulting remark, then closes his eyes again and ignores them. The woman goes away, taking her frustration out on her daughter. Two men sitting on the opposite bench, Doctor 博士頭 and Baldy 光頭, chat about how the latter bought his train ticket on the black market. After listening silently to their conversation, the man opposite suddenly gets up and delivers a small speech about the common people not having high enough standards (程度不夠), not respecting the law and being the cause of all problems by encouraging a black market. Baldy is terrified by this rebuke and tries to make out in vain some special features accounting for the "extraordinariness" of this man. When the man goes away for a while, somebody around explains that people are often forced by official corruption to resort to illegal means. A friend of Foul Mouth, the man sitting next to Baldy, comes over for a chat and sits down in the extraordinary man's place. When the man comes back, with a bedding roll, the people on the opposite bench squeeze out some room among them and persuade Foul Mouth's friend to move over there. The man lies down again, his head resting on the bedding.

In the last-minute rush before the ship's departure, two little creatures, a shoe-shine boy and another in tow, selling sesame cakes, pass through between the benches. The boy's box disturbs the man's bedding roll and in anger he kicks over the other's basket, making the oilsticks and cakes scatter on the ground. As the children scramble to pick them up, the man gives a speech again about the people's ignorance, lack of hygiene and lack of respect for order. Soon after, the ship starts, prompting another batch of people to look for seats. A man in a Hawaiian shirt, getting no satisfactory answer to his request for a seat, pushes the man's feet off the bench and sits down. The extraordinary man can not make him out; Hawaiian Shirt is not frightened of him, not willing to argue and his stature deters the man from fighting. Finally he hits on a brilliant idea; by ordering and shuffling people about, he makes room on another bench and asks Hawaiian Shirt to move over there to give him face. Hawaiian Shirt accepts the new place and peace returns again. The story ends with the extraordinary man lying asleep in his original position, with a large, red-headed fly walking irreverently on his small pointed nose.

As well as painting a portrait of this "man of standards" in action, the story also gives well-observed sketches of the minor figures around him. The man's character emerges through his interactions with these figures - the middle-aged woman, Baldy and Doctor, the friend of Foul Mouth, the shoe-shine boy and the little cake-seller, and finally, Hawaiian Shirt - who in their turn are also revealed by the same events. Their behaviour towards the man ranges from cowardice, through deference to authority deduced from the man's manner, to standing up to him simply out of self-interest and allowing themselves to be bribed into complicity. It is their attitude, to a great extent, which makes it possible for the man to bully them. By rebuking others, the man implies that he is better than them and therefore entitled to his exceptional position among the ship's passengers.

While almost none of the characters is shown in a flattering light, the self-appointed moralist of the title becomes exclusively the butt of satire. The narrator's standard epithet for him, "extraordinary man" and ironic descriptions like "the embodiment of the

law" and "the upholder of order" carry the satiric intent. There are repeated mentions of his undignified features, intended to point to a ridiculous contrast with his self-important speeches. The introduction of the cheeky fly, which walks on his nose, serves partly the same purpose: to take him down a peg or two in the eyes of the readers. But it is also a comment on the stand of the other characters, as the fly is the only creature in the story which is described as brave and strong. It disrespectfully explores the man's nose, peeps into his nostrils, lingers in his eye-socket. As the last image of the story focuses on the fly, the debunking effect of its actions serves as a kind of poetic justice.

"A Man of Standards" brings to mind Zhang Tianyi's story "Mr. Hua Wei" (華威先生) for its similar way of satirizing a phoney character through the juxtaposition of incongruous behaviours. However, Mao Dun's more elaborate, less sketch-like treatment, extending to detailed interaction with surrounding characters, results in a more effective portrait of a real type, than the caricature drawn by Zhang Tianyi.

In Yang Jiang's two stories the ironical tone is combined with close, but detached psychological observation. The first one, with the English title "ROMANESQUE" (1.1.pp.51-63), concerns the adventures of Ye Pengnian 葉彭年, a university student, who is averse to studying and has taken up arranging small business transactions for relatives and friends. He has a girlfriend, Lingyi 令儀, a thin, pale, elegant and clever, but somewhat insipid, girl. Though Pengnian admires her, he would prefer if she made herself prettier with make-up and soft clothes. As the story opens, he is about to sell some jewels for his aunt through an acquaintance of his. At the man's flat he sees a beautiful girl, who makes a strong impression on him. Later he is made drunk by the people wishing to buy his goods and wakes up in a dark, locked room, the jewels missing from his pocket. A girl rescues him, leading him blindfolded out into the street. From her perfume, he recognizes the girl he saw at the flat, and agrees to meet her two days later. On getting back he tells Lingyi of his adventures, but she laughs half-incredulously and calls them "romanesque", meaning just like in a novel. On their rendezvous, Pengnian and the girl, May, become rapidly charmed with each other, and arrange to meet again at her friend's house. Pengnian, however, finding the girl too secretive,

becomes suspicious and does not go. This he later regrets and when by chance catches sight of her on the street, he follows her home. He finds her in a seedy building, with an opium den on one of the floors, and in a quarrel with an older woman. Despite locking the woman out, she is afraid of being overheard and reported, and promises to tell him everything the next day at her friend's house. There he learns that her father was a foreign sailor, her mother died and she was brought up by that older woman, with friends in the opium den. She also tells him of her involvement with the people who wanted to cheat him, and how their leader gave her the jewels, expecting favours in return. To get away from these connections of hers, they decide to run away together to Tianjin. At their next meeting, as they plan their elopement, somebody tries to open the locked door, and she is thrown again into a panic, suspecting that she has been followed. On their day of departure, he waits in vain at the station. He never sees her again, nor finds any trace of her or her friends. When the telephone rings at his home it is always Lingyi: "Pengnian? Don't forget, at the same time..."

The story is indeed "romanesque"; it hardly seems possible to cram more happenings or coincidences into it. That Lingyi's sceptical comment is utilized as the title is the key to its interpretation. The unfolding events represent a realization of Pengnian's fantasies: he hankers after colour, glamour and drama, and finds it with a vengeance in his affair with the girl. At one point in the narrative, he feels that life more and more resembles fiction (小說). (p.63) His planned solution of eloping to Tianjin is in the spirit of such a "romanesque" sequence of events, and the (almost foreseeable) final disappearance of the girl feels like the only possible in-character ending. Thus events make an ironical comment on his aspirations, and since the fiction-like nature of these events implies the presence of somebody making them up, we almost glimpse the smiling face of the author in the background.

In Yang Jiang's second story, "Indian Summer" (小陽春) (2.1.pp.38-47), the protagonist, Yu Bin 俞斌, is a middle-aged university professor, who is married and has two young children. He has recently begun to feel that his wife, Huifen 蕙芬, through her attitude and temperament makes him old and fat (*sic*), though he considers himself in

the prime of his life and not ready to slide into old age. He also resents her for being different from his ideal, which he seems to have found in one of his students, Hu Ruoqu 胡若蕓, a thin, dark-skinned girl. One evening, as the Yu family is having their evening meal, Miss Hu calls to ask for Yu's contribution to a school publication. Seeing her husband's embarrassed behaviour, Mrs. Yu treats Miss Hu with hostility disguised by politeness. When left together with Miss Hu, Yu half-accidentally stumbles towards her and later unexpectedly kisses her good-bye. With this begin a series of meetings at her house, love-letters by Yu plagiarized from literature and letters from Miss Hu sent to Yu's home under the guise of manuscripts. Yu feels that the spring of his life has returned, and gets more and more intoxicated by the "dream" of their relationship. One day arriving unexpectedly at her home with a bouquet and a box of chocolates, he finds her in unambiguous proximity with another of his students. Realizing the situation, he makes an excuse and leaves. Not knowing what to do with the presents, he gives them to his wife, who is overjoyed and secretly reproaches herself for suspecting and treating him coldly. Some time later she accidentally discovers Miss Hu's letters in her husband's pocket. After her initial reaction of wanting to throw him out with a "good riddance", she resolves to fight for her marriage and not to let her rival win. She composes herself, but can not face her usual daily tasks and goes out, wandering all day. On her return, when Yu suggests their going to Hangzhou for a break, she can not restrain herself any more and in spite of her former resolve, confronts her husband with the truth. He tells her of Miss Hu's engagement with a fellow student and of his encouragement of it. Husband and wife finally make up and although they continue to talk of going to Hangzhou, they both know they will not go. It is autumn, the indian summer is over and the weather is getting cold.

"Indian Summer" deals with the recurrent theme in Yang Jiang's works, of a character's dreams, fantasies and ideals dissolving or being shown empty in the contact with reality. The irony used here to achieve this, though, is gentle and tempered with understanding.<sup>26</sup> One moment the writer watches her creations from a distance, where the absurdity and ridiculousness of their dreams and actions are visible, the next moment

she moves close up, observing their contradictory emotions and their weakness with a degree of sympathy. Yu Bin's romantic illusion is poked fun at through a number of mishaps, which are all the results of his married state; his own failure to see his situation clearly is the cause of his ridiculousness. At the same time we see the driving forces behind his fling and these are so universal and familiar that we are unable to condemn him, for it would seem the condemnation of inveterate human traits.

The story is a well-observed slice of life, with an implied moral, but also a very readable and entertaining piece. Its humour takes the form of descriptions and narrated interior monologues of gently mocking tone, like the following passage:

Of course Huifen is a good wife, a first class wife. But how come a woman forgets everything else when she becomes a wife? A wife! No longer a lover, no longer a friend. How boring! She has become satisfied with this. To be a good wife, grow plump contentedly, prepare for old age! Yu Bin felt his own putting on weight was entirely due to his wife's infecting him with it. [What?!] You can't catch fatness?! Her even temper and good humour, her laziness of feelings had an effect on him, and he too has grown fat. Yu Bin truly did not want to be fat! No-one knew how he hated fat people. "Give me a thin one, with a whole body of muscles!" he said, referring to women. He did not like white skin either. "What is good about white? It's like raw flour! Give me a sun-ripened colour. I'd rather have [something] sun-burnt than raw!" This was Yu Bin's criterion in choosing a wife. But, like all men who draw up a list of conditions when choosing a wife, he selected one diametrically opposed to those conditions.(p.39)

Another feature is the use of small narratorial asides on plot-connected but more general topics, such as Yu Bin's attitude to courting and love, which "was just like old people's attitude to life; who hanker after the enjoyment of ease and comfort, but are not in the mood to pay for it by worries and fighting" (p.43) or the peculiar nature of the "wife's throne", on which Mrs. Yu was sitting contentedly; this being "happiness built on a cock-up, no sooner perfected than becoming defective, on the principle that waxing is necessarily followed by waning".(p.46)

Some characteristics of these two stories by Yang Jiang apply in a sharper, more intense version to the story "Cat" (1.1.pp.64-90) by Qian Zhongshu. The gentle irony becomes merciless, the psychological insight discovers unforgiven character flaws and

the narratorial digressions become longer, more independent of the story and more devastatingly witty. At first glance even the storyline has similarities.

Feeling eclipsed by his society-beauty wife, Aimo 愛默, Li Jianhou 李建侯 wants to earn some recognition for himself by writing a book about his travels abroad. Since he has no head for learned things, he hires a nineteen-year-old university student, Qi Yigu 齊頤谷, to ghost-write it for him as his private secretary. On the third day of his employment, Yigu's work is destroyed by the cat of the title, Aimo's pet, Taoqi 淘氣. By way of an apology, Aimo invites Yigu to the tea-party she is giving the next day. The guests, all regulars at her salon, consist of prominent cultural figures: writers, a political commentator, a scientist, a director of an academic institution, a literary critic and a painter. At the bottom of each guest's contribution to the conversation lies the attempt to appear in the most favourable light in Aimo's eyes. Yigu, too shy to take part, watches and listens silently in the background, impressed by these men, whom he takes to be outstanding and genuine. Being inexperienced with women, he is dazzled by Aimo and falls in love with her. The next day Aimo, spurred by a remark at the party, gives Yigu some copying work to do, and in the course of the next few days takes Yigu away from her husband in all but name. Following the resulting quarrel, Jianhou gives way completely, lets Aimo have exclusive use of Yigu, and absents himself from home during most of the next few days. Then one morning Yigu learns that Jianhou left the previous evening for Shanghai to arrange their moving south. Shortly after, Aimo's most trusted admirer brings the news that Jianhou was travelling with a seventeen-year old girl. Aimo is furious, her pride is hurt, and she tries to console herself and take revenge on Jianhou by activating Yigu's love for herself. But the sight of Aimo's tear-stained face, made ugly by hatred, sobers him up and when she presses him to confess his love, he blames his embarrassment on Taoqi's presence. Putting the cat outside Yigu accidentally shuts the door on its tail. This is the last straw for Aimo; she slaps him in the face and kicks him out. Left on her own, she suddenly feels tired and wishes to be rid of the burden of having to look young, beautiful and socially successful. Meanwhile on the train for

Shanghai Jianhou regrets having broken up his marriage for the sake of such a plain, childish girl.

The storyline proper - events in the Li household after Yigu's arrival - represents only one half of the narrative; the other half takes up the tea-party, the description of the guests and their conversation. This middle section is a perfect and highly entertaining Menippean satire of certain intellectual attitudes and points of view embodied by the guests and expressed in their arguments. It exposes mercilessly, among other things, self-importance, spurious expert speculation, kitschy sentimentalism about old China, Japanophilia, "intellectual imperialism" and pedantic pseudo-scholarship. Occasionally the satire feels a little too vitriolic, especially in the case of four of the guests who are identifiably modelled on contemporary intellectuals.<sup>27</sup>

The figure of the cat, elevated into the title of the story, serves as a catalyst and as an excuse. Its destruction of Yigu's work leads to his being invited to the tea-party and to his meeting Aimo, which precipitates the ensuing domestic conflict. The cat also provides the link between the account of domestic happenings and the account of the tea-party. Its existence provides Aimo's admirers with opportunity to display their witticism and erudition in choosing a name for it, and with ready-made metaphoric raw material for flattering Aimo. At the end of the story, Yigu's hurting the cat supplies a concrete excuse for Aimo's burst of temper, which hides the true reasons of her husband's betrayal of her and Yigu's non-compliance with her expectations.

The characters' faults are made ridiculous by what they say, do and think, and by the narrator's comments and style. With the three main characters we have more insights into their motives than with the guests, and therefore less of a categorical judgement on them, but the standards are high, failings are never treated sympathetically, and nothing escapes the author's critical eye. The comments often take the form of perceptive and unusual similes, sending the subject up or cutting it down to size. The following is one of the many examples:

Mrs. Li was fully aware that this husband of hers was indispensable. Like the zero sign among Arabic numbers, though it has no value of its own, without it no tens,



hundreds or thousands could exist. Putting a zero after any number increases its value tenfold, therefore greatly increasing the significance of the zero sign itself.(p.67)

This passage also illustrates the mocking style of the whole story, achieved largely through the incongruity of the connected ideas.

Sometimes the comments branch off from the trunk of the story and instead of illuminating the topic in hand, they put forward the author's opinion on only tenuously connected subjects. For example, talking about Aimo's cat, the narrator launches into the following:

In the nearly two years since Taoqi got to the Li household, Japan occupied the three [North-]Eastern provinces, the administrative organizations in Peking were reorganized once, Africa lost a country and gained an empire, the League of Nations revealed its true nature, only to be regarded as a League of Dreams or a League of Blind Men, but Mrs. Li still has not changed her husband, and Taoqi still retained its own mischievousness and its mistress' dotting affection. In this repeatedly changing world, how many people can be similarly persistent and constant in their decisions and beliefs?(p.65)

At such times the author reaches out for a more direct vehicle for his views than what fiction can provide and the story seems to want to dissolve into an essay.

#### Character-centred narratives

In stories that centre on the psychological make-up of one or a very few characters, the plots are generally secondary, their twists and turns serving to illustrate further facets or levels of the character's inner world. Psychological insights are provided by direct or indirect interior monologues, by dreams and fantasies revealing the character's anxieties or premonition of the future, and by closely observed and accurate portrayals of seemingly irrational or contradictory acts of behaviour. Noticeably, the topic is often a romantic relationship, or otherwise the psychological probing discovers Freudian motives. The insight results in a narrative that engages the reader's sympathy and precludes judgement on the characters. Examples of these character-centred narratives are stories by Lu Ling 路翎, Li Tuozhi 李拓之 and Wang Zengqi.

The main character in Lu Ling's "The Love Between Cheng Dengfu and the Yarn-Shop Girl" (程登富和線鋪姑娘底戀愛) (1.5.pp.592-606), works for a transport company, taking goods to and from Chongqing by boat. With the daily toil, the dangers of the river and the bullying by company officials, life is hard for him and only the slight hope of having his own boat in a few years' time sustains him. On one of his short stays at home, he notices again with renewed interest his childhood playmate, Wang Shuzhen 王淑珍, the daughter of his neighbour, the yarn-shop owner. His feelings for her grow gradually stronger, and she becomes his only hope of warmth, of humane life. After some hesitation, he decides to find out if she likes him, and sensing her willingness, he sends his mother to propose on his behalf. He is refused; Wang Shuzhen has already been promised to the son of an impoverished member of the local gentry. Cheng goes to the wedding feast with his mates, to demand the return of the money he has lent to the bridegroom and to make a row if it is not returned. But the debt is paid back promptly by the bridegroom's father, Cheng's anger slowly dissipates and finally he drinks a toast with the bridegroom. The following morning, calm and feeling some hope, he leaves the town on his boat.

Narrated in the third person, the story focuses mostly on Cheng Dengfu's consciousness. We are given insights into Cheng's mental world by direct quotations of his thoughts, by the narrator's interpretation, explanation of them, and by general descriptions of Cheng's state of mind. More interesting and effective, though, are the passages which narrate unexplained, irrational or inappropriate acts of Cheng's behaviour. One such case occurs when Cheng is out drinking with his mates. A fight develops between some of the men, which Cheng watches apathetically for a long time. Then suddenly and without reason he throws himself into the fray, challenging and hitting everybody, as if he has lost his senses. In this incident Cheng's pent-up anger and fundamental frustration gain expression and release through misplaced aggression. The psychological phenomenon is well observed and used for indirect characterization.

Cheng's depressed state of mind and what Wang Shuzhen represents for him are also conveyed indirectly, through a scene of almost symbolic character:

After all the noises had become faint, a deep persistent growl spread gradually from the notoriously dangerous shoals on the near-by river, filling the darkness. To Cheng Dengfu it felt like being placed in the boundless, desolate wilderness; this sound sent out a warning about his life.

He fell asleep restlessly. Suddenly, he woke up, unclear about where he was, and heard that deep, persistent sound again. He did not know whether he had already been abandoned by everybody, he felt extremely frightened. He was not aware of any real, familiar, warm thing, there was only this inhuman, terrifying roar in the great, bleak darkness. He was fighting this nightmarish feeling with all his strength. Suddenly, he heard the faint crying of a woman. Like a ray of light, it penetrated the darkness and entered his heart, making him feel again in the human world.

He realized it was Wang Shuzhen's voice. He sighed lightly, then got up, threw on some clothes, opened the door and went out. The cold air made him shiver. The crying of a woman he loved had changed even the roar of that terrifying shoal into something familiar and warm. Light filtered through the papered window at the back of the yarn-shop. He went closer and stood under the window next to a withered 'Chinese scholar tree'.(p.599)

The warmth and hope he comes to feel, however, evaporates in the morning:

Looking at that overhead window of the yarn-shop, with its tattered paper, he saw that it was covered with cobwebs and dust: yet when he stood underneath it the previous night, he felt it was so beautiful. The filthiness of this window suddenly made him despair, just like he felt hope and happiness when he stood underneath it the previous night.(p.601)

Cheng Dengfu's downtrodden, dehumanized life is made perceptible by the menacing sound of the dangerous river in the darkness. In his bleak world even the distress of another human being, and his loved one at that, can provide solace by dissolving his isolation. His sudden hope of human warmth during the night and the subsequent loss of that hope in the morning light are expressed through the 'objective correlative' of the papered window.

Lu Ling's protagonist is a man at the bottom of society's ladder, whose living is hard and dangerous, who is bullied and has little prospect of escaping from his lot. He has all the makings of a proletarian figure of leftist fiction, complete with having a rival-in-love in the local gentry. But instead of focusing on the social or class aspect of Cheng Dengfu's story and describing oppression according to the leftist formula in order to facilitate the class struggle, Lu Ling concerns himself with the psychological effects of Cheng's situation on his everyday moods, feelings and thoughts, and traces the insidious

consequences of oppression in the human psyche: frustration, irrational outbreaks of mood, hesitation, indecisiveness and lack of purpose. Such an approach not only ran counter to the powerfully persuasive Maoist line, but was also a new and unusual way of dealing with the problems of workers.

Li Tuozhi's "Burial of a Beauty" (埋香) (2.5.pp.439-448) is set in 860, in a Daoist temple outside the Tang capital, Chang'an. The abbess of the temple, Yu Xuanji 魚玄機, was once a rich man's concubine, driven out for secretly meeting another man. She often goes out for long periods to poetry meetings, leaving the novice, Lü Qiao 綠翹 and the nun, Yue Yin 月印 to themselves. The seventeen-year-old Lü Qiao feels lonely and depressed in this situation. One day after her mistress has gone out, she paints and adorns herself with Yu's finery. A man riding a white horse comes for an appointment with Yu and leaves a letter for her. When Yu comes back, she senses something strange and suspects Lü Qiao of having entertained the man in her absence. On reading the letter, which mocks her, she faints. Yu blames Lü Qiao for not asking the man to wait and for dressing up to seduce him. Her frustrations at growing old and of her beauty fading come out in a fury, directed against Lü Qiao, who is young and beautiful. Yu ties her up and beats her savagely, the sight of her stripped body increasing her frenzied cruelty. As the result of the beatings Lü Qiao dies.

The next scene finds Yu in prison, on the last night before her execution. In her reveries she recalls events from her past. She sees herself first as an attractive young woman in the company of her master, then walking in the garden with a golden fan in her hand. The images speed up: a man jumping over the wall, an icy kiss on her lips, the golden fan shaking and changing into sparks. Realizing that the sparks are fireflies in the autumn night, she wakes up.

Her thoughts leave the prison and go back to the temple. The man on the white horse addresses her and as she remembers his mocking letter, she resolves to have nothing to do with him and anything in the outside world any more. But things have changed at the temple, now Lü Qiao's body lies buried in the back garden.

Yu Xuanji seemed to have seen Lü Qiao. In the moonlight she was climbing out of that piece of earth under the palm-tree in the disused garden. Her loosely hanging hair covered her face, but her whole body was exposed. Holding a silk stocking in her hand, she walked down the stone steps of the old pond, stared at the water for a moment, then suddenly with a splash she jumped into the green-black water like a frog, and started to swim. Duckweed and water plants gathered around her shoulders and chest, but could not stick to her smooth flesh. She quickly emerged from the water again, holding a watersnake in her mouth. The snake coiled around her neck, its hanging tail encircled her breast. Bathing in the moonlight and the waves, her face and body shone green. As she lifted her arms horizontally and lay back, the light and the waves of the turbulent tide around her swiftly turned into a dark green sea! And this sea started spinning, round and round and round; Lü Qiao was swept to the side of the old pond. She appeared to stretch out a hand to pluck a palm-leaf to cover her body, but at the same time wiped her face and body. When she turned around, her whole face was a mess of blood and flesh, her whole body was rotting. She seemed to have seen Yu Xuanji, and suddenly started to wail:

"Teacher Yu, Teacher Yu! 'It is easy to find a priceless treasure, but difficult to have a man of feelings!'" [These two lines are from a poem by Yu to which the man's letter alluded.]

Yu Xuanji fainted with fright. Her whole body came out in a sweat, as if immersed in water.(p.447)

Next, Yu is called outside and taken to her execution. After a procession through waiting crowds, she sees herself on the scaffold, stripped naked, showing her shrivelled, sallow, wrinkled body. A roar by the crowd: her head is chopped off, blood gushing out, open mouth revealing chattering teeth, eyes angry, as if cursing this failed youth, this dried up life of hers. Then, in terror, she truly hears her name being called outside.

The story can be divided into two halves. The first, ending with Lü Qiao's death, narrates the events plainly, with minimal exposition of Yu's personal history and motives; the second, comprising Yu's dreams and fantasies in prison, gives clues as to the driving forces behind her actions. It is a closely observed case study of sexual frustration and jealousy, manifested in actions and dreams. The associations and the symbolic elements of the dreams, in particular, would not be out of place in a psychological textbook. The recollection of Yu's past life ends, after the suggestion of her disloyalty, with the collapse of that life, symbolized by the fan's shattering into sparks, which also connects with the actual night scene around her. Lü Qiao's appearance in the following dream is an attempt to process psychologically the facts of her death, of her youth, contrasting it with Yu's own physical decline, and of Yu's jealousy of her. The final envisaging of her

own execution, viewed as if from outside by a disembodied self, reveals Yu's most deep-seated fears. Being stripped and having to display her ageing body holds as much terror for her as the beheading.

The story's setting, the prominence and significance of dreams and the baroque flourish of the descriptions all echo Tang *chuanqi* 傳奇. Historical settings are something of a speciality of Li Tuozi; his other story in *Literary Renaissance* ("Sheltering at Night" [投暮], 3.5.pp.541-548) is also set in Tang times. But while there the historical theme is used for an allegorical message related to the present, here the *chuanqi* form houses modern psychological fiction.

Two stories by Wang Zengqi, in addition to their character-centred aspects, also exhibit interesting new techniques of presenting their fiction material.<sup>28</sup> The first one, "The Bell of the Primary School" (1.2.pp.210-216), is at first glance reminiscent of those stories which record the educated author/narrator's visit to his old home and his attendant reflections (a couple of the many examples: "My Old Home" [故鄉] by Lu Xun and "A Dream of Three and a Half Days" [三天半的夢] by Zhang Tianyi). Here, however, the personal recollections touch on no problems of conscience or re-evaluation of life.

The story starts out with the first person narrator's stream of thoughts on one darkening evening. After some capriciously associative descriptions of his surroundings, he recalls scenes and sounds from his primary school days as if they were of that moment. Looming large in these recollections is the school-bell, which plays something of a symbolic role in his life. Then he switches on to the memory of leaving home on a boat, six years earlier, after his nineteenth birthday. The bulk of the story takes up this journey, his observations, recollections of his childhood, and conversations on the boat with a girl, a former schoolmate of his. A silent contest of will underlies their conversations, fuelled on his part by the wish to appear self-assured and adult-like. He pays close attention to details about her person: her clothes, the oilspot on her stocking, her cold hand, her muff. This muff, white and smooth like a kitten's fur, acquires importance towards the end of the story. The girl invites the narrator to her cabin to share some of her oranges. There,

on the table next to the oranges is that "white kitten", and as he puts down his contributions, his fingers touch it. Later, his thoughts straying, he picks up the muff instead of the oranges and starts playing with it. In a moment of embarrassment he transfers the muff to his face, wanting to bury his lips in its softness. A piece of orange skin comes flying over and hits him in the eye. As he covers his eyes with his hands, he feels on them the touch of the girl's hand. At this moment the ship's siren sounds and the girl goes ashore.

The closing paragraph of the story appears to leave the time point of the boat journey and return to the dream-like uncertainty of time and place of the beginning:

Of course, Lao Zhan's bell has started to strike again. The wind is strong, the boat sways violently. There were blackboards in every classroom, on them a lot of writing, a mysterious traffic emerging between the words, the bell sound acting as an intermediary. I do not know whether I am on the boat or on the water, or how I have lived till now. Sometimes I can not avoid being a little mad; at first it was mentioned by others, later on I remembered it myself. The bell!.....(p.216)

One of the main characteristics of the story is the series of passages giving the "I" character's thoughts in free direct form, i.e., without an introductory clause.<sup>29</sup> Of various lengths, these interior monologues can make up whole paragraphs themselves, can be found in the middle of descriptive passages, or even as fragments inside a narrative sentence ("I brought my lips together, the reeds on the riverbank were sighing, I must warn her." [p.213]). In no case are they marked off from their surroundings by appropriate punctuation. The propelling force of the interior monologues is association of thoughts, not entirely free and random, but requiring some effort nonetheless in working out connections. The following example is from the middle of the story, when after thinking about a sailor-suit he has bought for his brother, he goes on:

It is early, wait a little longer, wait till all the trees turned green. Now it is still only plum blossoms opening in the lamplight. Faint shadows thrown across my birthday. It is early, what do you mean - early, you have to set out at daybreak tomorrow, do not just play with those flowers and forget about matters, drop things! Pay attention, the first bell is for reveille.(p.213)

The phrase "it is early" is a reference that his brother will not be able to wear the suit yet. It also connects with an earlier remark by the girl, that it will be better for drawing

when the trees are green. The "plum blossoms" were mentioned in the girl's speculation to her cousin about losing her gloves. "Lamplight" on the flowers links up with the musings of the story's first paragraphs, and the shadows it casts, with his nineteenth birthday celebration. The last two sentences are his thoughts on that night before setting out; inserted into it are his imagined warnings to the girl about losing her gloves.

In this chain of associations there is an anachronistic element, the "lamplight". The time point of this interior monologue is after his nineteenth birthday on the boat, and "lamplight" belongs to the opening night-scene of the story when the narrator is twenty-five years old. But as the boat journey is remembered in the time setting of six years later, features of this setting can naturally seep into the recollections of earlier events.

Apart from the recall of actual events from his past, the narrator also visualizes imaginary scenes composed of several actual memories (see Appendix IV, third paragraph), as well as imagining absent people doing certain things at that particular moment. The resulting montage of scenes of different time, space and degree of reality is made more baffling for the reader by the ambiguous time reference of Chinese verbs.

Inside the frame provided by the first three and the last paragraphs, the account of the boat journey is chronological, interspersed with flashbacks. There is hardly any plot to speak of, the organization of the story is through association of thoughts and recollections. This pattern of organization results in the focus being shifted from the eponymous bell to the boat journey and onto the narrator's relationship with the girl and the latent tensions in it. This latter theme gains prominence halfway through, but comes to an abrupt end after the unexplained orange-peel throwing scene. Similarly unexplained is the significance of the girl's white muff, unless through the association of '手籠-小貓-陰毛' it has a sexual connotation, rather like 'muff-kitten-pussy' in English.

The lack of need felt for explanations and clarifications, and the overall concept of the story as fragments organized on the associative patterns of human thinking, give the impression of a piece written for private consumption, as a record of personal recollections. This is reinforced by the end-notes' admission about the autobiographical



nature of the story and the fact that the "I" narrator/main character bears the author's name.

Wang Zengqi's second story, "Revenge" (1.4.pp.394-398), is about a swordsman, who travels through mountain after mountain in search of his father's killer.<sup>30</sup> He spends a night at a Buddhist temple in the mountains, and his recollections, observations, mental reflections while there make up most of the story. His thoughts start off with his immediate surroundings, then take in the white-haired monk of the temple, summon up the image of his white-haired mother, his home village and a similar village at the foot of the mountain. He sees, as if sitting on a mountain top, a small figure climbing up; he becomes that figure, nearing the end of his wandering. In his imagination, he sees, hears, smells, feels the life of the mountain. Falling asleep, he comes up against a wall-like darkness, which surrounds him and changes into a lotus flower, and he goes round inside it, until a clanging sound accompanied by a spark wakes him up. The dream-sound leads on to the real one of the praying monk striking his chimes. The swordsman has the feeling of there being someone else connected with the temple besides the monk. We learn that the swordsman has been looking for his father's enemy on the basis of a name tattooed on his arm by his mother. This name connects him as strongly to the enemy as to his father, whom he never knew, and he feels ambivalent about revenge.

The following morning, after leaving the temple, he arrives at a high rock-face. From inside comes a clanging sound. The swordsman enters the cave and discovers a man, in a monk's robe, chiselling away at the far end. As the man raises his arm, the swordsman notices his father's name tattooed on it. He draws his sword, but at the sudden conviction that his mother is already dead, lets it fall back into the sheath. He then picks up the other set of hammer and chisel in front of his feet and joins the monk in the chiselling.

The story is told in the third person, with a window into the swordsman's consciousness. His thoughts are presented either in narrated form or in direct form without an introductory clause and quotation marks. This latter form is especially interesting when it turns up in an otherwise conventional narrative sentence, like the

following: "It was the monk, he was really startled, the monk stood very close, I almost killed him".(p.397) While the indeterminate time reference of the verbs allows the first and third clauses to be the swordsman's mental reactions in direct form (It is the monk, . . . , the monk stands very close, . . . ), the second clause is definitely the narrator's voice, from which the switch is made to the swordsman's internal voice in the last clause. Occurring less dramatically between sentences, the unmarked switch from the narrator's to the main character's voice and back is a characteristic feature of the story as a whole. The generally self-effacing narrator comes to the fore in one instance, makes a self-reference and introduces the vital explanatory material: "I almost forgot, this traveller was a posthumous child".(p.397)

The organization of the story is based on the structure of dreams or interior monologues, its parts linked by association through images, sounds and smells. Information about the swordsman's background and motives comes together gradually, from small scattered portions; apart from the one instance of narratorial intervention, no more explanation is provided than what would be needed in the swordsman's own thinking. As for the factors outside his character, there are enough pointers placed throughout the story to make the surprising ending plausible. The presence of the two praying mats, the meditation cell's incongruity with the old monk and his enigmatic remark about someone who "would even walk through places with no roads", all acquire sense with the appearance of the chiselling man in a monk's robe, even if the coincidence of his being the enemy is left unaccounted for. A little more mysterious pointer is the swordsman's premonitory dream: the wall-like darkness foreshadows the rock-face, the lotus flower the narrowing cave, and the sparks accompanied by the clanging sound anticipate the chiselling.

At one point the story comes up with an interesting typographical arrangement. The passage - probably some recollections by the swordsman - which describes a seaside port scene at sunset, is not printed continuously like prose, but broken up, sometimes mid-sentence, into indented lines.(p.396) Such an arrangement, however, is not unique among stories in *Literary Renaissance*. In A Zhan's "In Order to Divide the Household"

(4.1.pp.34-42), passages describing a fight or commotion are given the same treatment, as if to indicate by the short staccato lines the rhythm of the action. In "Revenge", however, the broken-up lines give the effect of poetry, which is strengthened by the fact that the passage is made up of a succession of images. In a later explanation, Wang illuminated the general idea behind this technique:

Some people say that my short stories are difficult to distinguish from *sanwen* (散文 non-fictional prose). It is true. In my youth I wanted to break down the barriers between short stories, *sanwen* and poetry. "Revenge" was the practical realization of this intention. Later, I got rid of the formal elements of poetry, did not break up the lines, and the components of *sanwen* had clearly been there all along. What I refer to as *sanwen* is the part that indirectly describes a character, his temperament, psychology and actions. Sometimes it is only a little atmosphere. But I hold that the atmosphere is the character. All the words, all the lines of a story have to be infused with the character.<sup>31</sup>

Further facets of his writings are described by himself as follows:

My short stories do not much resemble short stories, perhaps they are fundamentally not short stories. Some of them are just character sketches. I am not good at telling stories. I also do not like stories that are too much like short stories, that is, stories with a strong plot. If the plot is too strong, I feel it is not very truthful. My earliest short stories were simply fairly objective records of my impressions of some people, an unintentional, not exhaustive filling in on what I had not seen and did not understand [對我所未見到的，不了解的，不去以意爲之作過多的補充]. . . .

Looseness is another characteristic of my fiction, but it is intentional. I do not like stories with a tightly-knit composition; I am for 'trusting the horse, and following the bridle', for literature without rules.<sup>32</sup>

This plotless nature and looseness of structure give Wang's stories a distinctly modern feel. Their unusual, un-story-like way of aspiring to truthfulness makes the critic Li Guotao 李國濤 relate them to the anti-novel of Western modernism. But he also points out that the provenance of the inspiration is classical Chinese culture rather than Western modernism. Wang was highly accomplished in classical Chinese literature, and particularly fond of writings traditionally classified under headings of 'Sketches' and 'Jottings' (筆記, 隨筆), such as *New Accounts of Tales of the World* (世說新語), *Notes on Dream Brook* (夢溪筆談) or Gong Zizhen's 龔自珍 *On Mr. Wang Yin* (記王隱君). He felt that these could be regarded as stories (小說). His fiction shows affinity with

these works principally in structure and tone, but also in subject matter, there being many among them recording human affairs.<sup>33</sup>

On the ideological level too, "Revenge" brings together various disparate elements. The motto of the story, "An avenger does not smash Excalibur" (復仇者不折鏢干), from the *Zhuangzi* (莊子), expresses the Daoist opposition to revenge, with its attendant thought that peace would prevail if the spontaneously cohesive forces in society were not destroyed by order deliberately imposed from above.<sup>34</sup> The traditional Chinese subject of revenge is presented in the story re-evaluated in the light of a modern Western philosophical theory, existentialism. As Xie Zhixi 解志熙 pointed out, Wang Zengqi's attention here is focused not on the moral aspect of revenge, but on the swordsman's growing awareness of how his mission has pre-determined his life, stripped him of freedom and made him a tool in others' hands. At first the swordsman conforms to his mother's wish - which represents society's moral demand - and takes on passively the role of the avenger. As he gets close to fulfilling his mission, however, he starts to have doubts and becomes conscious of the pointlessness of his existence, even wondering about his own identity. When he finally sees his father's name on the arm of the enemy and realizes that that man also has been the tool of other people's revenge, his own fate becomes clear to him. In a sudden flash of illumination - symbolized by his conviction that his mother is already dead - he rejects that fate and society's moral demands on him.<sup>35</sup>

Throughout the story there are allusions to Buddhism and Daoism, often intertwined. The swordsman admires the old Buddhist monk for his perceived qualities of informality, naturalness, being full of feelings - virtues more evocative of Daoism than of Buddhism, as is the monk's resemblance to a large butterfly. As he feels himself nearing the end of his journey and is attracted by the quiet ease and freedom of the monk's life, he startles himself by saying aloud "But I know I don't want to become a monk here!", hinting at the sudden awareness of a subconscious wish, which is then rejected. The final scene's reconciliation with the enemy, joining him in the chiselling and cutting through together to emptiness and light, suggests enlightenment possibly via Buddhism (空 for 空門?).

The overall characteristic of stories in *Literary Renaissance*, in contrast to Chinese short stories of the twenties and thirties, is a less obvious Western literary influence, in terms of topics and concerns. The themes are all home-grown, bearing witness to their age and its problems from various angles. A novel aspect is the increased emphasis on personal relationships or on matters psychological. As for their techniques, even elements originally modelled on Western literature, such as the interior monologue or the first person narrative, have by now become assimilated and natural. Experimentation in form, when it occurs, appears to be inspired by the native Chinese tradition and involves crossing the boundary into poetry, the essay and other non-fictional prose. Mixing in characteristics of these basically symbolic or synecdochic genres gives the stories a modern aspect, in that they depart from the conventional representational technique of realism.

The two groups of stories discussed in detail above have claims to modernity in other respects as well. The unsentimental, disillusioned and sceptical attitude of the stories in the ironical mode is a characteristic reaction of the modern mind after a great catastrophe, in this case the devastating experience of the war. The situation in China in the forties was in many ways similar to that in Europe after the First World War, and it is not a coincidence that Qian Zhongshu's and Yang Jiang's writings show affinity, as Edward Gunn has demonstrated, with certain works of Somerset Maugham, Aldous Huxley and Evelyn Waugh.<sup>36</sup> This affinity, however, is one of similar response to historical circumstances, rather than of direct influence. Moreover, the sceptical spirit did not need to go abroad for inspiration, there was also the native source of Lu Xun's legacy to draw upon. Beyond the underlying approach to life, Lu Xun's patterns of story organization, the themes and the symbols used to express them exerted a direct influence on the writings of Shi Tuo, and even where no concrete influence can be shown, as Milena Doležalová-Velingerová pointed out in the case of Qian Zhongshu, there is the affinity of the artistic method, of the attempt to represent reality in a more complex and experimental manner.<sup>37</sup>

The character-centred stories responded to the loss of solid spiritual base in the aftermath of the war and to the lack of certainties in the outside world by turning their gaze inward. This phenomenon again can be regarded as parallel to what produced the works of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf in Britain in the 1920s. A particular reflection of this affinity can be seen in Virginia Woolf's and Wang Zengqi's respective views on fiction writing. In her essay "Modern Fiction", Woolf expresses dissatisfaction with writers she calls "materialist", who are constrained to provide a plot, but "not concerned with the spirit", and from whose well-constructed works life escapes. This "life or spirit, truth or reality, this, the essential thing", she sees recaptured in the works of modern writers, for whom "the point of interest lies . . . in the dark places of psychology".<sup>38</sup> On his part, Wang expresses dislike of stories with a strong plot, for he feels them to be untruthful, and his intention is to record within a loose structure, in an almost automatic, free-flowing way a character's psychology. Yet despite the similarity of views there is no evidence of direct influence, and in fact Wang cites Su Shi 蘇軾 as the inspiration behind his striving for a natural, unrestrained style.<sup>39</sup>

The character-centred stories also display most of the features of modernist fiction: they are experimental or innovatory in form; they are concerned with consciousness and with the subconscious and unconscious workings of the human mind; in them the structure of external 'objective' events is diminished in scope or presented selectively or is almost completely dissolved in order to make room for introspection, analysis, reflection and reverie; they have no real beginning and the ending is usually open or ambiguous; they use alternative methods of aesthetic ordering such as allusion, imitation and repetition-with-variation of motifs, images and symbols; they eschew the straight chronological ordering of material and the use of reliable, omniscient and intrusive narrator; they employ a single, limited point of view; and their handling of time is fluid or complex, with backwards and forwards cross-references.<sup>40</sup>

Due to their small number, the ironic and the character-centred stories are not representative of all the stories in *Literary Renaissance*. But their significance in pointing to new ways of development is greater than their proportional weight. The

situation to which they were a literary response - a China, already in the process of change from its feudal past, being further shaken by the war - was one in which familiar and accepted ways of literary representation were becoming no longer adequate. The war acted as a watershed, consolidating the advances the short story had made up till the eve of the war, isolating it from further foreign influence and placing new tasks in front of it by adding to the complexity of the human predicament. These two kinds of responses - with some generalization, an intellectual and an emotional one - attempt to deal with this more complex task by means that are more effective than the techniques of literary realism, and which, despite correspondences with facets of Western modernism, appear to be indigenous and the result of the Chinese short story's natural evolution.

## Chapter 4

### Novels

The three novels serialized in *Literary Renaissance* - *Fortress Besieged* (圍城) by Qian Zhongshu, *Gravitation* (引力) by Li Guangtian 李廣田 and *Cold Nights* (寒夜) by Ba Jin 巴金 - represent a bridge between the literature of the Sino-Japanese War and that of the following period, having been written during the last years of the war and first published in 1946-47. With their time-settings of 1937-39, 1939-40 and 1944-45 respectively, in all three the background is the war, prominent and determining in *Gravitation* and *Cold Nights*, written in the Nationalist-controlled South-west, rarely and only tangentially mentioned in *Fortress Besieged*, written in enemy-occupied Shanghai. The characters are mostly educated people - university lecturers, graduates of Chinese or foreign universities, secondary school teachers - whose circumstances deteriorate with the progress of the war. These three novels give a collective picture of the life of Chinese intellectuals during the war period: *Fortress Besieged* presents a satirical panorama of the elite at the beginning of the war, *Gravitation* deals with the issue of patriotism and the exemplary thought-transformation of a middle-class character under the Japanese occupation, while *Cold nights* focuses on a particular, personal tragedy, partly brought about by war conditions.

The serialization of *Fortress Besieged* greatly contributed to the magazine's success and with its publication in book form in 1947, the novel became a best-seller. Since then, it has turned out to be a milestone in the history of modern Chinese literature and has been considered by many to be the best modern Chinese novel. After C. T. Hsia initially raised the interest in the novel in his *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, it has been analyzed from various angles by several scholars.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, though to a lesser extent, *Cold Nights* has also received critical acclaim and scholarly attention since its publication in 1947.<sup>2</sup> In view of this, in the following discussion of these two novels, content



description will be kept to a minimum and analysis will also refer to and summarize some points touched on by previous studies.

*Fortress Besieged (1.2.-2.6.)*<sup>3</sup>

The novel follows the fortunes of Fang Hongjian 方鴻漸, during the two years after his return in the summer of 1937 from study abroad. Having frittered his time away at various universities, he has bought a false degree to please the Zhous 周, the parents of his dead fiancée, who financed his studies. On board the ship heading back for Shanghai, he has a brief affair with a returning fellow student, and when that is over, he turns his attentions to Su Wenwan 蘇文紈, a former school-mate of his. Back in Shanghai, he stays in the home of the Zhous and gets a position in Mr. Zhou's bank. After a while he starts visiting Su Wenwan, and in her salon makes the acquaintance of Zhao Xinmei 趙辛美, who mistakes him to be a rival for Su's affections, and of her cousin, Tang Xiaofu 唐曉芙, with whom Hongjian quickly falls in love. In spite of this, he lets himself get more and more entangled in Su's web, and when he finally clears up the misunderstanding, Su furiously blackens him in Tang's eyes, who in turn breaks with him. Nursing his broken heart, Hongjian offends the curious Mrs. Zhou, and as a result, loses his job at the bank. An offer of a professorship at a small university in Hunan, secured for him earlier by the jealous Xinmei to get him out of the way, arrives just in time, and Hongjian decides to accept it. The whole of the next chapter takes up his journey to Sanlü 三閩 University in the company of the now jilted Xinmei, the female teaching assistant Sun Roujia 孫柔嘉 and two other future colleagues. Through their adventures, while travelling by boat, bus and train, the conditions in the interior of China and the characters of the travellers are revealed. On arriving at Sanlü, Hongjian's actual post turns out to be only an assistant professorship, teaching ethics, and later some English classes taken over from Roujia. Having become friends on the journey, Hongjian and Xinmei now get gradually distanced, due to Xinmei's more elevated position, and Hongjian becomes increasingly involved with Roujia. When Xinmei is caught in a

compromising situation with one of the faculty wives and leaves suddenly, isolation drives Hongjian further towards Roujia, and in a tight spot, under the eyes of the self-appointed moral guardian of the university, he lets himself be tricked into engagement. At the end of the academic year Hongjian does not get his contract renewed, being suspected of Communist sympathies, and at Roujia's insistence they go back to Shanghai. Fearing the premature fruit of their union, they get married on the way in Hong Kong, but differences and quarrels are already starting between them. After setting up home together in Shanghai, their rows get more and more frequent and serious. Differences over Hongjian's resignation from his job at the newspaper, a job possibility in Chongqing recommended by Xinmei, and resentment of each other's families finally culminate in an explosive row, at the end of which Roujia goes to stay with her aunt and Hongjian is left there drifting into sleep, contemplating a possible new start to his life.

*Fortress Besieged* is written with the declared intention of describing a certain type of people and a certain section of modern Chinese society.<sup>4</sup> The gallery of characters in their appropriate milieu are presented through the experiences of the protagonist, Fang Hongjian. In this respect and in its satiric aim the book resembles a picaresque novel, yet Hongjian is not a typical dishonest, insouciant picaro. He is a member of that satirized group of people, but, while his faults are typical, he is probably one of the better specimens of it. Almost all the other figures have characteristics more condemnable than his, yet he alone is seen paying for his mistakes and shortcomings. His only morally reprehensible act - the buying of the false degree - was motivated by consideration for his ex-in-laws, instead of a wish to obtain advantages by deceit. Even though he intends to make no use of it, the surrounding ambiguity keeps exacting a price: it is part of Tang Xiaofu's reasons for breaking with him and later it costs him the professorial position at Sanli. Discovering another professor there with the same bogus degree, Hongjian reflects that a fraudster needs to be brazen and not, like himself, still wanting to have a clear conscience. He is basically honest and well-meaning, but lacks the ability to see the real nature of things and the consequences of his actions, and therefore to shape events. He just muddles along, taking things as they come, tripping over the obstacles the author

has put in his path. While he does gain some knowledge in the process, it is retrospective, too late and of no use to him in avoiding future pitfalls.

The characters Fang Hongjian comes across in the course of his adventures paint a composite and very unflattering picture of the Chinese intelligentsia - husband-catching manoeuvres and intellectually pretentious conversations in the private salons; nepotism and intrigue in academic circles; hypocrisy, collaboration and smuggling in their wider social contacts. The only unquestionably positive character is Tang Xiaofu, and Hongjian's attraction to her is due as much to her beauty and intelligence, as to her genuineness and her dissimilarity to all the other figures, whom he despises. In his appreciation of her a positive aspect of Hongjian's character is displayed, then the bungling streak and the passivity take over and he loses her. As very often the narrator's and Fang's points of view are not differentiated, satirical descriptions of other characters imply Hongjian's opinion, set him apart from them and give an indirect characterization of him. The figure of Zhao Xinmei, many of whose circumstances and experiences are similar to Hongjian's, provides contrast and comparison, and Hongjian emerges from them as a playful, lively intellect of some standards, a person without guile and malice, but also one who is useless and lacking in circumspection.

While the first chapters of the book are concerned with the public faces and various interactions of the described section of society, the last two chapters, after Hongjian's engagement to Sun Roujia, focus on their private relationship and the steadily worsening rows between them, which lead on to the final breach. One source of disagreement is their different family backgrounds - extended, old-fashioned literatus family on his side, new-type nuclear family on hers - and their own unwillingness to accommodate and compromise. But the more fundamental reason for discord lies in their respective approaches to and expectations of marriage. Behind her mask of innocence, Roujia turns out to have been calculating, casting her net to catch Hongjian. She has an inflated, romantic ideal of love and marriage, and when reality does not come up to the ideal, she blames Hongjian. Once married, she tries to dominate him and jealously alienates him from his family. On his part, Hongjian not only does not see through her scheming, but,

when the critical moment comes, does not resist either and meekly goes along with her wishes for their engagement. Not having been keen to start with, he quickly and philosophically resigns himself to the blandness of their relationship. In their quarrels he is just as intransigent as she is, but while her attitude is aggressive, his is fundamentally defensive and only belatedly assertive.

The novel has an episodic, basically linear structure. Seemingly loosely jointed, its nine chapters have been shown by Theodore Hutters to reveal on closer inspection a symmetrical organization of five "functional sequences". The first two sequences - Fang Hongjian's return to and residence in Shanghai at the beginning of the book, and the journey to the interior - are negatively mirrored in the final two - the Fangs' return from Sanlü University to Shanghai and their subsequent life there; with the third sequence - experiences at Sanlü - serving as a watershed.<sup>5</sup> The contrast of these parallel events marks the change in Fang Hongjian's situation, the narrowing of his world and the shrinking of his choices.

The novel is told in the third person, by an omniscient narrator, who, however, limits himself most of the time to the main protagonist's viewpoint and opinion. Occasionally, the narration that starts out from Hongjian's consciousness shifts its viewpoint and continues with things clearly unknown to him, such as other characters' feelings or future political events. Takeover by the omniscient narrator's voice, according to Theodore Hutters, occurs in two ways and for two purposes: it either gives glimpses at critical moments into the basic disposition of other characters, thereby preventing their becoming caricatures and giving a view of events different from Hongjian's; or it presents general descriptions of scenery and situation at transitional points, thereby setting the tone for the following scenes and chapters.<sup>6</sup> The contrast of the parallel sequences is highlighted by an increased narratorial objectivity, a more frequent shift from Hongjian's subjective view to that of the omniscient, objective narrator. The omniscient narrator behaves rather like God, looking down on his creatures from above, occasionally intervening to demonstrate the subjectiveness of their views or to paint a picture of larger connections.<sup>7</sup>

The affinity between the narrator's and Hongjian's points of view gives the impression that the narrator is on his side and, despite all his shortcomings, sympathetic to him. This is even more evident from the narrator's tone towards the end of the book in the increasingly frequent rows with Roujia. In one instance for example, the description of Roujia's mental reaction is overlaid with the narrator's sarcastic interpretation, which is strongly reminiscent of Hongjian's style. In the course of their quarrel, Hongjian says:

"Members of your Sun family, from top to bottom, are all like that bastard turtle of a Pekinese [reference to the dog Roujia's aunt keeps]. My reputation is thoroughly ruined anyway, I might as well bully you a little today. I go on my way, you go on yours; whether you go to see a film or go back to your mother's, it's all the same to me!" With this, he pushed away Roujia's arm linked with his. Roujia originally would not have minded not seeing a film, but at the rudeness of her husband's words, which even disregarded the possibilities of biology and classified a dog as a crustacean to compare with members of her family, she too flared up, . . . (2.6.p.711)

In another instance later on, a linking sentence in a dialogue - the narrator's voice - takes up a phrase of Hongjian's and uses it mockingly:

"You were still a human being when you left this morning; how come you've changed into a hedgehog by now!" said Hongjian.

"If I am a hedgehog, then don't speak to a hedgehog", retorted Roujia.

After a spell of silence, the hedgehog herself spoke: . . . (2.6.p.715)

The omniscient narrator's limiting himself to Hongjian's consciousness and adopting his tone of speaking have the effect of making the reader identify with him. Insight into the motives of Hongjian's actions and recognition of similar forces in himself remove the reader's critical judgement on Hongjian, who thereby becomes Everyman, with common aspirations and failings. The occasional switch back to narratorial omniscience, showing points of view other than that of Hongjian's, then destroys this identification and jolts the reader into some realizations. The reader is first induced to share Hongjian's complacency, only to be disabused of it later. The portrayal of Hongjian is thus a critical and ultimately sadly disappointed look at human nature.

The title of the novel is a reference to a saying quoted by one of the characters, that marriage is like a fortress besieged: those who are inside want to get out and those who

are outside want to get in. Later on Hongjian remembers this saying and uses it to describe his feelings about life generally; his great expectation when faced with a new situation, be it a job or a relationship, and his rapid loss of interest when the hope becomes reality. The image of the besieged fortress is the symbol of the novel's abstract theme, the universal human predicament of always wanting something other than what one has, the discrepancy between ideal and reality, and the recurring cycle of pursuit-attainment-disappointment-new pursuit. The same phenomenon is summed up catchily by a character in Yang Jiang's comedy *Turning Truth into Jest* (弄真成假): "Who isn't that way - when you want something, you never get it. When you get something, you don't want it!"<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the title, symbolizing the overall theme of the novel, the figurative language throughout the novel is used, as Dennis Hu has shown, to represent collectively another significant theme.<sup>9</sup> In ironical similies and metaphors, human beings are associated with a variety of subhuman creatures, from dogs through monkeys to hedgehogs, pointing to no essential difference between humans and animals in terms of moral standards (and, one feels, in terms of both being the creation of the omniscient narrator, quasi God).

*Fortress Besieged* is above all celebrated for its linguistic brilliance. The witty puns and the highly original similies and metaphors, however, do not just have an entertainment value, no matter how intellectual they are. They compress into a few words a multiplicity of connections and meanings, the exegesis of which, like that of poetry, would run into long paragraphs.<sup>10</sup> In the words of F. O. Matthiessen, "only by discovering such metaphors can the writer suggest the actual complexity of experience; and consequently, the more of them he is able to perceive, the more comprehensive is his grasp of human life".<sup>11</sup>

In looking for the literary relations of *Fortress Besieged*, various connections have been detected. The contemporary critic Wu Jiu 無咎 likened it to the eighteenth-century literati novel *The Scholars* (儒林外史).<sup>12</sup> For Yang Yi 杨义, Qian Zhongshu's sharp wit fits into and continues the tradition of modern Chinese satirical works, coming after Lu

Xun's profundity, Lao She's 老舍 gentleness, Zhang Tianyi's sarcasm and Sha Ding's 沙汀 gloominess.<sup>13</sup> Edward Gunn, who spotted Qian's affinity with disillusioned post-World War I British writers, sees the similarity of the novel with *Decline and Fall* by Evelyn Waugh and with *Antic Hay* by Aldous Huxley, not only in general features and intentions, but also particularly in the equivalence of Fang Hongjian to Paul Pennyfeather and to Gamsbril Junior, respectively.<sup>14</sup> Lin Hai 林海 considers *The History of Tom Jones* by Henry Fielding to be the novel's prototype in that both books are characterized by their picaresque character, satirical depiction of human nature, humorous tone, and the abundance of quotations, similies and metaphors.<sup>15</sup> Yet, while Qian was doubtless familiar with the works of these English authors, so elements from them congenial to his world would naturally find their way into *Fortress Besieged*, there is no evidence of direct or conscious influence. Even if the skeletal frame of the novel - elements of the plot or the picaresque nature of the narrative - were inspired by these Western works, the flesh and the overall shape are very much Qian's own. The all-pervading scepticism and the humorous tone are also characteristic features of his essays and short stories, and the original use of quotations from several languages and the dazzling, unusual similies and metaphors can be regarded as hallmarks of his style.

#### Gravitation (1.2.-2.2.)

The heroine of the novel, Huang Menghua 黃夢華, is a young married woman, who lives in Japanese-occupied Jinan 濟南 with her baby, elderly mother and younger brother. Her husband, Lei Mengjian 雷孟堅, has gone with his evacuated school to the Government-controlled interior. Menghua did not leave with him chiefly because she was pregnant at the time, but also out of consideration for her mother and out of fear of hardship. Unknown to him, she now teaches in an enemy-controlled secondary school for girls, and despite the precariousness of her position gives hope and inspiration to her students, who are in turn a source of mental sustenance to her. In his letters to her, Mengjian repeatedly urges her to join him and delivers moral admonitions about not

hankering after the past and possessions, and looking to the future instead. At first the dangers of the journey deter her, but countless reports of Japanese brutalities, her own increasing association with student discontent at the school and news of the fate of those who have come back to the occupied area finally make her decide to follow her husband, instead of urging his return. Having been helped in the organization of the journey by her students, Menghua finally sets out with her baby and a number of acquaintances. After six days of travelling on crowded trains, amidst threatening Japanese surveillance and frequent inspections, they reach the border of the free area, only to be met by not just an equally thorough inspection but also humiliating treatment at the hands of Chinese soldiers. Then follows two more months of hardship, during which she sees the eye-opening poverty, slavery, illnesses of the people, and the unexpected backwardness of the country. Arriving at last in Chengdu, after a most rigorous inspection, she learns that Mengjian, due to political reasons, has left the previous day and gone to a "better place" (presumably Yan'an). Although he has made arrangements for her to take over his job in Chengdu, she, as the result of her journey, has come to see things his way and decides to give up her dreams of "home" and go after him.

The main focus of the novel is Menghua's development of thinking and attitude, under the influence of her husband and the increasing pressure of Japanese occupation. It is traced through her dreams, conversations, interior monologues and correspondence with her husband. While the description is long drawn-out and fairly monotonous, the transformation nevertheless seems credible and Menghua's character well-rounded. The same can not be said about the character of her husband, who is cut out as the typical figure of left-wing fiction, an idealized hero of Communist dreams. Of peasant origin and self-taught, he puts his convictions before his family, with single-minded determination. His letters reveal a paternalistic, patronising and intellectually bullying attitude towards her, yet the overall tenor of the author on him is one of approval. The smaller, politically involved characters are equally schematic: true to type, a Mr. Hong 洪 who, like Mengjian, does not come back to his family in occupied Jinan turns out to be a good guy; and another person of their circle who does return to his fiancée proves



to be a suspect character and comes a cropper. The message is driven home: putting personal attachment before political principles is morally condemnable.

Apart from the issue of the right action to take under the occupation, the author's left-wing sympathies also surface when treating the theme of patriotism. The Japanese atrocities are naturally shown as unquestionably evil, but on the other side, the Government forces are not portrayed as much better either, and in one particular incident they are pronounced definitely worse. The same incident also brings in the real saviours of the people, in his eyes, the Communist guerillas - called "X" troops in the novel for censorship reasons - who are really fighting the Japanese, who protect the people, help them with the sowing and the harvest, and instead of confiscating their weapons, distribute more among them.

The narrative point of view of the novel is third person and limited to Menghua's thoughts. The plot weaves in the various threads chronologically, with interruptions of memory recalls and expositions of antecedents. In the preface to the first edition in book form the author comments on the structure of the novel and the inspirations behind it, quoting occasionally from his diary kept at the time of writing the novel:

The structure of novels, on the whole, follows two principles. One is change of scene, [that is,] for the most part, two different scenes alternate; the other is change of atmosphere, [that is,] if one chapter has a tense atmosphere, then the next chapter we expect to be a little more relaxed. Although it is not necessarily entirely like this [in *Gravitation*], there is roughly such a tendency, which was also one of the reasons of my difficulties.

This principle was of course unnecessary and I could not accomplish it either. But just recently, I have become aware that it was perhaps inspired by the transformational development of *War and Peace* [which he read at the time of writing *Gravitation*].<sup>16</sup>

Despite the attempt to introduce variety, the result is rather flat and uninteresting. The novel reflects events in the author's own life: Li Guangtian had left Jinan with his students just before the city fell to the Japanese, leaving behind his pregnant wife, who later followed him with their baby. The experiences of that long journey had a politicizing effect on him, and of this is born a novel that reads like an object lesson on the morally correct action and an illustration of the required transformation of thinking for petty bourgeois intellectuals. The writer's own view on the novel, emphasized by the

contrast with Ba Jin's *Garden of Rest* (憩園) and Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (his contemporary readings), is that it "can not be considered a 'creation'; it merely draws a profile of a phase of history, and only a simple outline at that".<sup>17</sup> Reasons for this failure are also hinted at:

. . . I often felt constrained by ready-made materials [his actual personal experiences]; my feelings and imagination would get entangled in a sticky spider's web, from which they could not be extricated, so that the result was simply not "creation". . . .

. . . All materials need to go through one's own creative transformation, before they can be used; products of one's imagination are much more convenient.<sup>18</sup>

Customary authorial modesty or dissatisfaction aside, Li Guangtian's own assessment and explanation seems justified. The personal experience is presented, without much creative transformation, as support for a political point and the transparency of that aim makes the novel schematic.

#### *Cold Nights* (2.1.-2.6.)<sup>19</sup>

*Cold Nights* chronicles from the autumn of 1944 the last year in the life of Wang Wenxuan 汪文宣, who is dying of tuberculosis in Japanese bombarded Chongqing. Once a teacher in Shanghai, he is now reduced by the war to working in the repetitive, mechanical, low-paid job of a proofreader. At home his life is made miserable by the frequent quarrels between his vivacious, independent-minded wife, Zeng Shusheng 曾樹生, and his traditional-thinking, possessive mother. The constant threat of having to flee as the result of the Japanese advancement and their lack of money for Western medicines or proper rest for him further exacerbate the gloomy situation. Short periods of domestic tranquility and his wife's more caring attitude make him temporarily better, but before long his health deteriorates to the point of spitting blood. When he loses his job, they have to rely on his wife's salary to support all of them, including their son at boarding school. The bank where Shusheng works offers her a transfer to Lanzhou 蘭州. At first she decides to stay with him, but as Wenxuan's urging her to save herself coincides with her wish to escape from their hopeless life, she eventually leaves. After

her departure he carries on apathetically until Shusheng in a long soul-searching letter breaks with him. This finally finishes him off; he gives up the fight against the illness and following a period of intense suffering and pain, dies a few days after the Japanese surrender. Unaware of Wenxuan's death, Shusheng returns to Chongqing about a month later, with thoughts of coming back to him, only to find their former flat occupied by neighbours and her son and mother-in-law gone without a trace.

The thin plot is filled out with minutely observed descriptions of Wang Wenxuan's state of mind and health, with his thoughts, dreams and conversations. One of the main threads is the interaction between Wenxuan, his wife and his mother. Wenxuan is torn in love and loyalty between the two women and his resistance to illness is worn away by their fight for him. Both women give Wenxuan an ultimatum at a certain point, wanting him to make a clear choice between them. When he is unable to do so, Shusheng remarks: "If you keep both of us, you must pay the price".(2.4.p.377) He feels guilty, not just for the specific reasons of not being able to provide better conditions for his mother and for not making Shusheng happy, but also more generally and vaguely, as he says: "I have wronged everyone, and I need to be punished".(2.1.p.27) His wish of self-destruction follows from here, since only by ceasing to exist can he envisage not wronging others any more, as well as atoning for his sins. His mother, in her love for him, is willing to do the menial, tiring and health-destroying tasks forced on them by poverty, but she wants her son to herself and, with her intolerant jealousy of Shusheng, removes from the scene the only person who can keep her son alive. Shusheng is more obviously selfish, if only because her aspirations do not focus on him or on their relationship. The wish to escape, to enjoy life while she can, overrides her compassion for Wenxuan. While she likes socializing and the attentions of her boss, her lifestyle is also a way of demonstrating her independence in defiance of her mother-in-law. At one point, when she is still undecided about leaving, she picks up a book her son, Xiao Xuan, is reading. It is a script of Cao Yu's 曹禺 *The Wilderness* (原野), which, as she sees it, is about the hateful relationship between a mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law, with the husband caught in the middle, which ends tragically. Realizing that she is in a similar

situation, Shusheng resolves not to let the same happen to herself and makes up her mind to leave.(2.4.pp.388-389) In the end she realizes remorsefully that her pursuit of happiness has helped to destroy her husband.

As the novel follows the course of a whole year in Chongqing, the title is more a projection of Wenxuan's state of mind and health than a strict description of actual conditions. It is a psychological chill and darkness - composed of the war situation, his tedious job, his illness, the lack of money and his domestic troubles - which persist even when the seemingly interminable winter months are over. These are the nights of a tubercular patient, who is drenched in cold sweat and kept awake by coughs and pain. These are the nights of a city under enemy attacks, where frequent black-outs increase the gloomy darkness. Not that cold and darkness are the only elements of the depressing atmosphere; there is the polluted air, heavy with the smell of coal, the sad looking, permanently grey sky, the dust and stench in spring, the humid, stifling heat of the summer. The change of seasons have no effect on the unrelenting gloom, they are hardly noticed. Since the atmosphere is a function of Wenxuan's physical and psychological state, even spring and summer can not bring cheerful and pleasant scenes, as the following passage illustrates:

Summer made him feel even more miserable. He never felt well; his illness steadily worsened. He did not know what force sustained him or prevented him from collapsing. Every day he had a fever in the afternoon and cold sweats in the evening; walking made him gasp for breath; he had a continuous dry cough, occasionally blood in his phlegm and strong pain in both of his lungs. At first he struggled [against his ailments] with gritted teeth, then gradually got used to them. 'Killing time' was not after all a difficult thing for him, his life was gloomy and grey anyway. He lost all illusions and dared not have any more wild hopes. Even Germany's surrender could not bring him joy or comfort. When he heard people predict that Japan would collapse within a year, he could not feel happy; it seemed, those bright and beautiful hopes [for the future] had nothing to do with him any more. . . . (2.6.p.729)

Apart from Wang Wenxuan's circumstances, general aspects of wartime living and the fate of some of his friends also add to the overwhelmingly depressing mood. Amidst power-cuts, air-raids, epidemics and runaway inflation, the young wife of a former classmate of Wenxuan dies in childbirth, her husband in his sorrow disintegrates into drunkenness and gets killed by a truck in front of Wenxuan's eyes, a friend at work dies

of cholera. The piling on of misery and suffering is almost unbearable, especially since the reader does not just get a description of the events, but, by sharing Wenxuan's thoughts and feelings, goes through all his anguish, as the events affect him. A measure of Wenxuan's inner torment is given in his increasingly frequent nightmares. The first and most elaborate one, which takes up the whole of Chapter 2, occurs after his wife has walked out on him, following a quarrel between them. In the dream they again have a fight and when the city is suddenly attacked and they have to flee, he stays and tries to rescue his mother, instead of escaping with his wife and son. The subsequent dreams, occurring similarly after emotional upsets or physical setbacks in his life, are also premonitory: in each, his wife leaves him and either his mother dies or he is abandoned sick. The insight into Wenxuan's mind leads to psychological identification on the part of the reader, to the point where we wish with him that death delivered him from pain. We are also shown the motives and intentions behind Shusheng's and Wenxuan's mother's behaviour, which give their actions subtle colouring and their characters complexity. The creation of atmosphere, the sustained, in-depth psychological characterization and the emotional involvement of the readers are the major achievements of the novel.

In his article "On *Cold Nights*" 谈《寒夜》) written in 1961, Ba Jin comments on the three main characters and makes clear his motivation for writing the novel. The characters were composite, not modelled on particular people but made up of the traits of many acquaintances the author observed in wartime Chongqing. The sad, hopeless fate of these people moved him to taking up his pen:

With the writing of this novel, I just wanted to illustrate: good men do not get their just rewards. My goal was simply to show what kind of a society it was under the rule of Chiang Kai-shek and the Guomindang. While writing, I often seemed to hear a voice in my ear saying: "I want to redress the injustices on behalf of those small characters". Needless to say, it was my own voice, because I had quite a few friends and relatives who, like Wang Wenxuan, died tragically. I cherished an affection for them. Although I did not agree with their attitude of 'being content with one's lot' (安分守己) and 'enduring humiliation to get momentary ease' (忍辱苟安), I still felt sorrow on seeing their heading towards death and not being able to help. If I could not redress the injustices on their behalf, at least I had to paint their image, to leave behind as a memento, so that I would remember them forever, so that others would not follow their example.<sup>20</sup>

At the start of writing, his characters were only slight acquaintances to him, but as he went on, they grew more and more familiar. He understood their faults and reasons, and became their friend, so much so, that when it came to Wang Wenxuan's death, he was deeply grieved.

None of the main characters, he points out, is entirely negative or positive; all have their good and bad points. However, he sympathizes with them completely and puts the blame on "Chiang Kai-shek and the Guomindang reactionaries".<sup>21</sup> In criticizing the shortcomings of the characters, he highlights the contradiction in their behaviour: they harm their loved ones, and actively head for destruction while seeking happiness. The explanation of this is, that "they are not masters of their own fate (不由自主). No action, no move of theirs stems from their own heart; the near-collapsing old society, old system, old powers command them from the background".<sup>22</sup>

The figure of Wang Wenxuan, a small intellectual working for a semi-governmental publishing company, reminds Ba Jin of the petty clerk, Akaky Bashmatchkin, in Gogol's *The Cloak*, who is humiliated by everyone. Wang Wenxuan's death is then summed up as: "the tragedy of a good and honest intellectual under Guomindang rule".<sup>23</sup> With the political conditions identified as the major cause of the protagonist's death, the purpose of the novel is stated strongly: "At the time I thought: I will denounce the old society, the old system, through the suffering of these small figures. I deliberately made the ending gloomy and hopeless, so that the novel would become my 'bitter indictment'".<sup>24</sup>

These retrospectively confessed intentions make the novel out to be more political than the impression the actual reading gives, for the likely reason that the current political situation in 1961 coloured the recollections and shifted the emphasis. While the author puts the blame here unequivocally on the social and political set-up, the picture presented in the novel is more complex than that. The tragic end of Wang Wenxuan is brought about by the combination of several factors: his illness, the fights between his mother and wife, in which he is broken to pieces, his wife's selfish pursuit of illusions, a certain weakness in his character, and general wartime and social conditions. In so far as most of the causes are particular, his tragedy could be considered individual and not

typical. Yet, looking at the fates of other figures in the novel, we see in each the war as a contributing factor. Most of the particular causes of Wang Wenxuan's tragedy are also exacerbated by the war. His case is therefore an individual example of a typical phenomenon, and the novel is all the more powerful for the mixture of the two, for avoiding clear-cut simplification and letting the general shine through the particular.

Of the three novels, *Fortress Besieged* and *Gravitation* were the first (and only) ventures by their authors into writing extended-length fiction. Though Qian Zhongshu had previously written some short stories, his literary reputation before *Fortress Besieged* rested mainly on his essays and critical articles.<sup>25</sup> Li Guangtian, for his part, had been a poet and essayist.<sup>26</sup> Their turning to the novel - a popular literary form that had traditionally been considered a lower literary mode - may have been due to the complexity of the personal experiences and views that they wanted to express. Probably only the novel - with its variety of characters, complication of plot, development of milieu and sustained exploration of character - could do justice to the subject of war or to the portrait of modern China. Venturing into an unfamiliar but more popular genre was also, as Theodore Hutters pointed out, a sign of the short-lived unity in the Chinese literary world during and immediately after the war, which fuelled hopes for a Literary Renaissance.<sup>27</sup>

When placing these three novels in the context of Chinese literature, *Fortress Besieged* can be regarded as continuing the line of satirical novels such as the eighteenth century *The Scholars* and Liu E's 劉鶚 *Travels of Lao Can* (老殘遊記), from the beginning of the century. The similarity, however, ends with the satirical intent. Compared to these predecessors, *Fortress Besieged* focuses more on private relationships and its interest lies not in criticizing officialdom, but in tracing the traps the protagonist falls into and in the manoeuvres and strategies for survival in intellectual circles. Its compositional structure is also a far cry from the episodic structure of these traditional novels, with their only marginally involved, spectator heroes.

Measuring the novel against the mature successes of the modern Chinese novel of the thirties, the differences on many points are striking. The dominant theme in the novels from the thirties is the plight of contemporary China: social conflicts, generational conflicts, economic crisis in the cities and stagnation in the countryside, internal political struggle and foreign aggression. In contrast, *Fortress Besieged* does not show the dark side of life and does not embrace experiences other than those of a narrow stratum of intellectuals, whose lives are not greatly affected by the contemporary situation and whose problems, even misfortunes, never turn into tragedy. Instead of the high seriousness of the social novels, its manner of treatment is one of detachment, scepticism and occasionally mocking irony. While novels in the thirties were a way for their authors to carry out a social crusade, the literary means to reach a social goal, *Fortress Besieged* appears as the recorded observations of the antics of a certain group of people, of human follies, frailties, schemes and strategies, by a philosophical scholar-intellectual, whose criticism is not meant to have a utilitarian purpose. And because of its sparse references to major contemporary issues, the novel has a timeless quality to it and an appeal beyond its own culture.

By contrast, contemporary issues feature very prominently in Li Guangtian's *Gravitation*, which also continues the trend of political engagement, dominant in the novels of the previous decade. The novel was the product of its author's conversion to Communist ideals and its theme is politically inspired: a petty bourgeois intellectual's change of attitude from being a passive onlooker to the war to becoming a committed fighter. Earlier examples of patriotic novels that take up similar themes are Wu Zuxiang's 吳組緜 *Mountain Torrent* (山洪), which describes the villagers' awakening to national resistance under the political guidance of (Communist) guerillas, and Sha Ding's *Breaking Through the Cordon* (闖關), which depicts the transformation of a traditionally educated intellectual character under the influence of a peasant-turned-soldier from the people's army. But, while these two novels describe rural life and a variety of rural characters, *Gravitation* concentrates on a middle-class intellectual in a (mostly) urban environment. The novel is the literary processing of the author's own (and his wife's)



experiences, evaluated in the light of his recently found creed. The enthusiasm of the convert, however, was not enough to make up for the inexperience in writing extended length fiction: instead of the complexities of the novel, we have a drawn-out, but simple study of character development. If the fact that a poet and essayist has turned to novel writing contributed to hopes for a Literary Renaissance, the final product in this case must certainly have dashed them.

Wrestling with an unfamiliar genre was not a problem for the writer of *Cold Nights*, who by then was an established and experienced novelist. In this novel Ba Jin returns to the problems of family relationships, though no longer focusing on the decline of the traditional extended family and on the generational conflict, which characterized his earlier novels (e.g. the *Turbulent Stream* [激流] trilogy: *Family* [家], *Spring* [春] and *Autumn* [秋]; and *Garden of Rest* [憩園]). A further link with his earlier works is the continuing preoccupation with justice and concern for people who suffer unjustly, so even if the subject of the novel is something of a departure from previous works, the basic motivating forces are unchanged. In *Cold Nights*, however, Ba Jin's preoccupations are developed into a qualitatively different level: the relationship between the three main characters is intricate and complex, their psychology is sensitively observed and described; causes and effects in their private, domestic situation and the social, political conditions around them are subtly interwoven; the atmosphere created is evocative and expressionistic. On the whole, the novel fits in with the general trend of Chinese novels since the 1930s, i.e., describing the darker aspects of life and employing a tragic plot, but it is enhanced with psychological depth and sophistication, and by focusing on individual worlds and private relationships. Though the tragedy of Wang Wenxuan belongs inherently to the China of the mid-forties, it creates resonances in readers of other cultures and times, and this universal appeal is the measure of the novel's quality. *Cold Nights* is not only the most mature of Ba Jin's works, it also ranks among the best of modern Chinese novels.

While the novels' greater complexity makes their classification a little simplistic, *Fortress Besieged* and *Cold Nights* appear to fit in with the two tendencies seen in the

short stories of the magazine, the ironical and the psychological mode, respectively. Not that the writer of *Fortress Besieged* is not interested in psychology, especially that of his protagonist; but the understanding of the motivating forces of a character does not lead to the reader's emotional involvement, because of the distancing, alienating effect of the all enveloping irony. On the whole, it can be said that *Fortress Besieged* appeals to the mind and *Cold Nights*, which makes the reader mentally participate in the events and experience the characters' feelings, appeals to the emotions. Looking from another angle, *Fortress Besieged* belongs to the psychologically and philosophically sophisticated, non-political literature of the Japanese occupied East coast, while *Gravitation* and *Cold Nights* to the patriotic, anti-Japanese, and, to varying degrees, anti-Government literature of the South-west. All three novels can be classed as urban literature: they show no particular concern with rural life and their protagonists (like their authors) are educated people, connected with the town and not with the countryside. While this is not unexpected in *Fortress Besieged*, the product of cosmopolitan Shanghai, in the case of *Gravitation* and *Cold Nights* it runs counter to the general trend of novels written in the South-west, and is especially strange in *Gravitation*, which was inspired by Yan'an ideals, with their strong emphasis on rural themes.

The fact that the authors of two of these three novels were high intellectuals who took up a popular form of literature pointed to a precondition for a Literary Renaissance (as was the case in May Fourth) and inspired hopes for it. Qian Zhongshu fulfilled these hopes in *Fortress Besieged*, an unusual and outstanding novel, reminiscent of May Fourth literature in its concern with urban themes and its affinities with Western literature, but reaching a new height in maturity and complexity. For Li Guangtian the switch to a popular genre was tied up with his ideological transformation; *Gravitation* aimed to illustrate a political point, the transparency of which made the novel formulaic and robbed it of any claim of belonging to a Renaissance. In *Cold Nights*, Ba Jin on his part aspired to nothing far outside his previous range, yet his natural internal development, inspired by current experiences, has produced his best work. In short,

*Fortress Besieged* and *Cold Nights* can with full justification be regarded as examples of a Literary Renaissance emerging from the wreckage of the war.

## Chapter 5

### Drama

Of the eight playscripts published in *Literary Renaissance* five were by well-known playwrights, Li Jianwu (2 plays), Yang Jiang, Cao Yu and Shi Huaifu 石華父; there were two one-act plays by Tong Lin 童林 and Ai Ying 艾影 respectively, and one script was co-written by the novelist Ding Ling 丁玲 with Chen Ming 陳明 and Lu Fei 魯斐.

In an obvious contrast with wartime plays, of either the Japanese-occupied or the Chinese government-controlled areas, there are no costume or historical dramas (古裝戲劇) among these plays. During the war costume dramas allowed writers to deal with contemporary problems through historical themes, thereby circumventing censorship.<sup>1</sup> While one source of censorship was certainly removed with the departure of the Japanese, the restrictions imposed by the Nationalist Government took their place.<sup>2</sup> Yet three of the scripts here ("The Bridge" [橋] by Cao Yu, "The Wrath of Hills and Streams" [山河怨] by Li Jianwu, and "Kiln Workers" [窯工] by Ding Ling et al.) carry the kind of social and political message which may only have slipped through the censors' net in script form, but may not have made the transition to stage performance. The other five plays have no strong relevance to sensitive contemporary issues, with their either pre-Republican or non-specific time settings. Of the eight, only Li Jianwu's "Youth" (青春) was actually staged. Three of the scripts - Shi Huaifu's "Dropping Anchor" (拋錨), Li Jianwu's "The Wrath of Hills and Streams" and Tong Lin's "Wish Them Happiness" (祝他們幸福) - are adaptations of a Chinese short story, a German play and a foreign short story, respectively; the rest are originals.

The first playscript, Li Jianwu's "Youth" (1.1.pp.96-109, 1.2.pp.221-243), was one of the jewels of the magazine's launch issue.<sup>3</sup> The play is set in the countryside of North China, during the first two years of the Xuantong 宣統 era (1908-09). Xi'er 喜兒, the eighteen-year-old only son of Widow Tian 田寡婦, and Xiangcao 香草, the daughter of

village headman Yang 楊村長, have grown up together as childhood playmates and sweethearts. The well-to-do Yang is against his daughter marrying a poor boy and tries to have Xi'er beaten whenever he goes near her or does some mischief. Xi'er finally persuades Xiangcao to elope with him one night. Due to coincidences, the lovers are overheard, taken for thieves and pursued. Xiangcao, overcome by doubts, stays behind, but Xi'er manages to escape by throwing Xiangcao's cloth bundle into the pursuing Yang's face. The next day, unsuspecting of the content of the bundle and of his daughter's part in the previous night's events, Yang has Xi'er seized and wants to hang him up and starve him to death for theft. As Widow Tian comes to her son's rescue, the lovers' attempt to elope comes to light, and in the commotion Xi'er escapes. To get his daughter off his hands, Yang decides to marry her off to the eleven-year-old son of Dr. Luo 羅舉人, a graduate of the provincial examinations. A year later Dr. Luo comes on a visit with Xiangcao and his son Tongsheng 童生. After Teacher Zheng 鄭老師 invites Dr. Luo to the Guandi temple 關帝廟 (which also serves as the village school) for a discussion, Xi'er is caught by his angry mother in front of the temple talking to Xiangcao. To quieten his mother down, he locks her into the temple, inadvertently locking in Dr. Luo and Teacher Zheng too. He and Xiangcao tell each other of their sufferings and unhappiness during the past year, and they are seen by Dr. Luo, as he tries to climb out over the temple wall. Dr. Luo divorces Xiangcao. Her father, considering that she has brought shame on him, does not want to take her back, and tries to force her to commit suicide to save his reputation. They are interrupted by Xi'er and his mother, who first try to persuade Yang to give them his unwanted daughter. When this fails, Widow Tian takes Xiangcao away without Yang's consent, ignoring his threats of bringing a lawsuit against them.

Though first published in *Literary Renaissance*, "Youth" was written and staged in 1944 in Shanghai, its lack of concern with the war or political issues of its time making it eminently suited to the conditions of the theatre under occupation. The countryside in the last years of the imperial era is presented in a nostalgic light, as something comfortingly familiar and unchanging, despite rumours of reforms (an end to the imperial

examinations and the setting up of new type of schools) and premonitions of impending change of rule. The potentially ill-fated relationship of the young lovers triumphs surprisingly easily in the end and the forces threatening them dissolve into harmlessness. While touching on social themes - such as status consciousness and the marrying off of young women to pre-pubescent boys - the play does not criticize or challenge the social order. The not untypical situation and developments are solved by resorting to individual quick-wittedness and resourcefulness on the part of Xi'er and his mother, rather than by universally applicable means. The motto of the play,

You go ahead and do it, even though you know it can't be done.  
You go ahead and do it, even though you don't know it can be done.  
You go ahead and do it, even though you don't know it can't be done.

giving variations on a quotation from *The Analects* of Confucius, also points to individual determination and effort in challenging social conventions, in addition to being a declaration of the relevance of the Confucian moral philosophy to the world portrayed in the play.<sup>4</sup>

Affording light entertainment to war-weary audiences in Shanghai, "Youth" shows the expert theatrical hand of Li Jianwu. The play employs the lively colloquial language of the northern dialect; the night watchman, Rednose 紅鼻子, sings a folk-style ballad to the village children, who also have their own mocking rhymes against each other. Comic effect is achieved by the use of humorous characters (e.g. Rednose), comic speeches and farcical scenes of pursuit, thrashing and getting stuck. Some of the comic scenes have a carefully constructed character, like a musical trio or a piece of choreography. When, for example, after the lovers' attempt to elope, village head Yang wants to examine the contents of the dropped cloth bundle to prove that Xi'er has stolen things from his house, the following scene takes place:

Yang: ...(Picks up the bundle) This bundle...  
Widow Tian: (Snatching it from him) As a matter of fact I would like to see what gold, silver, brick or tiles have been stolen from your house!  
Xi'er: Don't look, Ma, those things belong to others!  
Widow: Are you afraid I might steal some of their things in front of so many people?  
(Unties the knot) Oh!  
(The people gather around to watch, only Xi'er appears uninterested)

Mrs. Yang: (With a mother's apprehension, from behind Yang's back) Don't look!  
Don't look!  
Widow: A pair of bracelets!  
Yang: Gold!  
Widow: A pair of ear-rings!  
Yang: Gold!  
Widow: A red packet of money!  
Yang: Silver!  
Mrs. Yang: Don't look! Don't look!  
Widow: A skirt!  
Yang: Satin!  
Widow: A pair of trousers!  
Yang: Cotton!  
Mrs. Yang: Don't look! Don't look!  
Widow: A red jacket!  
Yang: More than one!  
Widow: Another patterned one!  
Yang: To wear going out!  
Widow: Another sky-blue one!  
Yang: To wear at home!  
Mrs. Yang: Don't look! Don't look!  
Widow: (Shaking the cloth out) No more!  
Yang: No more!(1.2.p.226)

The trio of Yang and Widow Tian alternating and Mrs. Yang occasionally chipping in is accompanied by their movements: Widow Tian pulls out one item, hands it to Yang, who passes it on to his wife. When the contents of the bundle are all revealed, the direction is reversed: Yang takes item after item from his wife and hands them to Widow Tian, who folds and wraps them up, repeating Yang's earlier comments on them, while Mrs. Yang interjects "How could you!" from time to time.

Li Jianwu's characters are typical figures of the Chinese village scene: the widowed mother and her rebellious, trouble-making son, on whom she dotes; the tyrannical village head, who tries to use his authority for his own interest; his timid daughter, frightened into obedience; the pedantic school-master and the scholar who lament the abandonment of old ways; the perpetually drunk nightwatchman. Yet all of them are distinct individuals with their own idiosyncrasies, some of them are even memorable. What interests the playwright is the individual features of these largely typical characters, and the way they interact with each other, propelling the plot forward, in a typical direction with unique turns. It has been remarked that Li Jianwu's characters do not "subordinate

themselves to the requirements of a satisfying plot" and the story simply grows out of the conflict between people "being obstinately and insistently what they are".<sup>5</sup> Neither is the writer concerned with criticism or with offering a remedy; he simply presents a real-life situation that has a potential for ending in tragedy, and utilizing his characters' individual qualities steers the plot towards a happy outcome. Wish-fulfilling may this treatment be, it provided hope and reassurance to the audience, as well as mirth and entertainment, much needed in its day.

In contrast with the lightheartedness of "Youth", the next play published in the magazine, Yang Jiang's "Windswept Blossoms" (風絮) (1.3.pp.256-274, 1.4.pp.495-505), is an intense psychological drama.<sup>6</sup> As the play opens, the main protagonist, Fang Jingshan 方景山, is due to arrive home from prison, where he has spent a year on trumped-up charges of arson and rebellion. He, an agrarian economist, and his wife, Shen Huilian 沈惠連, have moved to the countryside two years earlier with great plans for bringing transformation and prosperity to the village. After his arrest she stayed in the village, teaching in the school they had set up and looking after his mother. Having by now become disillusioned with both their projects and their relationship, Huilian does not go with the welcoming party to the station, but waits for him at home. Tang Shuyuan 唐叔遠, Jingshan's friend who helped him get out of prison, comes to tell her that he is going away. In the course of their conversation Huilian suddenly realizes the reason for his departure: he is in love with her. Jingshan finally arrives at the house and finds his wife cold and rejecting. Next day Ye San 葉三, the owner of the building, comes to remind them that he wants them out. Jingshan ignores the purpose of his visit and turns the conversation towards his latest plans of development for the village, pressing his written proposal on Ye. At dinner with Huilian and Tang, Jingshan notices that she tries to avoid Tang's company and he guesses their feelings for each other. After Tang's departure, husband and wife have bitter words for each other and Huilian leaves him. The next day Nanny Wang 王奶媽, whom Jingshan has sent to look for Huilian at her mother's and at Tang's place, returns without her. Ye San's men arrive to move out



the Fangs' furniture and secretly advise Jingshan to leave to avoid being arrested again for his new proposal. Having sent Nanny Wang away, Jingshan decides to kill himself, writes a farewell letter to Huilian and leaves the house. Tang arrives, bringing Huilian back to her husband. They find the letter and on reading it Huilian realizes that she still loves Jingshan. They go off to find and save him. A few hours later Jingshan returns and takes out his pistol from its hiding place, determined to kill Huilian and himself. Hearing noises, he hides. Tang and Huilian come back from their search, exhausted, having given Jingshan up for dead. They comfort each other and Tang finally admits his love for her. At this, Jingshan jumps out of hiding, confronts them and wants to kill Huilian. In the ensuing scuffle, Huilian grabs the pistol, turns it on herself and is killed.

The windswept blossoms of the title are the willow catkins blown by the wind around the dilapidated temple in the opening scene. As symbols of rootlessness, they are also a metaphor for the main characters, who do not have or know their own place in the world, who have ideas of soaring high, but are at the mercy of the forces surrounding them. In Shen Huilian's words: "They fly hither and thither, thinking they have so much strength, that they are in charge".(p.260)

Fang Jingshan, driven by the ambition to make his mark in the world, is single-minded in the pursuit of his ideals. In order to accomplish things, he explains to Tang Shuyuan, one has to be "like a tank, rolling forward, regardless of any obstruction". (p.267) He does not question whether his altruism really helps people, pays no attention to the effect of his actions on others and ultimately sacrifices others to his goals. The love he feels for his wife has a "cannibalistic" aspect to it, aiming to dissolve the love object in himself to increase his strength. As he says to Huilian, after learning about the death of his mother: "If it weren't for you, I would not have the strength to go on living. Come here, Huilian, I want to eat you up like a wild beast, so that your blood would flow into mine, warming me up".(p.264) When later she leaves him, he indeed feels unable to go on without her support.

Huilian, who originally believed in their plans and left her wealthy family to go with Jingshan to the countryside, has come to realize during his absence the futility of their

projects. When he returns from prison and demands her support again, she wants to escape from the burden of constantly having to shore somebody up, from a husband who regards her as part of himself. She rejects the blackmail of his romantic posturing: "I am not a little girl any more, who thinks that because you are willing to die for me, therefore I should live for you".(p.274) In the course of their arguments, some of her comments and retorts remind one of Nora's assertion of her individuality in Ibsen's *The Doll's House*. But this is not a case for feminism: Huilian does not rebel against the traditional institution of marriage, she merely leaves one person for another, escaping from her own failed dreams. Even this decision of hers is shaky; she lets herself be taken back to her husband, and after reading his suicide letter, she is overcome by doubts.

If he can come back, Shuyuan, my heart will be split in two. I say I love him; I also hate him. I am afraid, I hope - my despair has also hit rock-bottom. Shuyuan, I can't leave him, and I can't give you up. I thoroughly hate this self of mine. But - I love, I don't love, what a terrific big deal! (甚麼了不起的大事) - let me live in somebody else's heart - from now on I'll throw away this self!(p.502)

The see-saw of the enfolding events and the uncertainty of her oscillating emotions drain her energy to go on, and when Jingshan returns from the dead, the gun becomes the only solution.

What ultimately breaks both Jingshan and Huilian is the realization that their romantic ideals - both of their relationship and of their mission in society - have come to nothing. While society has certainly not been kind to them, the reason for their failure is that they themselves have fallen short of their own, unrealistically inflated ideals. In this respect "Windswept Blossoms" links up with Yang Jiang's two short stories published in *Literary Renaissance*, "ROMANESQUE" and "Indian Summer" (See Ch.3, pp.106-109); in all three she explores the theme of striving for an illusion or a romanticised idea, which ends in failure and disappointment.

"Windswept Blossoms" was Yang Jiang's first serious play after three successful comedies (*As You Desire It* [稱心如意], *Truth Into Jest* [弄真成假] and *Sport with the World* [遊戲人間]) on the Shanghai stage in the early forties. It was submitted to Huang Zuolin's 黃佐臨 Kugan Theatre Company 苦幹劇團 in 1945, but was not

performed in the end and the company dissolved before the year was out. Neither has the play been staged since. Yang Jiang's deeply penetrating observant gaze and her unflinching eye for the weaknesses of her characters, which was such a rich source of amusement in the comedies, in "Windswept Blossoms" have produced uncomfortably accurate psychological portraits without the ameliorating effect of laughter. The uneasiness caused by this and the overall pessimistic tone of the play may have been the reason for the decision not to perform it, before or after 1949.

Starting in the same issue as "Windswept Blossoms", the next script, "The Bridge" (橋) (1.3.pp.310-357, 1.4.pp.399-424, 1.5.pp.560-568) by Cao Yu, returns in topic to the difficult period the country has just been through, that of the War of Resistance against the Japanese.

The play is set in the Prosperity Iron and Steel Company (懋華鋼鐵公司), somewhere in the unoccupied areas of China in 1943. General Manager Shen Zhefu 沈鵬夫, his son Chengcan 承燦 and a group of like-minded colleagues are dedicated to the creation of China's own heavy industry. Not only do they have to struggle with increasing raw material costs, decreasing demand and lack of capital for investment, but they also have to fight against the landowner and financier speculators on their board of directors. A much needed and long negotiated financial loan, for example, is secured immediately by the new chairman of the board, He Xiangru 何湘如, after the resignation of Ling Guangdou 凌光斗, founder of the company and an old friend of General Manager Shen. In exchange for the loan on extremely harsh terms, He Xiangru tries to persuade Shen to buy the local iron-ore from the Xiangfeng 祥豐 mine, in which he has a financial interest. When the iron-ore is rejected for its low quality, He Xiangru takes steps to have the loan stopped by the bank. Another new director, local landowner Yang Weizhai 楊味齋, urges Shen to buy coke from a mine of which Yang is one of the bosses. The laboratory tests of the sample are satisfactory in this case, but the coke actually delivered later turns out to be of inferior quality and has to be sent back.

With great difficulty, however, amid power failures, using outdated, primitive equipment, Shen and his colleagues manage to produce a batch of rolled steel, which is of good enough quality for manufacturing railway tracks. But during the tapping of molten steel, due to water left in the furnace, an accident occurs, Chengcan gets burnt and his right arm is smashed by a fall. The doctor says it has to be amputated. Seeing Chengcan's distress, his girlfriend, Gui Rongxi 歸容熙, changes her earlier plans of going away to pursue her studies, and decides to stay with him. At this moment, news come that the bank has reduced the amount lent to the company, and that the government has scrapped plans for building the new railway line for which they were to supply steel. But General Manager Shen does not give up, hoping to get a contract for supplying steel for a bridge. Chengcan's pains increase and he is taken to hospital for an operation.

The script of "The Bridge" as published in *Literary Renaissance* ends here, with Scene 2 of the second act, and with no indication if it was to be continued. For its length it could be taken for a whole play, but it feels unfinished, the threads of the plot left loose. The conflict between General Manager Shen and the new directors on the board has been escalating towards a foreseeable future climax, the eponymous "bridge" contract has only just emerged as a possible lifesaver for the company and Chengcan's life seems to be in danger. It is indeed unfinished; the victory of the War of Resistance and Cao Yu's subsequent lecture tour in the United States (April 1946-January 1947) interrupted the writing. Although before his departure in 1948 for Hong Kong Zheng Zhenduo expressed hope that Cao Yu might complete it one day, the play has remained as it was published in the magazine.<sup>7</sup>

Judging from the existing two acts, the play's main topic is the same as that of Mao Dun's play *Around the Qingming Festival* (清明前後) (1946) and of Song Lin's 宋霖 novel *Shoal* (灘) (1947): the difficulties and struggles of the native Chinese industry in the unoccupied areas during the Sino-Japanese War. A weighty, serious topic, demonstrating the concern of writers with a social conscience. But whether "The Bridge" would have been successful as a play, either commercially or from the literary point of view, is another matter. The play is peppered throughout with steelmaking

terms and technical discussions, which would not have been popular with the audience. While in the script technical terms, some in English, and certain characters' dialects are explained and translated by the copious footnotes, the audience at the theatre would not have had them at their disposal. Similarly, before a character first comes on the scene, the playwright gives a long, detailed description in the script of his or her life history, character and temperament, far exceeding the bounds of stage directions. If such information was considered necessary for characterization, how was it to be transmitted to the audience?<sup>8</sup> What exists of the play is dry and slow moving. The characters divide into typical good guys and bad guys: the former are patriotic, unselfish and honourable, the latter corrupt, self-seeking and sycophantic. The only exception is Emmy Liang 梁愛米, Chengcan's childhood playmate and now rich playgirl, who loves and admires him, but who, by reason of her lifestyle, belongs to the world of He Xiangru. It is not clear from the first two acts what role Cao Yu intended her to have in the play; her ambivalence of character may serve to throw into deeper relief the rectitude of the Shens. In any case, it is not so much the characters that interest the author, but the diagnosis of and the solutions for the problems of the Chinese industry. The polarization of characters corresponds closely to the forces dedicated to or hindering the establishment of indigenous steel-making, and confers a moral judgement on the opposing sides. The formulistic nature and the oversimplification of this treatment recalls Liang Shiqiu's 梁實秋 labelling of works of similar kind as an 'eight-legged essay style of resistance literature' (抗戰八股).

The exposure of the problems of the steel industry hints by extension at the problems of the country as a whole and contains a covert criticism of the way China is run. The main obstructor of progress, He Xiangru, used to hold a position in the government and still has connections and influence in high places, which enable him to obtain the decisions he wants, but he uses this power to further his own aims. Through him the government is seen as condoning corruption and favouritism, and more generally is criticized for bad economic management and for lack of support for Chinese industry.

According to Cao Yu, in this play he wanted to focus on the struggle between the patriotic capitalists and the bureaucrat capitalists. The latter's representative in the play, He Xiangru, was modelled on Kong Xiangxi 孔祥熙, Chiang Kai-shek's brother-in-law. Kong was a member of one of the four most powerful clans of China at the time, and was held to be responsible for the destruction of many small-to-medium-size enterprises of the native Chinese industry, as his financial groups sought to extend their monopoly and to profit from the war. Cao Yu also recalls that "The Bridge" was influenced at its writing stage by Mao's *Yan'an Talks* when it reached Chongqing, and how he felt that he should reflect the real struggle and write about workers and peasants. The title of the play he intended to be symbolic: we need to construct bridges, if we want to cross over to the happy future on the other bank.<sup>9</sup>

"The Bridge" invites contrast and comparison with Cao Yu's earlier wartime play *Metamorphosis* (蛻變), written in 1939.<sup>10</sup> Both are patriotic problem plays dealing with Chinese efforts during the anti-Japanese War. In *Metamorphosis*, the selfless work of Doctor Ding 丁大夫 and the clear-sighted reforms of Government Inspector Liang 梁公仰 transform an inefficient inland hospital riddled with corrupt administration into a model front-line one. The play is characterized by rousing patriotic language and an optimistic belief that under China's new officials the country will be transformed, like an insect metamorphosed into a beautiful butterfly. Further on into the war, in "The Bridge", progress appears to have been hindered by corrupt and self-seeking ex-government officials, and the selfless industry-building efforts of General Manager Shen and his colleagues seem doomed. In both plays success or failure in one particular social sphere is considered to be due to central government policy, indicative of enlightened support or pernicious neglect. But, whereas in *Metamorphosis* the rousing needs of patriotism in the early war years brought about the optimism of wishful thinking, in "The Bridge" the experience of years of war encourages no more hope, the criticism is untempered and extended. In addition to particular points of censure, a general moral dimension is raised, which is encapsulated in the play's motto, a quote from Milton's "Areopagitica": "Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to

conscience, above all liberties".<sup>11</sup> In view of this demand, and the fact that the play was overtaken by events which made its topic and criticism mostly irrelevant, it is perhaps not surprising that it remained unfinished after the Communist victory.

From the particular moral-political problems of the War of Resistance, "Dropping Anchor" (2.1.pp.91-108, 2.2.pp.218-232) by Shi Huaifu, the experienced playwright of adaptations, takes us to a non-specific time and a traditional moral framework. The play is adapted from Yang Zhensheng's 楊振聲 short story of the same title.<sup>12</sup> The setting is a small fishing village on an offshore island. The main character, Mu San 穆三, an ex-fisherman turned fish merchant, is generally hated by the villagers, because he bullies them and takes their fish without payment. But he is the only one to lend money to He Jiu 何九, who has been ill for two months. Mu San has an affair with He Jiu's wife, Jiugu 九姑, but loves Sujie 素姐, who is wooed unsuccessfully by Liu Si 劉四. One day Mu San accidentally drops Jiugu's handkerchief on Liu Si's boat, and Liu Si gives it to the jealous Sujie, who reveals the situation to He Jiu. He Jiu challenges Mu San, but Mu San does not want to fight a sick man. Soon after this, He Jiu dies, and when his ghost appears to some of the villagers, rumours start spreading about the suspicious nature of his death. Liu Si proposes marriage to Sujie, but she refuses him. To blackmail her, he then takes away her little brother Xiao Yi's 小乙 fishing net for non-payment of money allegedly borrowed by their late father. No-one in the village is willing to take up Xiao Yi's case except Mu San, who steals back Xiao Yi's net, together with Liu Si's own and sells them at another village. Mu San tells Sujie that she is the only one he loves and that he only hangs around Jiugu's house because he is waiting for an opportunity to avenge his father's killing by He Da 何大, He Jiu's brother, who is hiding in Tianjin 天津. But when Sujie overhears a conversation between Mu San and Jiugu, about planning to go away together, she swears to kill him. In the meantime, He Da secretly arrives back at the village and Jiugu, unaware of Mu San's intention of revenge, invites both of them to her house, with the result that Mu San kills He Da. At this, the villagers arrive, led by Liu Si, and want to drown Mu San (拋他的錨) for his past misdeeds. When they learn

about the killing of He Da, they cowardly want to report him to the *yamen*, instead of dealing with him themselves. But Sujie appears on the scene, claiming to herself the right to dispatch him (拋他的錨) and die with him. Although Mu San explains that he had no intention of going away with and marrying Jiugu, and that it was only a trick to get hold of He Da, Sujie leads him away.

The play has a densely packed, eventful plot, reminiscent of old style vernacular fiction 通俗小說 or stories told by traditional storytellers in the marketplace. It handles timeless, private themes: love entanglement, jealousy, rivalry and revenge. Some elements of the plot carry shadows of other plays: the handkerchief incident brings to mind Shakespeare's Othello; the suspicious nature of He Jiu's death and his ghost's appearance reminds one of Wu Da's 吳大 case from *The Water Margin* (水滸傳). The characters take up typical roles, such as the cuckolded husband, his wife and her lover; the scheming suitor; the bully and his victims; yet they are all lively and credible, with more than one dimension to them. The character of Mu San is especially complex. In the tradition of folk heroes, he protects the weak and helps the badly-off, but on closer look, he is not disinterested in either case, his actions fit in with his personal interests. Moreover, he himself also bullies others. The main driving force of his life is the determination to take revenge for his father's death; everything else is secondary to it, even his love for Sujie. He has sold his fishing boat and deliberately maintains no strong ties with anyone in the village, in order to be free to escape after carrying out his revenge. As he sees an uncertain future for himself and feels he has nothing to offer to Sujie, he encourages her to marry Liu Si. On the whole, Mu San is a sympathetic, positive character, despite his personal failings, which only make him more human in our eyes. Larger than life, he is also something of a hero, who has knowingly made a choice that unavoidably leads to a tragic end. The compulsion of revenge excludes him from his community and determines his course of action, and ultimately his fate.

"Dropping Anchor" presents a soap-opera type picture of a rural community, complete with gossip, intrigue and passions. The language is the colloquial of South China, and the plot and the interaction of characters are the main sources of interest. No



moral judgement is delivered by the author on the actions of the characters and no theory or overt criticism is offered about the overall situation. However, the characters do not operate in a moral vacuum, but in a traditional framework built up from the views of the community members on various relevant issues, such as adultery, murder or revenge. By presenting the events and showing the consequences of actions in this framework without comment, the traditional moral code can be reaffirmed.

But, interestingly, Mu San's fate is undone not by his transgression of certain aspects of the traditional moral code (i.e., his adultery, his bullying and exploiting of the fishermen), but by his honourable observance of another aspect of it (i.e., his revenge for his father's death). Thus the validity of traditional morality is called into question, and the answer, together with the play's outcome, is left to the audience's conscience and imagination.

The next playscript published in the magazine, "The Wrath of Hills and Streams" (2.4.pp.290-302, 2.5.pp.511-534) by Li Jianwu, concerns itself with moral questions relevant to the contemporary situation. The play is set on the North China Plain, between the spring and autumn of 1946. The protagonist, Du Chengguang 杜承光, on coming home after eight years of fighting against the Japanese, has killed a member of the local gentry and had to go into hiding in another county. The lot of the people in the village he is staying in has not become easier with the end of the war; their present rulers are just as oppressive and corrupt as the Japanese were. As one of the villagers says: "Those who sat in the sedan chair before, still sit in it; those who carried it before, still carry it . . . . As if these eight years of war were fought for nothing!" (2.4.p.291) The village headman demands the various taxes (business, self-defence, local government, household, victory [*sic*]) retrospectively for the years of Japanese occupation and either arrests people for non-payment or tries to force one of the villagers to give him his daughter as a concubine, in lieu of cancelling his debt and taxes. Some of the villagers, out of desperation, decide to form a robber band. About the same time Chengguang

hears that his father has disowned him for being wanted by the law, and in his bitterness he agrees to become the leader of the robbers.

Back at the Du family home, Chengguang's younger brother, Chengming 承明, who collaborated with the Japanese and has brought shame on the family by his shady connections, plots to malign Chengguang in front of their father and tries to seduce his wife. He tells their father grossly exaggerated news about Chengguang becoming a bandit and, as the result, the old man, already ill from worry about his son, dies of a heart attack.

Meanwhile, one of the robbers, Yanzi Li 燕子李, has been captured by the local government forces, but on his way to the execution ground he is rescued by his fellow bandits. The pursuing county troops surround the mountain where the bandits have their base. Hu Ziqiang 胡自強, Du's one-time schoolmate, now clerk at the local *yamen*, comes to offer a deal: in exchange for Yanzi Li, the bandits would be pardoned and made into the county's official 'Peace Preservation Troops' (保安大團), and the order for Du's arrest in his own county would be cancelled. The bandits refuse the offer and retain Hu as a hostage.

A month later, things have taken a turn for the worse. Yanzi Li has died as the result of the beatings received in prison. The robbers feel offended by Hu's presence and two of them kill him. They also resent Du's taking Xiao Lian 小蓮, the daughter of one of the robbers, to bed, while not allowing them to take women by force from the surrounding villages. Du's feelings that he has brought harm to everybody increase. On hearing the death of his father and being worried about his wife, he decides to go home.

The last act is set in the Du family garden. Chengguang's wife, Fang Qianyun 方倩雲, is locked into a small hut in the garden by Chengming, who tries thereby to make her give in to him. During the night the robbers climb into the garden in search of Chengguang, and hide when they see nobody there. Then comes Chengguang, who tries, with the help of their Nanny Yu 于媽媽, to set his wife free, and hides on hearing noises. Next, Xiao Lian arrives and hides too. Finally, Chengming and his henchman come, and after opening the door of the hut, they are seized and locked up by the robbers.

Chengguang is reunited with his wife, but as they go out of the garden she is shot dead by the jealous Xiao Lian. Chengguang then leaves the bandits, saying he might come back one day.

After the ending of the play proper, as an Epilogue, one of the actors comes on stage and asks the audience to help them think what they have achieved, and puts at least part of the blame on the audience, for having let "these eighteenth-century German bandits of Schiller" turn up in China.

It is at this point that the readers and the audience realize that the play has borrowed the framework of Schiller's play *Die Rauber*, for the adaptation is so free that no foreign flavour can be detected throughout. The overall theme of the play, pointed out directly by the Epilogue, is also different from Schiller's concern with man's challenge to God and his social order. The robbers in Li Jianwu's play are modern counterparts of the bandits from *The Water Margin*, forced by social conditions to become outlaws. However, they lack their archetypes' moral dimension; banditry for them is just another way of earning a living. Their leader is not convinced of the morality of their actions either; he is not sure of his own role and can not give his followers guidance or direction. As he expresses it in one of his discussions with Wang Ming 王明, "a university student without a university", who joined the robbers:

No ending could be found [to this], neither a theory put forward. But we can't act in this way, we can't be bandits all our lives. You are a university student and I graduated from a university a long time ago. We are both intellectuals, it is not our task to add trouble to this unreasonable world. But the world doesn't want us, apparently we haven't suffered enough during the War of Resistance. We, pitiful creatures, have no share in the victory. Others have made a profit amid fervent activity, and naive, guileless people like us haven't tasted even the scraps at the bottom of the pan. Never mind not tasting it, but suddenly, I'm not clear how, with a trick of magic, we have become the fish fried in the pan. Even simply ignoring us, would have been all right, but they devour our flesh, while still using fine sounding names, like our blood. It's unreasonable, it's unjust! You want to live and want to live well; why is it that of those who exerted all their strength for the country, some just have no way to live. One may ask what is the point of our stirring up trouble in this way; this is precisely the point, being a bandit is precisely the point. The tiger and the wolf live in the high mountains; when they can't live there, they run down to the plain and kill people, incurring their hatred. Give us a way out, and we'll all go and eat grass like obedient sheep. Look, these hundred or so brothers were all originally farmers, . . . in

times of peace, eminently compliant folk, beloved by officials. You want them to have ideals, you arrange things for them with good intentions. But once the world is at peace and the people have a way out, can go home and cultivate their land - guess what will happen? They haven't turned to banditry for the sake of being a bandit. . . . When politics gets on the right track, when society is made equitable, when they have food and clothes, they will all go off to work with enthusiasm.(pp.519-520)

The main and the various sub-themes of the play are indicated by the biblical quotations to the individual acts of the play. The Prologue introduces the reasons for the people's turning to banditry with: "Why do you persecute me as God and are not satisfied with my flesh?" (Job 19:22) and "The way of peace they have not known" (Rom. 3:17). The epigraph to the first act, "I am a woman of sorrowful spirit, I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink (I Sam. 1:15), describes the plight of Chengguang's wife. The epigraphs to the second, third and fourth acts mark Chengguang's role among the robbers, his failure as their leader and his final disillusionment: "These daughters are my daughters, these children are my children . . ." (Gen. 31:43), then "And be it indeed that I have erred, mine error remaineth with my self" (Job 19:4) and lastly "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death" (Rom. 7:24). The quotations preceding the whole play strike an almost religious note, making man's fate out to be determined by God's designs: "Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance" (Job 30:22) and pointing to the moral frailty of human creatures: "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I" (Rom. 7:14-15).<sup>13</sup>

Many of the moral questions of the play are voiced by Du Chengguang in speeches or conversations with other intellectuals. At the beginning of the play, when a bridge collapses in the neighbourhood and the villagers loot the damaged lorries and only rescue the victims after negotiating a price for it, Chengguang bemoans the degeneration of morals, the conditions where "man eats man" and the people become barbaric. The lot of intellectuals, exemplified by Chengguang's own case, is also a cause for complaint. Chengguang, who originally left his profitable occupation to join the army and defend his country, was ordered after the Japanese surrender to turn around and fight his own

people. When he was not willing to do that, he was dismissed. On arriving home, his clash with the local gentry who had collaborated with the Japanese made him a fugitive. The other intellectuals among the robbers are also refugees or homeless for one reason or another.

Having agreed to become the leader of the robbers, Chengguang soon realizes that banditry in itself is no solution to their problems, it keeps them forever outside ordinary society and leads them nowhere. He clearly feels the need to justify their actions, their outlawed existence with a comprehensive theory or ideology, but he himself is unable to provide one and judges his followers uninterested in ideas. At first he dismisses Wang Ming's views, who holds that the bandit-turned-peasants are basically good and improvable by education, but at the end of the play Chengguang admits that Wang was right, entrusts his followers to him and asks him to find a way out for them. There is a parallel recognition in Chengguang of his own shortcomings: failing to give direction to his followers, abusing his authority as a leader by taking Xiao Lian to bed, and generally bringing harm to people. When events culminate in the death of his wife, he can only remove himself from the scene, hoping to come back one day when he would not be so impetuous and conceited any more. There is an implied judgement here on the traditional type of intellectuals and a hint that solution may lie with the views of Wang Ming.

"The Wrath of Hills and Streams" raises many of the pertinent problems of post-war China, with more of a moral, than a political approach. Fuelled by the disappointment that conditions have not improved with the ending of the war, it is fairly unusual among Li Jianwu's plays, in that it deals with contemporary problems, even though, true to form, no definite solution is advocated. Perhaps, in common with his intellectual protagonist, Li was unable to provide an answer. A turn, however, by Li Jianwu from his customary fare of comedies to serious drama and current issues seems to be one of the many signs of the increasing politicization of writers in the run-up to the Communist take-over in 1949.

After the high seriousness of "The Wrath of Hills and Streams", in the next issue Tong Lin's "Wish Them Happiness" (2.6.pp.747-758) brings light relief.

The setting is the home of Liu Dayu 劉大愚, a busy, successful playwright and director. Wang Xishi 王西石, a young struggling actor, manages to see him, after a dozen unsuccessful attempts, and asks Liu to give him a major role in one of his plays, so that he could prove his talents. Convinced by the young man's enthusiasm and determination, Liu agrees to go and see him at the theatre in his present role. After Wang leaves, an old friend of Liu, Li Zhongfu 李仲甫, comes to visit with his daughter, Li Lin 李琳. When she leaves the room, Li asks for Liu's help to dissuade his daughter from marrying a poor actor, who turns out to be Wang. Liu promises to help, but when he wants to contact Wang, he finds no address on his card. As it happens, Wang is still waiting outside, for the same reason, suspecting the insincerity of Liu's promise to him. Liu tries to picture to him the possible harmful consequences of his marrying Li Lin and asks him to break off their relationship for the sake of her future and her mother's health. Wang finally agrees and, disguised as his own father, describes himself to Li Lin and her father in the worst possible light, to make Li Lin change her mind. At first, she does not want to believe what he tells them, then she says she trusts her own feelings and that a father who speaks that ill of his own son can not be considered a father. At this, Wang reveals his true identity, the lovers embrace, and Liu and Li, now ashamed of themselves, give the youngsters their blessings.

Despite adapting the main points of a foreign short story, the play appears thoroughly indigenous.<sup>14</sup> The themes of young people rebelling against parental authority and feudal ideas, listening to their hearts and ignoring social expectations, emerged in the wake of the May Fourth Movement and were frequent in the early twenties. In particular, the play is rather reminiscent of Hu Shi's *The Greatest Event in Life* (終身大事) and some of Ding Xilin's 丁西林 plays, in arguing for the right of young people to choose their own partners in life. That this theme still appears in modern Chinese literature some twenty years after its emergence is probably due to its continued relevance as well as to its political innocuousness.

The play is well-constructed, with a good tempo and a plot that employs devices such as coincidental happenings, unexpected turns and a false identity. There is a formula that is used twice, not only for comical effect, but also for characterization, of a character's words being repeated later by another. One instance is when Li enumerates the reasons to Liu against the youngsters' marriage, and then later Liu, now arguing in support of Li, brings up the same reasons to Wang. In the second instance, Liu's exchanges with Wang are replayed at the end of the play by Li and Liu, with Liu making use of Wang's replies this time. As both instances involve a turn around by Liu, the formula is used to highlight his wavering, undecided stand in the issue. On one side of him is old Li, influenced by the traditional idea of 'compatibility of family status' (門當戶對), on the other the young lovers, rebellious but highly moral, idealistic and steadfast with it. The argument for freedom in love is conducted not only through the youngsters' words in the debates, but also by their personal qualities - particularly those of Wang Xishi - and the contest is clearly decided in favour of the new ideas.

The next playscript, "Kiln Workers" (3.1.pp.97-106, 3.2.pp.222-241), the result of collaborations between Ding Ling, Chen Ming and Lu Fei, concerns itself with the effect of political changes around the end of the war.

The play is set between April and September of 1945. At the beginning we witness how Zhang Yongquan 張永泉, the manager of the Morishita 森下 kiln and a collaborator with the Japanese, maltreats his kiln workers, working them to the bone, not feeding them properly, holding back their pay and locking them up at night like slaves. He has an adopted daughter, Xiao Yu 小玉, whom he first wants for himself, then offers to Kanemoto 金本, Morishita's father-in-law. Xiao Yu turns out to be the daughter of one of the kiln workers, Liu Wenfa 劉文發; her grandfather, Zhonghou 忠厚, and her younger brother, Xiao Fa 小發, also work in the kiln. In order to achieve the production quantities required by Morishita, Zhang forces the kiln workers to take the still hot bricks out of the kilns, and has them beaten for insubordination. At night, locked in the look-out tower (望鄉台), one of the kiln workers, Zhao Man 趙滿, tells the others of the time

he spent with the Eighth Route Army 八路軍. Learning that the Eighth Route Army is in their vicinity, the workers decide to escape and join them. Their attempt is discovered and Zhonghou is beaten to death. In the commotion Wenfa manages to flee, but when shot in the leg by the pursuing soldiers, he falls on the railway track in front of an approaching train.

The action then skips to the fifteenth of August 1945. Xiao Yu has escaped from Zhang's clutches. In quick succession come news about the dropping of the nuclear bombs, of the Japanese surrender, of Morishita's death in fighting and of the Eighth Route Army's approach. Zhang joins the defence of the town. After the Eighth Route Army takes the town and Zhang's hidden gun is discovered, he is taken to army headquarters, but manages to get out by giving them a guaranty. He tries to re-assert his power over the kiln workers by telling them that the Eighth Route Army has given him the kiln, and begins to collect names, ostensibly for setting up a workers' union, but in reality in order to claim their grain relief for himself. He does not succeed, however, because, as a result of Zhao Man's encouragement, the workers organize themselves, stand up and want to settle accounts with Zhang. Zhang is arrested again and brought in front of the workers' meeting. One after the other, the workers recount Zhang's crimes, his cruelty, bullying, his exploitation of the Chinese and collaboration with the Japanese. In the end they decide to confiscate his property to reimburse the workers, and to shoot him. Seeing the advantage of united action, the workers decide to set up a trade union (工會). At this point, presents from the workers of an iron mine arrive; two red flags, with inscriptions: "Long live the trade unions!" and "Let's organize!". This provides further inspiration and the play ends with the workers chanting slogans in praise of unity, of standing up (翻身) and of democratic government.

In 1946, after the CCP's May 4th Directive, which marked the official shift in land policy from rent reduction to the inauguration of land reform, many Yan'an intellectuals, among them Ding Ling and her co-authors, went to take part in the class struggles of the land reform, mostly working in propaganda brigades (土改宣傳隊). One of the most efficient vehicles for their propaganda purposes proved to be the theatre, and a great



number of plays promoting the land reform were written. In "Kiln Workers" we have the town equivalent of the rural class struggle/land reform plays, substituting workers for peasants, managers/factory owners for landlords and trade unions for peasants' associations. Accordingly, the play is not much more than the dramatic representation of a political thesis, illustrating the wickedness of the oppressors and exhorting the oppressed to seek justice and revenge. The overriding importance of this thesis means that both plot construction and the creation of characters suffer. The plot is schematic and the characters are mainly black or white, with no depth to them: the bosses are cruel, morally depraved and betray their country; the somewhat more sketchily painted workers are innocent, trusting and supportive of each other; the only requirement of both plot and characters is that they should demonstrate a political lesson. In case this lesson is missed, it is spelt out directly in Zhao Man's encouragements to the workers and in the workers' discussions about trade unions - which read like the pure propaganda of political tracts. The character of Zhao Man, moreover, is the typical 'mentor figure' of much leftist fiction, who represents the 'right line' and guides other characters when they waver.

The play's subject matter is similar to Ding Ling's well-known novel *Sun Shines over the Sanggan River* (太陽照在桑干河上) (pub. 1948), which she began writing in 1946, after her stint of land reform work in South Chahar 察哈爾.<sup>15</sup> Another didactic work such as these, inspired by and supporting the land reform in the Communist-held areas, appeared in *Literary Renaissance* in May 1947, a month after "Kiln Workers", its title anticipating Ding Ling's novel: a short story, "Roving on the Banks of the Sanggan River" (游動在桑乾河兩岸) by Li Baifeng 李白風.(3.3.pp.283-292) It appears that by this stage of the civil war, with the advance of the Communist troops and their consolidation of power in the conquered areas, the redistribution of power and the associated class struggle became a topical subject in literature. At the same time, the changing Nationalist-Communist power balance made the handling of such a subject in publication safer and less prone to the intervention of censorship.

The last playscript published in the magazine is a short, humorous sketch called "Dispute" (糾紛) by Ai Ying.(3.6.pp.760-762) The dispute referred to in the title involves two petty street-peddlers - fifty-year-old, quick-tempered Old Zhang 老張, who sells five-spice eggs, and thirtyish, glib-tongued Pockmarked Wang 王麻子, who sells *mantou*. The two of them meet on the street and chat about business, which is not going well. Old Zhang complains about his lack of luck and about the amount of extra work he has to do, because of his wife's month-long illness. Pockmarked Wang retorts saying that since he is unmarried, he has to do everything himself, adding that he will get married only when he is his own boss. On to his favourite subject, he starts talking about the shop he wants to set up in future. Old Zhang joins in the fantasy, suggesting that they do it together. They daydream about the details of their shop and get more and more carried away. Before long, however, in their fantasies they encroach on each other's business, threaten each other's customers, and the scene develops into an actual fight. A passer-by separates them and asks about the dispute. As they present their arguments to him, they talk about their shop as something that actually exists and accuse each other of having in fact committed the imagined transgressions. Finally, the man asks where their shop is, at which point the curtain falls.

This comic sketch mocking human follies is given a symbolical importance by the description of its time setting as "any time" and its place setting as "China, of course". With these, the play becomes a send-up of the Chinese character, satirizing its cantankerousness, one-upmanship and its Ah Q-ish tendency to take the imaginary as real to escape from present problems. The two main characters also seem to represent the traits of different generations: the older one constantly moaning about his lot in life and ready to fight at the drop of a hat, the younger one only interested in getting rich and glibly badgering his opponent with fashionable accusations such as being undemocratic, autocratic, interfering and wanting to turn the clock back.

Because of its short length, it is difficult to imagine this play being performed on its own or even coupled with another one-act play as a two-parter. Its most likely

appearance could be in a programme made up from a succession of humorous sketches of similar kinds or in a variety show.

In his critical review of five wartime plays (written in November 1946) Yue Shaowen 樂少文 remarks that after the end of the war, as the political situation worsened, cultural enterprises shrank and playwriting completely stopped.<sup>16</sup> The shortage of new scripts is borne out in our case by the fact that only two of the eight plays published in *Literary Renaissance* were unquestionably written after the war: Li Jianwu's "The Wrath of Hills and Streams" and Ding Ling's "Kiln Workers", both in 1946. Li Jianwu's "Youth" and Yang Jiang's "Windswept Blossoms" were written towards the end of the war in Shanghai (1944 and 1945 respectively), Cao Yu's "The Bridge" in 1944-45, and the rest of the plays could have been written any time within the previous 25 years. The chaotic conditions after the end of the war were clearly not conducive to the writing and staging of new plays; the editors therefore had to make do with material on hand, regardless of its time of creation.

The plays in the magazine fall into two distinct groups. One consists of plays with the dominant intention of social criticism. These include the two post-war plays, which deal with contemporary situations and problems: "The Wrath of Hills and Streams", approaching it from a moral point of view, and "Kiln Workers", turning it into a Yan'an-style propaganda play. The third of these plays is "The Bridge", Cao Yu's unfinished patriotic play of the War of Resistance.

The other five plays, in contrast to the above, concentrate more on the entertaining function of the theatre, while not necessarily excluding its educating role. Their subject matter is also more enduring or timeless. "Youth" and "Windswept Blossoms" fall preeminently into this category: the former a nostalgic, romantic comedy, cheering audiences in Japanese-occupied Shanghai; the latter a love triangle and domestic tragedy, intriguing with its psychological insights. Shi Huafu's "Dropping Anchor" returns to the world of the traditional storyteller, addressing questions on the moral order in a ripping yarn; Tong Lin's drawing room comedy, "Wish Them Happiness", takes up lightheartedly

a contentious social issue; while Ai Ying's satirical sketch, "Dispute", pokes fun at human follies.

It is perhaps not surprising that the two best plays in the magazine, "Youth" and "Windswept Blossoms", belong to this second group. The lack of dominance on these plays by a heavy social thesis allows for a more complex approach, more freedom in creating characters and devising plots and for a less simplistic, therefore more 'realistic' and truthful, view of life than that of the thesis plays. Though one of them a comedy and the other a tragedy, both plays show a similarly deep understanding of human nature and relationships. Since the characters and their behaviour are not judged against preconceived requirements, faults and weaknesses, though certainly not excused, are regarded sympathetically, as part of the human phenomenon. The gallery of village characters in "Youth", driven by their own individual mixture of good and bad traits, with their own idiosyncratic ways of speaking, give the audience a glimpse of the real world of Chinese rural life, warts and all, idealized only to the extent that the unhappy outcome is benignly averted. In "Windswept Blossoms" penetrating observation is directed at the human psyche, disclosing character defects, ironies of behaviour and the complexities of intimate relationships. While the focus of observation is narrower here than in "Youth" (though the probing is deeper), what is offered again is a slice of life - perhaps vertical this time rather than horizontal - life as it is, without comments or interpretations. In addition to the richness of material observed, the audience's attention is held in both plays by the twists and turns of the plot, by well-constructed scenes of confrontation and sharp dialogues - a happy combination of intriguing content and accomplished technique.

The other plays in this second group are less unique or outstanding. "Dropping Anchor" links up with the traditional vernacular tales in its topic and treatment of material, only adding some novelty by leaving the hero's fate open in the end, undecided by conventional morality. Of the two shorter, lightweight plays, "Wish Them Happiness" continues the line of well-made, one-act plays popular in the twenties and thirties, with little variation on the social concern and quick-fire dialogue of its predecessors.

"Dispute" appears more original: its brevity and satirical undertones give it the feel of a number in a comedy hall routine.

Turning back to the first group of plays, with their dominant social concerns, we find that "The Bridge" also has connections with previous works of Chinese theatre. Though it may have been written after the war, by reason of its subject matter and overall tenor, it can be classed as 'War of Resistance realism', following the pattern of patriotic plays such as Yu Ling's 于伶 *Apricot Blossoms and Spring Rain in South China* (杏花春雨江南), Song Zhidi's 宋之的 *Chongqing Fog* (重慶霧) and Mao Dun's *Around the Qingming Festival*.

"The Wrath of Hills and Streams" was one of the major plays in the magazine, taking up the common concerns of its time and topping it with moral deliberations about the nature of rebellion and leadership. As its writer was not in the habit of dealing in his plays with current events, the play's existence indicates the pressure the country's plight exerted on writers' minds, so that personal disinclinations were overcome, resulting in uncharacteristic contributions to the general trend. Thus a thesis-play was created by a playwright who was a skilful master of techniques that hold the audience's attention, but the combination is not very successful. The eventful plot, the intrigues and conflicts of the characters stand apart from the speeches and moral ruminations of the protagonist and his intellectual friends; the two disparate parts do not fuse into a whole. Moreover, in a thesis play, by definition, some kind of solution needs to be offered, and this, Li Jianwu, an unprejudiced, kindly observer of the human condition, could not provide. The attempt to marry two different theatrical trends in one play ended up doing justice to neither and resulted in this unsatisfactory hybrid, neither fish nor fowl.

"Kiln Workers" was an example of the Maoist theatre emerging in the second half of the forties. In the wake of Mao's *Yan'an Talks*, which crystallized the Communist Party's requirements on literature and art, a number of plays that promoted Communist ideals and policies were created by writers in the liberated areas. Driven by immediate propaganda needs, they dealt with various aspects of the class struggle: exposure of the crimes of the oppressors, redress of injustices, land reform and redistribution of land and

property. Since the vehicle of propaganda was the live performance, many of these plays did not survive in script form. In the case of "Kiln Workers" the exception may have been due to Ding Ling's literary reputation independent of and previous to Communist affinities, or to its quality relative to other Yan'an inspired plays. However, in absolute terms or in comparison with earlier successes of modern Chinese theatre, the quality of the play is impaired by the overt propaganda aim, the predictable plot and the stereotyped characters, reducing it to a mere illustration of the required political teaching. Nevertheless, the play has a significance despite its intrinsic features: it points to the future direction of Chinese drama, to the prevalent line after the Maoist literary principles gained dominance over the whole Chinese literary scene.

Having examined the playscripts in *Literary Renaissance* on their own and in their literary connections, we finally have to return to our basic question: could these pieces be regarded as indications of a post-war Renaissance? In answering, special consideration needs to be given to the two outstanding plays, "Youth" and "Windswept Blossoms". They represent a connecting link between wartime and post-war literature: though published in 1946, they properly belong to the flourishing wartime theatre of Shanghai. Indeed, it was such wartime works that gave rise to hopes for a post-war literary revival. Moreover, after "Youth" and "Windswept Blossoms" their writers did not produce plays of similar kind, which would have indicated a trend continuing into the post-war period. Li Jianwu, in fact, went for a change in his next play, "The Wrath of Hills and Streams", incorporating contemporary social concerns into his customary fare (which proved unsuccessful). Of the other plays, some hark back to earlier works or trends in Chinese theatre or literature - War of Resistance drama, vernacular tale, well-made one-act plays - without much advancement on them. "Kiln Workers", which represented the new trend of the Communist propaganda play, a variation on the left-wing thesis play, could, from a particular standpoint, be regarded as indication of a renewal of literature, especially in view of the trend's continuance beyond 1949. Judged by non-political criteria, however, the play has no claim to such a distinction.

Both the quantity and the quality of plays in *Literary Renaissance* after all testify to the remarks of the contemporary critic on the state of the post-war theatre. The turbulent, transitional period could not provide the stable conditions which the drama, more than other genres of literature, seems to require. The need to relocate institutions and people, and to restore the damage caused by the war, plus the fresh upheaval of the soon resumed civil war meant a shortage of funds and opportunities for staging plays. In addition, the resumption of the screening of American films (previously banned by the Japanese) and increasing fears of government censorship proved particularly damaging for the theatre. Thus, following its wartime flowering, modern Chinese theatre slid into a decline in the post-war years, and when conditions stabilized after 1949, the extra-literary requirements of the new era effectively finished it off.

## Chapter 6

### Summary and Conclusion

*Literary Renaissance* was launched with the hope of a post-war revival of literature and with the intention of working towards that revival. The hope was based on the achievements of Chinese literature during the War of Resistance against Japan: on outstanding individual works that addressed the country's plight and on the unity of purpose of writers. The way to bring about a Literary Renaissance, in the magazine's view, was to preserve that wartime unity of writers and to continue writing for the people, exposing social ills and providing moral leadership. In order to create such a 'united front', the magazine published a great variety of contributions of different political persuasions, as well as works by unknown authors and translations of a range of foreign writings.

The magazine's literary philosophy that was expressed in critical and theoretical articles by its editors and other contributors, however, was less catholic. Apart from a few dissenting voices that maintained the individual and subjective nature of literature (see for example Tang Shi's reviews), the tone of the theoretical articles was mostly in harmony with the Communist literary guidelines formulated by Mao Zedong in his 1942 *Yan'an Talks*. The magazine's professed literary philosophy was also far more radical than many of the creative contributions published, indicating a split in the editors' attitude: though fully subscribing to the politically motivated theory of literature, they often seemed to disapprove of the products of its practical application and chose contributions at variance with or even in opposition to that theory. Another explanation of this dichotomy might lie in the division of labour between the editors: contributions on literary theory were on the whole the responsibility of Zheng Zhenduo, who throughout had contact with and support from the Communist Party, while creative writings were handled by Li Jianwu, whose thinking, by his own admission, was "centre-right".<sup>1</sup>



The ambiguity of the magazine's political character was due to the fact that, backed by the underground Shanghai branch of the CCP, it followed the United Front policy, which the Party formulated for the government-dominated areas of this period. Applied to the literary field, this policy sought to rally a wide variety of contributors and readers with the objective of 'working towards democracy', which was a censor-proof, euphemistic way of expressing an anti-government, anti-Nationalist stance. So while its guiding philosophy was the Maoist literary theory, *Literary Renaissance* was, generally speaking, a magazine for centre-right, liberal-democratic and independent intellectuals.

Accordingly, two major strands are detectable in the weave of the magazine: the Maoist or Yan'an line and a politically independent line. To the first one, the eponymous principles of which are often alluded or referred to, belong most of the reviews and theoretical articles, the 'polemical' group of poems, short stories by such writers as Zhou Erfu 周而復, Feng Yi 馮夷, Li Baifeng 李白鳳, Feng Cun 豐村 and Luo Gao 羅高 (among others), the novel *Gravitation* by Li Guangtian and Ding Ling's play "Kiln Workers". The politically independent line is far less homogeneous. Some of its works are characterized by the influence of Western, particularly Anglo-American, literature, some represent the natural evolution of indigenous tendencies, and some exhibit leftist leanings that are the expression of artistic conscience and sensibility rather than of ideological dogma. Yet in all of them the implicit assumption is the autonomy of literature. Its outstanding examples are the critical writings of Tang Shi, the poems of the 'contemplative' group, especially of the 'Nine Leaves' poets, short stories by Lu Ling, Wang Zengqi, Qian Zhongshu, Yang Jiang, Shi Tuo and Mao Dun, the novels *Fortress Besieged* by Qian Zhongshu and *Cold Nights* by Ba Jin, and plays by Li Jianwu and Yang Jiang.

Due to the inevitable time-lag of availability, works written towards the end of the war feature in large numbers among the ones published by the magazine. The most remarkable of these originated from two of the wartime political and cultural regions: from Shanghai in the Japanese-occupied East coast and from the government-controlled South-west, with its main centres of Chongqing and Kunming.

Under the restrictions of Japanese rule, literature surprisingly thrived in wartime Shanghai. The banning of American films left the field of entertainment to the theatre, which flourished, with the works, among others, of Li Jianwu and Yang Jiang. Censorship and the taboo of political subjects led writers to focus on private life, on family matters and relationships. The sobering experience of recent historical events and their own embattled position influenced their general approach to life and resulted in a detached, disillusioned and sceptical attitude in their writings. In *Literary Renaissance*, fiction by Qian Zhongshu, Shi Tuo and Yang Jiang provide some of the best examples of this trend, which was urban in focus, international in character, and displayed affinities with Western literature.

In the South-west hinterland, where the government and the cultural establishment withdrew from the advancing Japanese forces, most writers sought to express the experience and the trauma of the war. They depicted life under the occupation (Li Guangtian) or under enemy bombardment (Ba Jin), described the effect of the war on the lives of peasants (Sha Ding, Wu Zuxiang) or the patriotic war effort of industrialists (Cao Yu). This literature was realistic and non-experimental or non-innovatory in style, the main object being the reflection of reality with cathartic or pragmatic intention.

In the overall conservatism of this rural region, reinforced by the traditionalist attitude of the Nationalist government, Kunming unexpectedly became something of a centre of modernism during the forties. After the beginning of the war, the major universities in the east (Peking, Qinghua and Nankai) moved inland, finally settling in Kunming, where they joined together to set up the South-west Associated University (西南聯大). Many of the prominent Chinese literary figures of the time gathered round the university, teaching and inspiring the younger generation of writers and poets. Bian Zhilin gave courses in poetry and translated W. H. Auden and other Western modernists. Feng Zhi lectured on German literature and in 1941 published his famous sonnets, which showed great affinity with Rilke's poetry and were much imitated by younger poets. Western modernism was transmitted more directly by foreigners, such as William Empson, who lectured on contemporary English poetry, or Auden, who toured China

with Christopher Isherwood and wrote sonnets about China as part of his sonnet-cycle "In Time of War". Among the Kunming undergraduates, the 'Nine Leaves' poets, especially Du Yunxie, Mu Dan, Yuan Kejia and Zheng Min 鄭敏, were influenced by Bian Zhilin and Feng Zhi, but even more by the English and American poets, like Eliot, Auden, Yeats and the Imagists, who were introduced to them by their teachers.

In the field of fiction writing, apart from Qian Zhongshu, who lectured there briefly (1938-1939) on the twentieth-century Western novel, the main inspirational force was Shen Congwen 沈從文. Shen taught creative writing at the university and was the editor of the literary supplement (文學副刊) to the *L'Impartial* (大公報) newspaper, and in these two capacities, nurtured and promoted many young poets and writers, among them Mu Dan, Yuan Kejia, Zheng Min, Lin Pu 林浦 and Wang Zengqi.<sup>3</sup> He also continued with his modernistic experiments, which were inspired by Freud and Joyce, and which, in their turn, influenced his students. The unconventional form and structure of his writings from this period, the lack of plot, the alternation of narration with interior monologue and the presentation of fragmented consciousness, for example, all find echoes in the short stories of Wang Zengqi, whom Shen thought the most promising among his fiction writing protégés.<sup>4</sup>

By the end of the war, excellent works produced in these regions had accumulated or were nearing completion, and waited for publication. They gave *Literary Renaissance* both the basis for its launch and the hope and aspiration for a Literary Renaissance. The assumption was that if writers continued with their endeavours in the same vein, the changed political circumstances - the end to the war and to the surveillance and restrictions of the Japanese occupation - would by themselves bring about a Literary Renaissance. The changes after the Japanese surrender, however, either did not have the envisaged effect or also transformed the conditions that fostered wartime achievements. The repressive measures instituted by the Japanese were replaced by those of the Nationalist government's own, which even extended to previously relatively free areas, such as the Shanghai theatre scene. With the post-war move of institutions back to the East, the South-west Associated University in Kunming was disbanded, its students and

teachers dispersed, and the 'hot-house' atmosphere came to an end. Moreover, as the background to all the changes, after a few months' cessation of hostilities between the Communist and Government forces, the civil war flared up again. One type of war replaced another, extending the dark period that was supposed to have ended with the defeat of the Japanese.

Looking at the contributions to the magazine chronologically, we find that the first six issues carried most of the outstanding works that gave the magazine its prestigious reputation. After that, quality on the whole declined, in parallel with the deteriorating political and economic situation in the country. Since the majority of those outstanding works were written towards the end of the war and formed the basis of hopes for a revival of literature after the war, they themselves, by definition, can not be used as evidence of a post-war Literary Renaissance. Yet they give an indication of some kind of a literary upturn, except that what people thought was the beginning of a sustained revival, turned out to have been a brief, 'fin-de-guerre' flowering.

Only in the field of poetry did the end-of-war excellence carry over to some extent to the post-war period. Poets emerging from their wartime refuges gathered around the Shanghai magazines *Poetry Creation* (詩創造), edited by Hang Yuehe 杭約赫, Zang Kejia and Lin Hong 林洪, and *New Chinese Poetry* (中國新詩), edited by Hang Yuehe, Xindi, Chen Jingrong, Tang Qi 唐祈 and Tang Shi. The former, starting in July 1947, published poems of a wide spectrum of topics and styles, with the vague overall objective of writing for "the broad labouring masses". The latter, from June 1948, carried works that continued the May Fourth tradition and had the characteristics of a school. The most significant contributors to these magazines were the ones later christened the 'Nine Leaves' group of poets.<sup>5</sup> Both magazines were closed down by the government authorities in October 1948.

Though brief, the end-of-war flowering of literature was full of promise. It produced two major novels, which are now regarded as among the best of modern Chinese fiction; short stories that pointed to new ways of representing reality or exhibited the characteristics of the modernist style; sophisticated plays combining intriguing content

and accomplished technique; and a range of poems with sharp social sensibilities and high artistic standards.

These works - to answer finally the basic question of this study - can indeed be regarded as evidence of a revival of literature; but of the end-of-war and not of the post-war period. They could have become part of a fully developed Literary Renaissance, but their example had no continuation in the literature written after the end of the war. Their brief flowering gives us only a glimpse of what might have been if conditions for literary creation had been favourable.

## Notes and References

References to works published in *Literary Renaissance* are given by the volume, issue and page numbers only, without the name of the magazine.

### Chapter 1

1. In this pre-1946 literary profile of Zheng, I rely on his biographies in *中国现代作家传略* [Short biographies of modern Chinese writers] (四川人民出版社, 1981), Vol.1, pp.436-441, and in Howard Boorman (ed.), *Bibliographical Dictionary of Republican China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), Vol.2, pp.266-270.
2. See Li Jianwu, "自传" [Autobiography], in *中国现代作家传略*, Vol.1, pp.334-339, and the entry on him in *中国文学家词典：现代第二分册* [Dictionary of Chinese writers: modern period Vol.2] (Chengdu: 四川人民出版社, 1982), pp.321-324.
3. Li Jianwu, "关于《文艺复兴》" [About *Literary Renaissance*], *新文学史料* [Historical materials on new literature] 1982:3, p.185.
4. Ibid., pp.185-187.
5. Di 諦 [Zheng Zhenduo], "編後" [Editorial note], 2.1.p.128.
6. Apart from the above, see the editorial notes in 1.2.p.201, 1.3. p.378, 1.6.p.715 and 3.6.p.762.
7. "关于《文艺复兴》", p.185. Li Jianwu does not mention, however, the reason for choosing Leonardo da Vinci's pencil study of a hand as the cover of the fourth volume (September-November 1947). Was its obvious lack of political significance an indication that by then even such symbolic expressions of feelings were unwise? For reproductions of the magazine's front covers see Appendix II.
8. Incidentally, the change in profile was also reflected in the front covers of these special issues. Instead of the Renaissance paintings of the earlier issues, it used Chen Hongshou's 陳洪綬 painting of the Chu 楚 statesman and poet Qu Yuan 屈原 (338-278BC).
9. Zhou Zuoren, "文藝復興之夢" [Dream of a Renaissance], *苦口甘口* [Bitter and sweet] (Hong Kong: 實用書局, 1973. Facsimile of the 1944 Shanghai ed.), p.12.
10. Chow Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), p.272.

11. Hu Shi, *The Chinese Renaissance: The Haskell Lectures. 1933* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), Ch.III, p.44.
12. *Ibid.*, pp.46-47.
13. *Ibid.*, p.48.
14. "建設的文學革命論" [For a constructive literary revolution], *建設理論集* [Towards a constructive theory], Vol.1 of *中國新文學大系* [A comprehensive anthology of modern Chinese literature], (Taipei: 業強出版社, 1990), p.128.
15. *Ibid.*, p.136.
16. Li Changzhi 李長之, "國防文化與文化國防" [Culture for national defence and national defence of culture], *迎中國的文藝復興* [Towards a Chinese Renaissance], (Chongqing: 商務印書館, 1944), p.12.
17. Li Changzhi, "自序" [Preface], *迎中國的文藝復興*, p.3.
18. "國防文化與文化國防", p.10.
19. *Ibid.*, p.13.
20. Li Changzhi, "中國文化運動的現階段" [The present stage of the cultural movement in China], *迎中國的文藝復興*, pp.54-55.
21. *Ibid.*, pp.57-58.
22. Zhou Zuoren, "文藝復興之夢", pp.12-15.
23. *Ibid.*, p.15.
24. *Ibid.*, p.16.
25. See the account of the meeting in Zhao Jingshen 趙景深, "記上海文協成立大會" [Notes on the founding meeting of the Shanghai Association for Literature and Arts], 1.1.pp.126-130.
26. Arthur Koestler 凱士特勒, "小說作家的三個危機" [Three crises of fiction writers], trans. Jiao Juyin 焦菊隱, 1.2.p.153. The quote in the text is from the original article, "The Novelist's Temptations" (Speech at the 17th International Congress of the P.E.N. Club, September, 1941) in *The Yogi and the Commissar* (London: Hutchinsons, 1965), pp.33-40.
27. Zhao Jingshen, "記上海文協成立大會", pp.126-127.

28. For a discussion of the history of the Rice-Sprout Song, see David Holm's article "Folk Art as Propaganda: The *Yangge* Movement in Yan'an" in Bonnie S. McDougall (ed.), *Popular Chinese Literature and Performing Arts in the People's Republic of China 1949-1979*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp.3-35.
29. Cf. Maxim Gorky: "'realism' would cope with its difficult task if . . . it depicted man not only such as he is today, but also such as he must and shall be tomorrow". "Besedy o remesk" [Talks on craftsmanship], *O Literature* [About literature], Vol.10 of *Collected Works of Maxim Gorky*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1982), pp.226-227.
30. To base a critical review on the discussion of masculine-feminine duality is very apt in the case of Chen Jingrong. Having read some of Chen's poems without knowing their author's identity, this writer was surprised to discover later that, despite the masculine style, their author was a woman.
31. Li Jianwu, "关于《文艺复兴》", pp.186-187.
32. This has also been confirmed by one of the contributors to the magazine, the poet Tang Qi 唐祈, who in a personal correspondence described the significance of the magazine's title as being only an allusion to the revival after the war.
33. Li Jianwu, "关于《文艺复兴》", p.187.

## Chapter 2 - Poetry

1. Jian 健 [Li Jianwu], "編餘" [Editorial note], 3.4.p.460.
2. See the review of Ai Qing's 艾青 詩論 [Poetic theory] in Liu Xiwei 劉西渭 [Li Jianwu], "三本書" [Three books], 1.3.p.379, and "爲「詩人節」" [For 'Poets' Day'], 1.5.p.512.
3. "爲「詩人節」", p.513. The modern view of Qu Yuan as a national patriotic poet was formed by Wen Yiduo's essay "Qu Yuan: The People's Poet" (屈原：人民的詩人) and Guo Moruo's play "Qu Yuan". Previously Qu Yuan had been mostly looked upon by frustrated men of letters as their patron saint: 懷才不遇 (Having talent, but meeting no opportunity to use it).
4. Liu Xiwei, "詩叢和詩刊" [Poetry collections and poetry publications], 3.1.pp.126-128. The quote is from a letter by Lu Xun to Cai Pei 蔡裴, written in 1935. See Zhou Shuren 周樹人, 魯迅書簡 [Letters of Lu Xun], (魯迅全集出版社, 1946), p.956.



5. See Li's review of Tian Jian's collection 給戰鬥者 [For a Fighter] in Liu Xiwei, "詩叢和詩刊", p.127.
6. "「馬凡陀的山歌」和臧克家的「寶貝兒」" [*Ma Fantuo's Mountain Songs and Zang Kejia's Treasure*], 3.4.pp.509-512.
7. "詩底粗獷美短論" [On rough and rugged beauty in poetry], 詩創造 [Poetry creation] 1.4 (October 1947), pp.26-29.
8. "「詩四十首」" [*Forty Poems*], 3.4.p.507.
9. "「手掌集」" [*Palm*], 詩創造 1.9 (March 1948), p.28.
10. "詩的新世代" [The new generation of poetry], 詩創造 1.8 (February 1948), pp.20-21. There are no examples in *Literary Renaissance* of Lü Yuan's work, who belonged to the group called 'July' (七月), the leading figures of which were Hu Feng 胡風, Ai Qing, Tian Jian, Xiao Jun 蕭軍, Xiao Hong 蕭紅 and Duanmu Hongliang 端木蕻良. For a description of the history, ideas and the main characters of the 'July' group, see Yang Yi 楊義, *中國現代小說史* (The history of modern Chinese fiction), Vol.3, (Beijing: 人民文學出版社, 1991), pp.141-155. In his review 「手掌集」 (see note 9) Tang Shi places Lü Yuan, Ai Qing and Tian Jian on the opposite or parallel side to Feng Zhi 馮至, Bian Zhilin, He Qifang, Li Guangtian 李廣田 and Xindi.
11. Mu Ge 穆歌, "早晨" [Morning], 3.4.p.424; Li Baifeng 李白鳳, "我們歌唱苦難的歲月" [We sing of times of hardship], 1.4.p.427, and "我是無用的詩人" [I am a useless poet], 3.1.p.107; Hang Yuehe 杭約赫, "世界上有多少人在呼喚我的名字" [How many people in the world are calling my name], 2.5.p.477; and Suo Kai 索開, "歌手烏卜蘭" [The singer Wubulan], 2.2.129.
12. Qing Bo 青勃, "巨人" [A giant], 2.5.p.478.
13. Sima Tianjian 司馬天健, "讓我們來歌唱民主" [Let us sing of democracy], 3.2.p.220.
14. Hu Xiao 胡肖, "煉鋼" [Tempering of steel], 3.4.p.406; Mai Zi 麥紫, "工作" [Work], 3.4.p.428.
15. "On *Fish Eyes*", quoted in Lloyd Haft, *Pien Chih-lin: A Study in Modern Chinese Poetry* (Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1983), p.25.
16. Sima Changfeng 司馬長風, *中國新文學史* [The history of new Chinese literature] (Hong Kong: 昭明出版社, 1978), Vol.3, pp.172-173.
17. For example Lao Xin in his review quoted in note 6 above.

18. China is compared to a begonia leaf being devoured by the caterpillars of foreign imperialism in Qin Shou'ou's 秦瘦鷗 novel *Begonia* (秋海棠). See Milena Doleželová-Velingerová, ed., *A Selective Guide to Chinese Literature 1900-1949 Vol.1 The Novel* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), p.142.
19. In the original text 枳, a bitter, sour kind of orange. The line is a reference to a story about the politician Yanzi 晏子, from Ch.6 of the 晏子春秋. The king of Chu 楚 wanted to humiliate him, a man of Qi 齊, and arranged the spectacle of catching a thief ostensibly from Qi. When the king asked if men of Qi tended to be thieves, Yanzi answered: It must be something to do with the environment; oranges growing south of the Huai River are oranges, but when grown north of the Huai, they become 枳.
20. "布谷" [Cuckoo] in 九叶集：四十年代九人诗选 [Nine leaves: an anthology of nine poets' works from the forties] (Nanjing: 江苏人民出版社, 1981), pp.15-16.
21. See Lao Xin, "「十年诗选」" [*Poems of Ten Years*], 2.5.pp.535-539, a review of Zang Kejia's collection.
22. See He Qifang's postscript to his collection 夜歌 [Night songs], quoted in Sima Changfeng, 中國新文學史, Vol.3, pp.208-209.
23. Private correspondence with Du Yunxie.
24. Ibid.
25. 道德經, Ch.32; trans. Arthur Waley, *The Way and Its Power: A Study of the Tao Te Ching and Its Place in Chinese Thought* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1934), p.183.
26. See remark by Tang Shi in "「詩四十首」", 3.4.p.508. Translation is by Waley, *The Way and Its Power*, p.141.
27. Private correspondence with Du Yunxie.
28. W. H. Auden, *Selected Poems*, ed. Edward Mendelson (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), p.73.
29. See Wang Zuoliang's 王佐良 "Modernist Poetry in China" pp.81-85 and "A Chinese Poet" pp.89-99, in his *Degrees of Affinity: Studies in Comparative Literature* (Beijing: Foreign Language and Research Press, 1985).
30. *Datura stramonium*, a poisonous shrubby plant.
31. The description quoted here defines the basic assumptions about the nature and function of poetry that differentiates modern poetry from its classical counterpart. See Michelle Mi-Hsi Yeh, *Modern Chinese Poetry: Theory and Practice Since 1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), p.9.

32. Translation by Waley, *The Way and Its Power*, p.141.
33. Ibid., pp.51-53.
34. For an analysis of Chen Jingrong's poetry, see Shiu-Pang E. Almberg, *The Poetry of Chen Jingrong: A Modern Chinese Woman Poet* (Doctoral Dissertation 1988, University of Stockholm), which also includes translations of a great number of poems.
35. See for example Hsu Kaiyu, *Twentieth Century Chinese Poetry: An Anthology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), p.xxviii.
36. 冯至选集 [An anthology of Feng Zhi's works] (Chengdu: 四川文艺出版社, 1985), Vol.1, p.123.
37. Ibid., p.139.
38. See 九叶集, p.229.
39. See his article "詩底粗獷美短論", 詩創造 1.4 (October 1947), pp.26-29.
40. Haft, *Pien Chih-lin*, p.174. The translation is mine.
41. Ibid., p.175.
42. Two further members, Hang Yuehe 杭約赫 and Tang Qi 唐祈, also had poems published in *Literary Renaissance*. In this description I draw on Yuan Kejia's introduction in 九叶集, pp.3-18.
43. The influence of Western modernism on these poets is discussed in detail by Mao Xun 毛迅 in "论九叶诗派的现代主义背景" [On the modernist background of the 'Nine Leaves' group of poets], 中国现代文学研究丛刊 [Modern Chinese literary research series] 1991:4 (no.49), pp.51-68. For their views on and attitudes to poetry see Guo Xiacong 郭小聰, "九叶诗派诗歌理论漫评" [Informal comments on the poetic theory of the 'Nine Leaves' poets], 中国现代文学研究丛刊 1987:2 (no.31), pp.150-156.
44. James J. Y. Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), pp.94-100.
45. Li Jianwu, "編餘", 3.4.p.460.

### Chapter 3 - Short Stories

1. See for example: Sha Ding, "蘇大個子" [Su Dagezi], 1.6.pp.676-682; Liu Huozi 劉火子, "豬的戰爭" [The war of the pig], 2.2.pp.143-152; Tian Tao 田濤, "泥土" [Earth], 1.5.pp.527-532; Ai Wu 艾蕪, "鄉愁" [Country sorrows], 3.1.pp.8-24 and 3.2.pp.137-154.
2. Zhou Bi 周璧, "一個平凡的故事" [An ordinary story], 3.1.pp.76-81; Xiang Yi 向一, "白髮娘" [A white-haired woman], 4.2.pp.155-159; Yi Luo 伊洛, "樹" [Tree], 2.6.pp. 674-677; Jin Zhou 晉宙, "軍民合作" [People-army co-operation], 3.1.pp.54-66; Zhang Xiuya 張秀亞, "控訴" [Accusation], 3.4.pp.488-490; Yi Ding 一鼎, "林二狗子" [Lin Ergouzi], 3.6.pp.690-696; Tian Qi 田畦, "白米飯好吃田難種" [Easy to eat the rice, hard to cultivate the land], 4.2.pp.150-154.
3. Fan Quan 范泉, "山本安太郎" [Yamamoto Yasutaro], 2.4.pp.363-365 and "井上豐" [Inoue Yutaka], 3.6.pp.727-732.
4. See Song Lin 宋霖, "絕交" [Break-up], 3.4.pp.467-474; Qu Guan 屈觀, "倭刀的記憶" [Chronicle of a Japanese sword], 2.6.pp.653-655.
5. Wang Zhong 王忠, "鬼神世界" [World of ghosts and spirits], 1.6.pp. 696-699; Shan Feng 山風, "牛八科長的苦惱" [Section Head Niuba's worries], 3.1.pp.67-72; Xiang Yi, "暗流" [Undercurrent], 3.2.pp.155-162; Shi Dan 石膽, "熱流" [Hot spell], 3.5.pp.615-624; Huang Mei 黃梅, "牢" [Prison], 2.6.pp.669-672.
6. Li Baifeng 李白鳳, "馬和放馬的人" [Horses and horseherds], 2.3.pp.362-374; Wu Jiao 吳嶠, "虎口" [In the jaws of death], 2.5.pp.449-458; Shi Yi 時易, "期待" [Waiting], 3.5.pp.597-602.
7. Li Yun 黎筠, "豐收" [Bumper harvest], 3.4.pp.481-487; Liu Beifan 劉北汜, "黑夜的呼喊" [Shouts in the night], 3.5.pp.549-578; Lin Leng 林冷, "到大荒山去" [Going to the barren mountains], 4.1.pp.49-57.
8. Zhou Erfu 周而復, "微笑" [Smile], 1.5.pp.613-620 and "八月的白洋澱" [Baiyang Lake in August], 3.5.pp.581-589; Feng Yi 馮夷, "中條山的夢" [The dream of Zhongtiaoshan], 4.1.pp.9-20 and 4.2.pp.164-184; Li Baifeng, "游動在桑乾河兩岸" [Roving on the banks of the Sanggan River], 3.3.pp.283-292; Feng Cun 豐村, "高家少爺回來了" [Young Master Gao has come back], 3.2.pp.193-204 and "江奇峰上校" [Captain Jiang Qifeng], 2.4.pp.330-341; Luo Gao 羅高, "流浪的以色列人" [The wandering Israelite], 3.2.pp.169-177.
9. Peng Hui 彭慧, "小天使" [A little angel], 4.1.pp.85-88; Xiao Jin 蕭金, "小二的生日" [Xiao'er's birthday], 3.6.pp.739-743; Wang Zhong, "一個販煙土的女人" [An

- opium-dealing woman], 3.4.pp.503-506; Mu Ye 牧野, "兩種腳印" [Two footprints], 3.4.pp.450-459.
10. Shi Jia 釋加, "貴畜篇" [Precious beast], 3.4.pp.475-480; Pu Yin 普寅, "母子之間" [Between mother and son], 2.4.pp.352-362; Wang Bei 望北, "玉蘭" [Yulan], 3.6.pp.672-682; Ai Mingzhi 艾明之, "痴" [Idiot], 2.3.pp.356-361.
  11. Tian Bi 天璧, "瘋" [Madness], 3.1.pp.82-88; Li Tuozhi 李拓之, "埋香" [Burial of a beauty], 2.5.pp.439-447; Fan Quan, "井上豐", 3.6.pp.727-732.
  12. Zhou Miwu 周靡蕪, "沒有露水的草" [Dewless grass], 3.5.pp.631-635; Lu Ling 路翎, "程登富和線鋪姑娘底戀愛" [The love between Cheng Dengfu and the yarn-shop girl], 1.5.pp.592-606; Zang Kejia, "鳳毛麟角" [Phoenix feather and unicorn horn], 3.2.pp.185-192; Tian Tao 田濤, "勝力" [Victory], 2.5.pp.429-438; Yang Jiang 楊絳, "小陽春" [Indian summer], 2.1.pp.38-47; Xu Jie 許杰, "來客" [Guests], 1.2.pp.202-209.
  13. Luo Hong 羅洪, "動搖" [Vacillation], 1.4.pp.440-446; Zang Kejia, "夢幻者" [The dreamer], 2.1.pp.33-38; A Zhan 阿湛, "爲了分家的緣故" [In order to divide the household], 4.1.pp.34-42; Zang Kejia, "掛紅" [Red sign], 1.4.pp.387-393.
  14. Jin Yi 靳以, "生存" [Survival], 2.2.pp.133-142; Zheng Shigu 鄭式谷, "教授之家" [The professor's family], 3.6.pp.654-671; Tian Tao, "蠟梅花開" [When the wintersweet blossoms], 3.6.pp.683-689.
  15. Jiang Muliang 蔣牧良, "離婚" [Divorce], 3.2.pp.205-217; Sima Lanhuo 司馬藍火, "我的丈夫" [My husband], 3.6.pp.733-738.
  16. Wen Tian 問天, "兩條小影子" [Two little shadows], 3.6.pp.756-757; Wang Zuoliang 王佐良, "平原的邊緣" [On the edge of the plain], 3.4.pp.500-503.
  17. See for example: Jian Xian'ai 蹇先艾, "老實人" [A guileless man], 2.1.pp.48-57; Yan Chao 嚴超, "慧英" [Huiying], 2.2.pp.161-167; Che Hong 車虹, "那個梳雙辮的女人" [The woman who wore plaits], 4.1.pp.42-48; Wang Zengqi 汪曾祺, "老魯" [Old Lu], 3.2.pp.242-248 and Xiao Ge 曉歌, "被鎖在土地上的人" [A man who is chained to the land], 2.4.pp.342-351; Luo Binji 駱賓基, "可疑的人" [The suspect], 2.1.pp.58-63; Ling Zhou 菱舟, "阿寶和他的牛" [A Bao and his ox], 3.6.pp.744-747; Lü Deshen 呂德申, "老祖母" [The grandmother], 1.6.pp.690-695.
  18. Jiang Muliang, "離婚", 3.2.pp.205-217.
  19. Feng Yi, "中條山的夢", 4.1.pp.9-20 and 4.2.pp.164-184; Liu Shude 劉樹德, "籬" [The fence], 3.1.pp.42-50; Jian Xian'ai, "老實人", 2.1.pp.48-57; Li Baifeng, "游動在桑乾河兩岸", 3.3.pp.283-292.

20. Wu Yan 吳岩, "株守" [Holding on], 1.4.pp.447-459.
21. Song Yuan 宋元, "遙寄" [Sent from afar], 3.2.pp.249-252; Xiao 嘯, "給明兒的信" [Letter to Ming'er], 3.3.pp.383-384.
22. Lin Mang 林莽, "夜話" [Night talk], 1.1.pp.114-118; Xiao Wangqing 蕭望卿, "烏鴉" [Crows], 1.6.pp.742-744.
23. Best examples are Lu Ling, "程登富和線鋪姑娘底戀愛"; Li Tuozhi, "埋香"; and Wang Zengqi, "復仇", 1.4.pp.394-398.
24. Some of the many examples: Zi Feng 紫風, "媒婆" [The matchmaker], 2.4.pp.366-371; Yan Chao, "慧英", 2.2.pp.161-167; Wang Zengqi, "老魯", 3.2.pp.242-248; and Qing Miao 青苗, "黎莎" [Lisha], 1.6.pp.700-703.
25. For a discussion of *Records of Orchard City* see Yang Yi, *中國現代小說史*, Vol.3, pp.426-429.
26. Yang Jiang's early short stories from the mid-thirties already display her characteristic mixture of psychological insight and gentle irony, and trace the pursuit and destruction of illusory ideas in people's lives. An appreciative account of her fiction is given in Yang Yi, *中國現代小說史*, Vol.3, pp.485-488.
27. See Edward M. Gunn, *Unwelcome Muse: Chinese Literature in Shanghai and Peking 1937-1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), p.245.
28. Full translations of these stories are given in Appendices IV and V. Page references of quotations in the text, however, are to the original.
29. In describing various forms of speech, I follow the definition given in the following examples by William Tay in his article "Wang Meng, Stream-of-consciousness, and the Controversy over Modernism", *Modern Chinese Literature* (San Francisco) 1.1 (September 1984), p.7.
  1. She paused and said to herself, "I have to go". (Direct form)
  2. She paused and said to herself that she had to go. (Indirect form)
  3. She paused. She had to go. (Free indirect form)
  4. She paused. I have to go. (Free direct form)
30. A later, revised version, included in *汪曾祺短篇小說選* [An anthology of short stories by Wang Zengqi] (Beijing: 北京出版社, 1982), is translated by Shu-mei Shi and Adam Schorr, and published in *Rendition* No.37 (Spring 1992), pp.35-42.
31. Wang Zengqi, "自序" [Preface], *王曾祺短篇小說選*, p.2.
32. *Ibid.*, p.2.

33. Li Guotao 李国涛, "汪曾祺小说文体描述" [Wang Zengqi's fiction style], *文學評論* [Literary criticism] 1987:4, pp.58-59.
34. In the later, revised version of "Revenge" (see note 30 above) the motto includes the next clause: "even the most hot-tempered man does not resent a tile blown by the wind" (雖有忮心,不怨飄瓦). Translation by A. C. Graham, *Chuang-tzu: The Seven Inner Chapters and other writings from the book Chuang-tzu* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), p.174.
35. Xie Zhixi 解志熙, "汪曾祺早期小说片论" [A brief discussion of Wang Zengqi's early fiction], *中国现代文学研究丛刊* 1990:3 (No.44), pp.35-41. This article also shows the influence of Sartre's existentialism on three other early short stories of Wang Zengqi.
36. See Gunn, *Unwelcome Muse*, pp.198-200 and pp.258-263.
37. See Milena Doleželová-Velingerová's essay "Understanding Chinese Fiction 1900-1949", which serves as the introduction to Doleželová-Velingerová, ed., *A Selective Guide to Chinese Literature Vol.1 The Novel* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), pp.33-34.
38. Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction", *The Common Reader. First Series* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1975), pp.184-185.
39. Wang Zengqi, "自序", p.2.
40. This list of characteristics is taken from David Lodge's "identi-kit portrait" of modernist fiction in *The Modes of Modern Writing: Metaphor, Metonymy, and the Typology of Modern Literature* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977; reprint paperback ed., 1983), pp.45-46.

#### Chapter 4 - Novels

1. See C. T. Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction* (2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), pp.441-460; Dennis T. Hu, "A Linguistic-Literary Approach to Ch'ien Chung-shu's Novel *Wei Ch'eng*", *Journal of Asian Studies* 37.3 (May 1978), pp.427-443; Edward M. Gunn, *Unwelcome Muse: Chinese Literature in Shanghai and Peking 1937-1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), pp.243-263; Theodore Hutters, *Qian Zhongshu* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), pp.118-154; Lin Hai 林海, "A Town Besieged and *Tom Jones*", *Chinese Literature* (Beijing) Summer 1985, pp.210-215.
2. Hsia, *Modern Chinese Fiction*, pp.381-386; Nathan K. Mao, *Pa Chin* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979), pp.128-142; Introduction to Nathan K. Mao and Liu Ts'un-yen trans., *Cold Nights* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1978), pp.xxiv-xxix.

3. Translation by Jeanne Kelly and Nathan K. Mao, *Fortress Besieged* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979). The translations of the excerpts quoted here from the novel are mine.
4. See "圍城序" [Preface to *Fortress Besieged*], 2.6.p.722.
5. Hutters, *Qian Zhongshu*, p.119 and p.149.
6. Ibid., pp.126-127 and p.136.
7. The contemporary critic Wu Jiu 無咎 in a review of the novel remarked that the author is like God, the stern creator of 有生之倫. See "讀《圍城》" [Reading *Fortress Besieged*], *小說月刊* [Short story monthly] 1.1 (July 1948), p.90.
8. The play was staged in October 1943, in Shanghai. Quoted by Gunn, p.236.
9. Hu, "A Linguistic-Literary Approach", pp.430-436.
10. For the analysis of several passages of the novel, demonstrating how linguistic manipulations serve a literary purpose, see *ibid.*, pp.436-440.
11. F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p.284; quoted Hutters, p.131.
12. Wu Jiu, "讀《圍城》", p.91.
13. Yang Yi, *中國現代小說史*, Vol.3, p.485.
14. Gunn, *Unwelcome Muse*, pp.260-262.
15. Lin Hai, "A *Town Besieged* and *Tom Jones*", pp.210-215.
16. Li Guangtian 李廣田, "後記" [Postscript] to *引力* [Gravitation] (上海晨光出版公司, 1947), p.4.
17. Ibid., p.5.
18. Ibid., p.3.
19. Translation by Nathan K. Mao and Liu Ts'un-yen, *Cold Nights* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1978). Translations of excerpts quoted in the text are mine.
20. Ba Jin, "談《寒夜》" [On *Cold Nights*], in *寒夜* [Cold nights] (Shanghai: 上海文藝出版社, 1980), p.283.
21. Ibid., p.285.



22. Ibid., pp.285-288, passim.
23. Ibid., p.287.
24. Ibid., pp.292-293.
25. Qian Zhongshu's short stories were published in the collection 人獸鬼 [Men, beasts, ghosts] in 1946 and his essays in 寫在人生的邊上 [Written on the margin of life] in 1941, both in Shanghai.
26. Li Guangtian's poems were published, jointly with those of Bian Zhilin and He Qifang, in the collection 漢園集 [The Han garden], 1936; his essays in the collections 畫廊集 [Gallery], 1936; 銀狐集 [The silver fox], 1936; 雀簑集 [The straw cape], 1939; 圈外 [Outside the circle], 1942; and 回聲 [Echo], 1943.
27. T. D. Hutters, "Critical Grounds: The Transformation of the May Fourth Era", in *Popular Chinese Literature and Performing Arts in the People's Republic of China 1949-1979*, ed. Bonnie S. McDougall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp.67-68.

#### Chapter 5 - Drama

1. For a comprehensive picture of the theatre during the war in Shanghai see Edward Gunn, *Unwelcome Muse: Chinese Literature in Shanghai and Peking 1937-1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), pp.109-150. A contemporary assessment, which notes the differences between wartime plays of the occupied and of the inland areas, is given in the magazine by Yue Shaowen's 樂少文 review "五個戰時劇本" [Five wartime playscripts], 2.4.pp.402-411. He points out that while the staples of the theatre in the occupied areas were adaptations, comedies and farce, and those of the inland areas were tragedies and problem plays, historical plays were also prominent in both areas, for censorship reasons, though with different slants.
2. The continuing government censorship, for example, led writers at the founding meeting of the Shanghai Association for Literature and Arts (上海文藝協會) on 17 December 1945 to pass a resolution calling for the lifting of censorship. See Zhao Jingshen's 趙景深 account in the magazine, "記上海文協成立大會" [Notes on the founding meeting of the Shanghai Association for Literature and Arts], 1.1.pp.125-127.
3. A translation by David Pollard, with the title "Springtime", is included in Edward Gunn, ed., *Twentieth Century Chinese Drama: An Anthology*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), pp.174-227.
4. The original quotation from the 論語, XIV. 38 is a question put by a gatekeeper to a disciple of Confucius after the latter said he had come from Confucius's family:

"是知其不可而爲者與?" "Is that the K'ung who keeps working towards a goal the realization of which he knows to be hopeless?".(Translation by D. C. Lau, *The Analects* by Confucius, London: Penguin Classics, 1979, p.130) Li Jianwu's motto to the play runs: "是知其不可爲而爲者也. 是不知其可爲而爲者也. 是不知其不可爲而爲者也."

5. D. E. Pollard, "Li Chien-wu 李健吾 and Modern Chinese Drama", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 39 (1976), pp.373-374.
6. Translation by Edward Gunn in *Twentieth Century Chinese Drama*, pp.228-275.
7. See Tian Benxiang 田本相, *曹禺传* [A biography of Cao Yu] (Beijing: 十月文艺出版社, 1988), p.327, recording conversations with Cao Yu; and Li Jianwu's recollections "关于《文艺复兴》" [About *Literary Renaissance*], *新文学史料* [Historical materials on new literature] 1982:3, p.187. Monographs such as published by 文化生活出版社 in 1959 and 文藝書局, Hong Kong, in 1965 are reprinted from *Literary Renaissance*. *曹禺研究传集* [Collection of research on Cao Yu], edited by Wang Xingping 王兴平 et al. (Fuzhou: 海峡文艺出版社, 1985) also only lists two acts of the play.
8. The same practice is followed in Cao Yu's other plays. Perhaps these detailed descriptions were given to help actors in building up their characters, but they seem more likely to have been directly intended for the 'armchair-theatre'.
9. See Tian Benxiang, *曹禺传*, pp.326-328.
10. "蜕变" [Metamorphosis], *曹禺文集* [Cao Yu's collected works] (Beijing: 中国戏剧出版社, 1989), Vol.2.
11. John Milton, "Areopagitica", *The Complete Works of John Milton*, IV (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), p.346.
12. Published in the first issue of the old *文學雜誌* [Literature magazine].
13. Translations from the *Holy Bible* (King James) (Oxford: printed at the University Press, 1874).
14. The title of the original story is given as "粉紅衣服的洋囡囡" [The pink dressed doll]. I have been unable to discover who the author, 梅利克, was.
15. One of Ding Ling's co-authors, Chen Ming, recalls that Ding Ling began the play *Kiln Workers* and the novel *Sun Shines on the Sanggan River* at the same time, which explains the similarity of their subject matters. See Chen Ming 陈明, "丁玲在延安" [Ding Ling in Yan'an], *新文学史料* 1993:2, p.37.
16. Yue Shaowen, "五個戰時劇本", p.402.

## Chapter 6 - Summary and Conclusion

1. "关于《文艺复兴》", pp.185-187.
2. For a description of the Kunming literary scene in the forties, see Wang Zuoliang's "Modernist Poetry in China", pp.72-88.
3. Works of Zheng Min and Lin Pu were not among the ones published in *Literary Renaissance*.
4. About Shen Congwen's experimental writings during the war, see Jeffrey Kinkley, *The Odyssey of Shen Congwen* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1987), pp.254-257. Shen's leading role as inspirer of young writers and poets is mentioned *ibid.* pp.336-337.
5. For the editorial principles behind the magazine *Poetry Creation*, see "編餘小記" [Editorial note], *詩創造* 1.1 (July 1947), p.26. The founding and closing circumstances, poetic stands and associated poets of these two magazines are described by Tang Shi, the theoretical representative of the 'Nine Leaves' poets, in his "我的诗艺探索历程" [My poetic explorations], *新文学史料* 1994:2, pp.171-175.

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## Appendix I

### Chronology of Selected Events, Relevant as Background to *Literary Renaissance*

1945

August

- 28 Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, accompanied by US ambassador Patrick Hurley, fly to Chongqing from Yan'an to discuss with Chiang Kai-shek and his representatives the problems of peace, democracy and unity: the Chongqing negotiations.

October

- 1 Wartime press censorship, except in areas recovered from the Japanese, is abolished.  
10 As a result of the Chongqing negotiations, representatives of the Nationalist Government (NG) and of the CCP sign and issue the "Summary of Conversations". Both sides resolve to avoid a civil war and to build an independent, free and strong new China. Many questions remain unresolved: the NG refuses to recognize the CCP liberated areas; a committee is set up to consider further the nationalization of troops.

December

- 1 Armed agents and military police raid the South-west Associated University in Kunming to suppress students and teachers who had demonstrated against the civil war on November 25 and subsequently held a strike. Four students are killed and over ten wounded. As a result, the strike continues, with prolonged mourning for the four as martyrs to freedom.  
23 General George Marshall, president Truman's special envoy, arrives in China in an effort to mediate in the NG-CCP dispute: the Marshall Mission.

1946

January

- 10 Representatives of the NG and the CCP, with George Marshall as mediator (the Committee of Three), reach agreement on a ceasefire between Nationalist Party (NP) and CCP troops to come into effect on January 13.  
11- The Political Consultative Conference meets in Chongqing; the NP, the CCP, other  
31 political parties and independents take part. Conference passes resolutions to reorganize the NG on the basis of coalition of political parties, but not to convoke a National Assembly without discussion with the Political Consultative Conference.

February

- 25 The NG and the CCP sign an agreement on military reorganization and on the integration of the Communist forces into the Nationalist Army.

April

Numerous violations of the January 13 ceasefire by both sides.

May

- 5 Formal return of the nation's capital from Chongqing to Nanjing.

## July

- 4 The NG orders the convening of the National Assembly on November 12. (This action was in contravention of the agreement reached at the Political Consultative Conference.)
- 12 NG forces attack CCP-held areas in Jiangsu and Anhui, leading to full-scale civil war.
- 12, 15 Two leading members of the Democratic League, Li Gongpu and the writer, Wen Yiduo, are assassinated in Kunming.

## October

The NG announces the formal resumption of national conscription, halted in August 1945.

## November

- 15 The National Assembly opens in Nanjing, boycotted by the CCP and the Democratic League.

## December

- 25 The National Assembly adopts and promulgates the Constitution of the Republic of China, which is to go into effect after one year, to establish democracy and end political tutelage by the NP.
- 30 Large scale student demonstrations begin, following the rape of a female student allegedly by a group of US soldiers. This incident leads to a widespread anti-American movement over the next month.

## 1947

### January

- 8 General Marshall leaves China, having failed to bring about peace.
- 29 The US announces the formal termination of its mediation effort.

### February

- 28 The NG authorities in Nanjing, Shanghai and Chongqing order all CCP representatives to leave their offices and return to the CCP area before March 5.

### March

- 19 The NG forces capture Yan'an.

### May

- 2 Rice riots break out in many central Chinese cities, galloping inflation having caused serious food shortages.
- 4 Starting in Shanghai, a new student-worker movement begins against economic disruption and civil war. It spreads quickly to other big cities.
- 18 The NG issues its Provisional Measures for the Maintenance of Public Order, banning all strikes and demonstrations, and giving wide powers to local government authorities to suppress movements threatening the NG.

### July

- 4 The NG declares the CCP to be in open rebellion and calls for total national mobilization to suppress it.

### October

- 10 The Manifesto of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA; the name adopted on 1 May 1946 to designate CCP forces), drafted by Mao Zedong, calls for a united front of "workers, peasants, soldiers, intellectuals and businessmen, all oppressed classes, all people's organizations, democratic parties, minority nationalities, overseas Chinese and other patriots" to overthrow Chiang Kai-shek.

27 The NG outlaws the Democratic League.

November

21-3 General elections are held for membership of the National Assembly.

1948

March

29 The National Assembly holds its first session in Nanjing and elects Chiang Kai-shek and Li Zongren as President and Vice-President, respectively, of the Republic of China.

May

1 The CCP issues a statement calling for the convening of a Political Consultative Conference, with the aim of establishing a coalition government.

5 The outlawed Democratic League and the newly established Revolutionary Committee of the NP, both based in Hong Kong and calling for a united front to overthrow Chiang Kai-shek's dictatorship, cable their support for the convening of the Political Consultative Conference.

1949

January

31 The PLA moves peacefully into Beijing.

April

23 The PLA captures Nanjing.

May

27 The PLA captures Shanghai with barely a fight.

July

1 Mao Zedong publishes his "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship".

2-19 The first National Congress of Literary and Art Workers is held in Beijing.

September

21- The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference is held in Beijing. It adopts

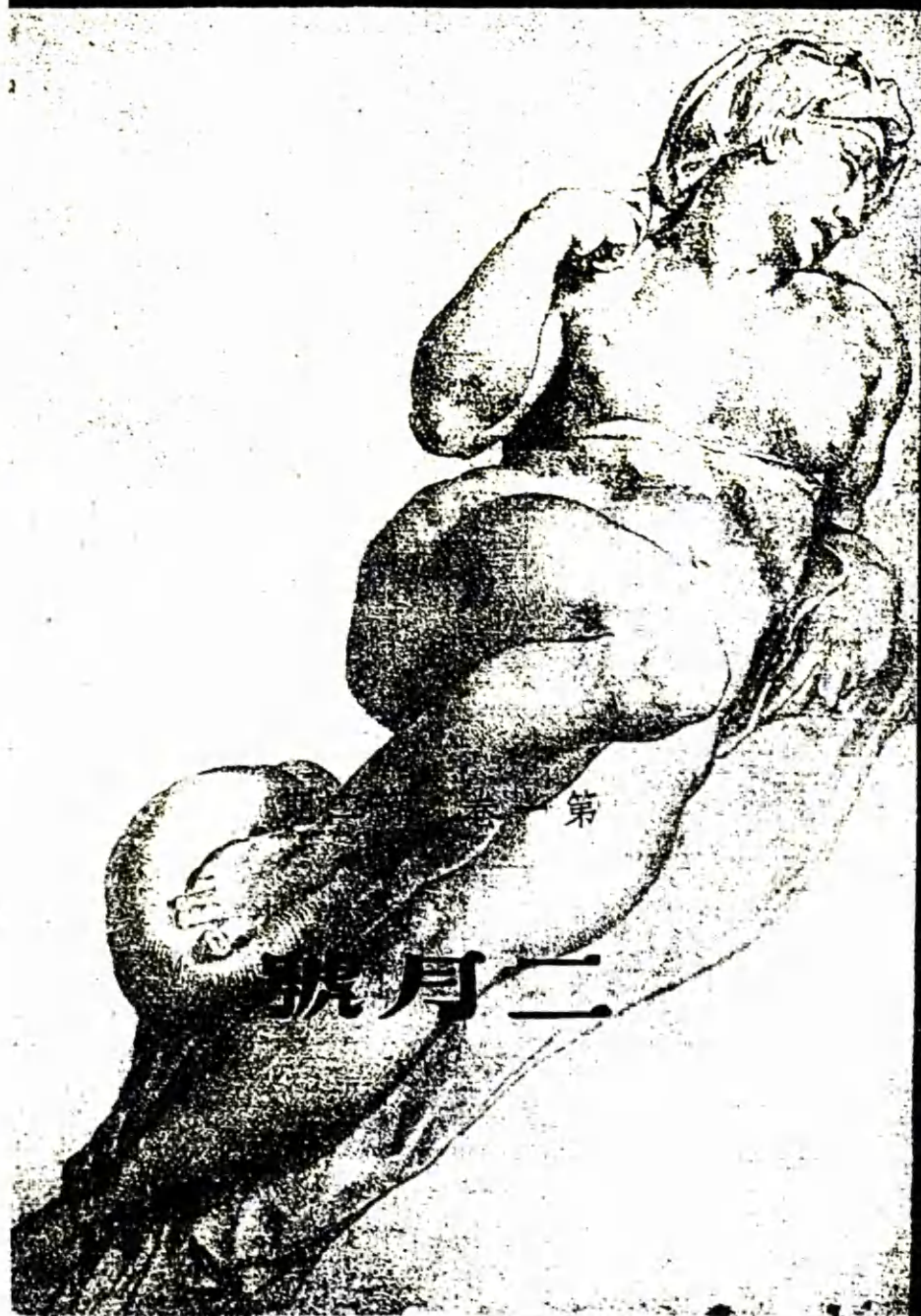
29 the Common Programme, an interim constitution setting out the policies of the Central People's Government.

October

1 Official proclamation of the People's Republic of China.

Compiled from Colin Mackerras, *Modern China: A Chronology from 1842 to the Present* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982), pp. 408-439, and from Suzanne Pepper, *Civil War in China: The Political Struggle, 1945-1949* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp.xiv-xxi.

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七十三位作家簡敘。(均附英譯)

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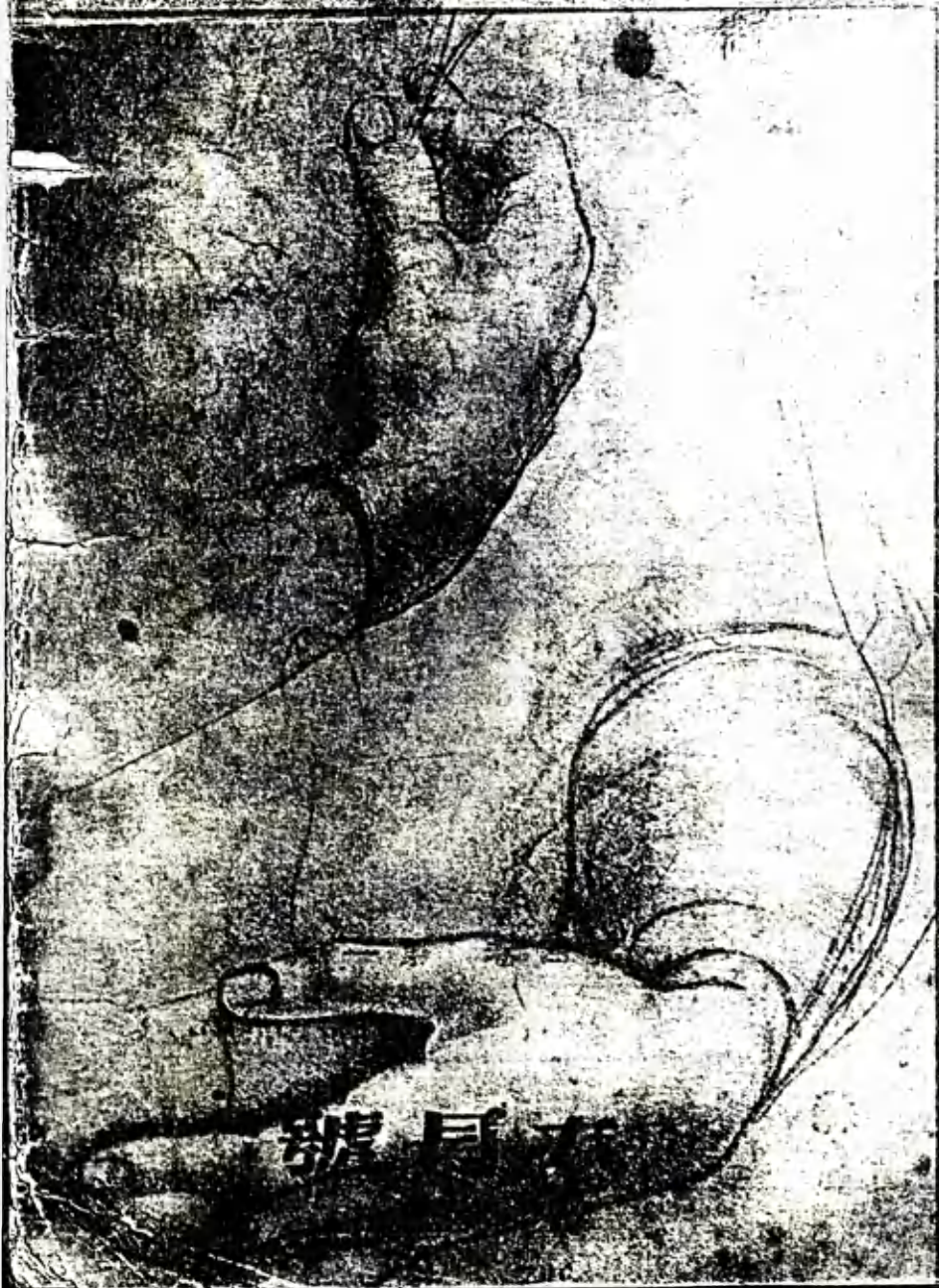
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第四卷

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中國文學研究號 下

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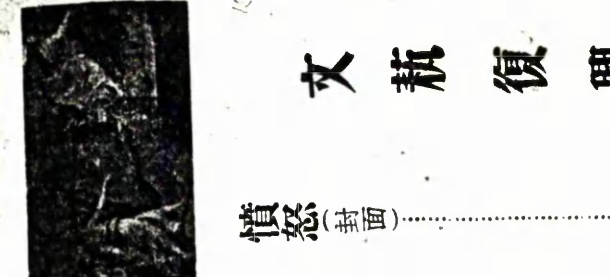
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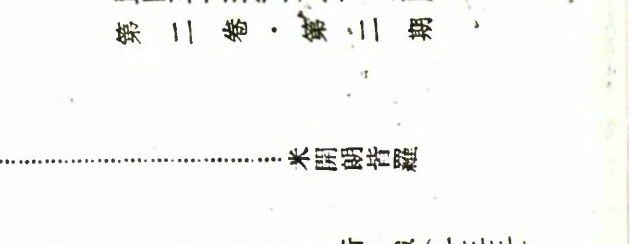
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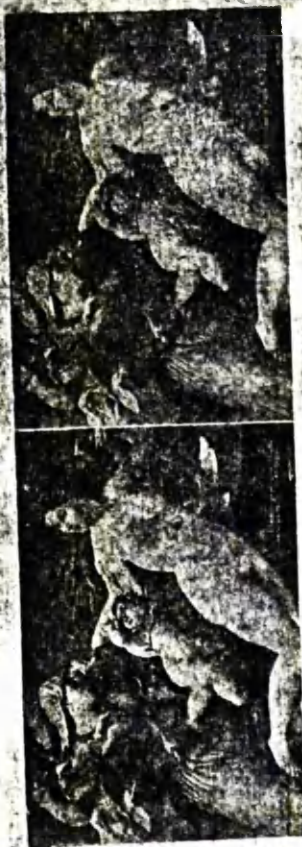
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## Appendix IV

### The Bell of the Primary School

By Wang Zengqi

The flowers in the vase have gathered up the broken bits of shadow on the linen cloth. The porcelain vase reflects no light, it is gentle and quiet like a man's moral character. Now it is slightly cooler than the water it embraces. The curtain, muddied by dusk, hangs with heavy stillness. I could switch on the light. Under the lamplight the flowers would be of a different colour. Would the fragrance change? What could be done all seems to have been done, I look at my hands, how should I dispose of them? Hide them in my hair? There are all kinds of smells preserved in my hair, it has naturally absorbed some of the fragrance of the flowers. My hair, black and white. Each speck of floating dust carries a whiff of fragrance. I wash my hair, even while washing it I see the vase of flowers.

It has become dark. My hair is dark. Dark hair cascades onto the pillow. My hands are on my chest, my breathing makes them vibrate. I intone my name repeatedly, as if calling an intimate friend.

The merry sounds from the primary school and the flowers in the school garden are all dissolved in the still, heavy night air. That sound is indeed visible, palpable, it could be offered on the vase-table, one bouquet after another. I hear the sound of the bell, it is like a metaphor. I did not count, but I know its tempo, its weight, can hear from it that the wind today is in the South-west. Now it hits the place where the school's name and dates are engraved. The bell-rope has become damp from the sweat of Lao Zhan, the school caretaker; he has changed hands. The chain suspending the bell pulled two big ilex trees closer, so that we had even less idea which one had shed the sheet of leaves on the ground. Their root-whiskers must have tickled each other. Another stroke, Lao Zhan's wine bottle is not corked properly, he is thinking his cat has already seen his five-spiced beef. But he gives another strong pull and the swing rope moves slightly; he knows that it was not the wind. He laughs, two short shadows separate. Now the ringing is definitely over, the bell-rope, snakelike, sways in the air. Lao Zhan creeps into the school garden and having checked the light in the schoolmaster's bedroom, picks a spray of flower, carefully and deftly. Today someone was punished for taking a fancy to this flower by having to clean up the aphids on it. "Rhythm and life become one, like the sound of the bell". I live within the sound of the bell; at the same time it exists in me. It has become dark. I am twenty-five this year. An age when absurdity follows absurdity.

My nineteenth birthday was celebrated with great merriment; it was lovely like an immature literary style, hope everywhere. After the wine had run out and the guests had dispersed, only a red candle in a silver candlestick remained in the reception room. I should have snuffed or blown out the candle, but I did nothing. Bright moon all over the ground. Palace filled with bright moon, pear-blossom white, still very early. What do you mean, very early - it's after twelve! I simply look like a girl. My white scarf is just like a girl's. I must sleep now, tomorrow I have to set out at daybreak. My luggage is already packed, today I will probably sleep under that scarlet damask quilt.

First thing in the morning I got on the boat.

My younger brother and his friends had to get up and go to school. I could in fact have come later, had breakfast with them; even walking them to the school would not have made me late. I could have left after hearing the warning bell.

Leaning against the cabin window I could see the pier. The embankment was very white and especially clean, the wind blew the wrappers of firecrackers. I could see they made a mistake in the spring couplets on the door of the cake seller's shop. Who is that, passing by on a donkey, so early in the morning? The face is familiar. Somebody has come, this man will pay the porter something extra, I thought. How much music has flown through this violin, will its owner try a few short pieces tonight? Wow, this suitcase has been abroad! The hotel proprietor should have had some poems printed on the handbills, travellers should read some poetry. This one came at the same time as I did, he had a packet of walnut candies in his pocket, will he recognize me? I remembered, I too had a large packet of walnut candies in my suitcase, given to me by my aunt yesterday. Popping a candy in my mouth, I heard people talking:

"It's all right, you should go back. It's cold and you also have that first class."

"Doesn't matter, I can make it; the children will wait for me."

"Does Lao Zhan still ring the bell five minutes late for the first class?"

"What? -- Yes."

The girl on the shore seemed to want to say something else, her lips moved. But the wind was strong and she thought she would rather keep it for a letter. She paused for a while, then, waving, she said:

"All right, I'm going."

"Good bye. Aiya!"

"What happened?"

"Nothing. I left my glove at your place. Doesn't matter. It's probably on the small tea table, I forgot to put it on after arranging the plum blossoms. I have this."

"I'll send it to you if I find it."

"Make sure you do, don't pocket it!"

"Don't be mean!"

The girl on the shore laughed, waved again and did leave this time. The wind had pulled loose a hank of her hair, she was already embarrassed over her woollen hat, set crookedly on her head. Who told her to become a teacher? She will not stay long in this place; come the summer vacation, she will probably say good-bye to the pupils with tears in her eyes, and it will be the old headmaster's lot to comfort a group of children, including this one. I could write to my brother and ask: "There is a schoolmistress in your school who has a white skin, dimples and grey wrinkles at the side of her mouth, likes to wear blue and has black gloves. Who is she, what is her name? She has such a pleasant voice, does she teach you singing?" Could I ask? I could not. Father would certainly learn of it, and would go to the school to see her for himself. Old people are really hopeless!

If I had seen my brother to the school, I could have come with her and her friend. No good, Lao Zhan still remembers me. If I had come with them, we could have discovered that this girl on the boat had forgotten her gloves, since no girl goes without them at this time of the year. I could have reminded her. Simply because of that colour, of that pattern, because she chose it, designed it herself, she should wear it too. "Doesn't matter, I have this!" What is "this"? A muff? Probably, it was only when she stretched out a hand to wave, that she discovered in her hand some kind of a muff; white? I have not seen it. I have not seen anything. My vision is restricted; I am on the boat. Plum blossoms, are they in bloom? Is it cinnabar or green calix? There were two kinds

formerly in the school garden. Booo - a siren sounded. How can a small steamer have such a big siren, ridiculous! I lay down, eating my candies.....

"Good morning, teacher."

"Good morning, children."

We were like individual notes stepping into a musical score. I was very fond of that brown satchel of mine. Some peanut skin stuck to the wax crayon. A small stone, semi-transparent, picked up on the river shore. And all of a sudden, my fingers touched a piece of candy whose sweetness, I believed, my mouth had tasted already. Concrete steps, so clean it made us want to go and wash our hands. "The cat's come, the cat's come" "My horse is great, it doesn't drink and doesn't eat". As soon as the dismissal bell rang, we broke into a wild din, like a bunch of flowers suddenly coming into bloom all at the same time. The bird perching for the first time on a tree in the garden got frightened and flew away instinctively. Seeing that nobody else moved, it came back and tilting its head watched things below closely. At the age of six I went to a nursery school. The joker in the toy cupboard is still there, to this day, smiling foolishly. In a yellowing photograph on a whitewashed wall I ride a wooden horse.

In the department store I recognized my nursery school teacher at a glance. She had combed her hair to look like the Virgin Mary. She must have seen me, seen my school uniform, and my special bearing, the result of military training. She pretended to concentrate her attention on a pile of gauze handkerchiefs. Her face was a little flushed and not only from looking down. I thought of going over and greeting her, but what would I say? Call on her at home? After the winter holiday there will be an exhibition at the school, I can help them cut out paper flowers, pin butterflies. No, I can't. In the summer vacation I will sit for the university entrance exam.

I walked out of my cabin.

I wanted to have a look from the bow. My destination was rushing towards me. I hugged my arms to me or I would have opened them out. My eyes could see as far as the captain's. But I changed my mind and went to the stern of the ship. The bow, facing the wind, is suited to the summer; as yet winter has not dropped from the inertia of my language. I watched where I came from.

There were no ships at all on the water. An egret tested the sun in the water with its black foot. Abundant greenness seemed already prepared inside the dried out trunks of willow trees on the bank. On the left, Pearl Lake was covered in a light mist. A dog was chasing after the small steamboat. The boat got to Jiadaowan; the vermilion gate of the temple was firmly shut in the middle of the yellow, winding wall, above the wall there were dark green cypresses beneath the blue sky. Chilling was the sound of bells on the corners of the pagoda eaves as they shook in the wind.

From my breathing, from my imagination, from this scenery I became aware that I was not alone. I felt ill at ease, constrained. I could not call out to that egret, wave to that dog, move of my own accord those misty willows next to the temple and the temple to the mist on the lake. I even felt my way of standing somewhat reckless: if I was not looking haughtily at the whole world, then I was, it seemed, constantly looking down into my own soul. There were a pair of eyes behind me. This will not do, I am nineteen, I must act like a man, I must find a way out of this situation. The walnut candies were in my hand. I turned round and we nodded to each other.

"Happy birthday!"

"Thank you.--" Happy birthday?! I blinked. Then it seemed to dawn on me. This town is too small. I put a candy in my mouth. In fact the walnut skin had already numbed my tongue. All I could say was:



"Have some candy." To take the sweet, she would need to come to the railing, our positions had to be on an even footing. I saw a black-covered sketchbook, quite heavy by the look of it, threatening to slip down from under her arm; she should not wear such a soft material. The blackness accentuated the brightness of everything white.

"Do you draw?"

"How can I in other people's presence?"

If it is so hard to draw in someone else's presence, would it be so much easier in their absence? Actually, I have never seen anyone drawing with a hand enveloped in a muff, a white muff at that. Most likely you have not even brought a crayon. Did you know in advance that there would be somebody at the stern of the boat? Indeed, a boat is even smaller than a town.

"In two or three months it will be better for drawing."

"By that time we should be up to our ears in work for the finals."

"Oh, I meant that the trees would be all green by then." She laughed, kicking the deck with the tip of her foot. I noticed an oilspot on her stocking, a small swab of medicated cotton wool sticking up, visible even though it was spread very thin. Well, this could make you ill at ease, this oilspot could be magnified in your perception, the cotton wool sticking up like a small mountain!

"Your younger brother is liked by everybody at the school. He resembles you, they say."

"He resembles me when I was young."

She laughed again. Girls always like to laugh. "In fact the women of this locality have the crispest laughter in the whole earth." This sentence was printed in the book I was holding. I too gave a laugh. She did not understand why.

I remembered the sound of learning the multiplication tables. Those big gingko trees must be golden-yellow by now. They have absorbed a lot of that chanting. The wood of gingko trees is very soft, even to the point of being translucent. Our drawing boards were in fact made of this wood. The sound of the organ belongs to the sounds of the past. Dust settles on the crepe paper decorations in the classroom.

"Is it still Lao Zhan who rings the bell?"

"He still trims the ilexes by the gate too."

The small sparse flowers of the ilex were pale green, its fruit deep purple. It seems, we went in together, shoulder to shoulder, along that hump-backed tiled path. Lining the path were the ilexes, levelled off on top, taller than us. Before long, very soon now, they will be putting forth new, soft red branches and leaves. Then Lao Zhan will trim them with a pair of big shears, one after the other, just like trimming hair. We went in side by side, resembling pairs of notes.

We were both looking into the distance, even further than those trees, further than that flock of pigeons. The water was flowing backwards.

I must get my brother to have his photo taken for me. Ah, it has to wait a bit, he will not be able to wear that big-collared sailor suit these two days. The suit hung in a shop next to the school. Whatever the shop assistant thought when I went to buy it, whatever my family will think when it is delivered, they will not have understood my reasons. I bought a secret, I sent a secret. I am very bad. It is early, wait a little longer, wait till all the trees turned green. Now it is still only plum blossoms opening in the lamplight. Faint shadows thrown across my birthday. It is very early, what do you mean - early, you have to set out at daybreak tomorrow, do not just play with those flowers and forget about matters, lose things! Pay attention, the first bell is for reveille.

"Look, what is that?"

"Countryfolk getting married, a bridal sedan chair." - how come she couldn't recognize this?! Piping and drumming, a bundle of red passed by, like a sun. It was the pointing hand that I was watching. Nails trimmed so pointed, don't they make holes in the glove? I brought my lips together, the reeds on the riverbank were sighing, I must warn her.

"Your hand will get cold."

"Who would go for the bride at this time of the day? -- It doesn't matter."

"They have to go a long way, so have to set out with the sedan chair before noon. Having chosen the date, they can't change it, just like with birthdays. Ah, your gloves will need about three days to arrive."

She wanted to take a piece of candy, but in the end she did not.

"It's awkward with these, not easy to draw."

She looked at her nails, a blade of moon.

"Chilblains are nasty things." Nasty like memories. "They feel hot, if you walk too far."

She said nothing, but expressed everything simply without words: she put the sketchbook on the seat by her, slipped her other hand out of the muff and put the muff on top of the sketchbook. It looked like a kitten.

With the fingers of the right hand she turned the garnet ring on her left hand to its correct position and gave me a look which said:

See if you have anything else to say!

Had I said anything, it would only have been:

Look, your left hand is redder than your right one, because it has been kept warm longer. Your body heat is slowly lost through your ring. Li Changji said: "Cold is the white jade around the waist", your ring will appear much harder in a while.

But it would not do; when she put her things down, she again took up a position slightly behind me. I discovered that her eyes had a glint of the gambler about them, and, like Jupiter's, a look of absolute confidence. She eyed my scarf extremely irreverently, with it being scented and all.

A strong gust of wind came, blowing so hard that her eyes became frozen, not to mention freezing our ship.

She shifted her eyes, but what was in them before moved instantly to the corner of her mouth.

All was quiet.

The walnut skin had tanned my tongue.

Releasing my grip, I dropped the packet of candies into the water. It was more deliberate than accidental. The sugar coating on the walnuts dissolves. But sugar has also seeped into the walnuts. In themselves the walnuts are also sweet. Walnut skin is walnut skin.

"Let's go, they are checking the tickets." She spoke. Having spoken, she could not regain her previous manner. Thank heavens the boat is so small:

"Let's go and sit in my cabin, I've got a lot of oranges, they are too heavy to carry. I'll treat you."

Actually, I have my ticket on me, but I will go back to my cabin all the same. I know I have to wait a little before taking up the invitation. About half an hour, I suppose. Of course, I can not stay here in the wind for half an hour, because I have already been exposed to it for longer than that. And she certainly expects me not to go empty-handed, she knows I had my birthday yesterday. (How long will she remember, will she recall this day when she celebrates her own birthday? Thinking of this, she might smile

serenely to herself, as she starts cutting the birthday cake. She has her own secret.)  
Now, it is the right time:

My brother has returned home after the morning classes; to punish his leather shoes he has been kicking stones all the way. The shadows on the Western side of the river-dyke have been washed away. His music teacher is lost in thought in front of the vase of plum blossoms; bird-song fills the school garden. She picks up the pair of gloves from behind the vase of flowers, for the moment she has no thoughts of going to the post office in the afternoon to send it. The sound of Lao Zhan's bell sent tremors through the sunshine, like sending tremors through water, the sound is half spreading, half settling.

"All right. Of course I'll come. I have already smelled the oranges."

I almost said orange blossoms. The sound of the *suona* faded away, just like the mist on the lake, the same kind of unnoticed fading away, making one at the same time conscious of it after its disappearance.

Sure enough, she changed her stockings during the half an hour. A layer of fine silk came off from her foot, she looked at the tip of her foot with fondness. She remembered leaving lines of slender footprints across the clean white sandy bay after the rain, an inexpressible tenderness. Afraid of being too indulgent with herself, she quickly put on another pair.

On the small table two oranges, already peeled. Beside them that white kitten.

"All right, you have come to be the host."

Putting down the box of cakes and the already opened tin I held, my fingers touched the white fur, cold and smooth.

"Which class you were in?"

"Two years below you."

"How come I didn't know you?"

"I joined the class mid-year and I also took a year out."

She must have smiled to herself, fancy not knowing her!

"Have you seen my little brother?"

"He was at my cousin's yesterday. After school we kept him there to play and did not let him go back, he got terribly anxious!"

"Taking advantage of little kids! Did your cousin graduate from there?"

"She had a spell of illness, otherwise she would have been four years above me."

"She must have had some classes in that classroom; there was a pond outside the window and sitting on the window-sill one could stick out a fishing rod, trying to catch fish. Once I caught a big snake-headed fish, then I remembered my grandmother saying that on the head of this fish were the seven stars of the Dipper, so I threw it back quickly."

"In the pond there was a small island, originally a grave, probably."

"You could pick up wild duck eggs there."

"I never went birdnesting."

"I bet you did go, only you didn't find any!"

"You seemed to have watched me. Help yourself to the oranges. That monk's stone pagoda is still in good condition. Did you understand the inscription carved on it?"

"Even now, I can't say I understand it."

"You always had your essays in the school magazine. I liked the lotus flowers on the pagoda."

"The lotus flowers are still nice. If those masterpieces of mine could be found, it would be good fun to look at them now."

"I saw quite a few student compositions at their place yesterday."

"Have some more of these bamboo-shoots, don't be shy!"

"Do you still draw?"

"I haven't got a sketchbook. How do you know that I liked to draw?"

I was glad my long-abandoned hobby was mentioned. In truth, I should have studied drawing from early on; I always felt my achievements in that field more certain than in the work I was about to get into. I got up to take the oranges, but picked up the muff instead and simply played with that. It was she who picked up the oranges and peeled them, sitting down opposite. With the empty seat beside me, I felt I had a reason not to relinquish that soft, slippery sensation.

"What we liked most at school was to go out to the countryside and draw. The arts-teacher was called Wang, he was always saying "for example", "for example" - over and over again, we painted temple eaves hemmed in by the tops of clumps of trees; sails and distant landscapes; thatched cottages with pitch-black windows and chimneys sending forth smoke regardless of the time. We always went to the Big Kiln Mound by the East Gate, to the Tower for Refined Excursions at the Taishan Temple, to the Wang Family Pavilion..."

"Duke Fu's Bridge, the pagodas by the East and West Gates..."

"The West Gate Pagoda was on the dyke, we most often went to the dyke. We always bought some water chestnuts to eat from an old woman called Qu."

"Even from this river, the water will flow there."

"You once painted that ferry crossing, nearby on the left it was all wild roses, extremely fragrant."

"That crossing..., on the other side was the Tan family's compound; inside there were more trees than people, more thrushes than ducks..."

"But those trees were not all willows, you painted all willows, one after another."

"....."

"Even now, that painting is still in the prize works room."

"Don't you remember, you also corrected other people's drawings. It was the school's spring outing that day, Teacher Wang couldn't cope and said we could all ask Wang Zengqi to correct our drawings. You did it most carefully, quite a few people wanted you to correct theirs."

"That painting of mine is still in the prize works room too, the trees also painted one by one. My cousin and I went to look at it yesterday."

I swallowed the small piece of cake which had been in my mouth for a long time. I could think of nothing to say, my name was mentioned so naturally. Without being aware of it, I transferred that soft, smooth sensation to my face, my lips too wanted to be buried in the pure white nest. I looked somewhat foolish, my age shining in my eyes. I thought a heap of white dewy *mibo* petals was pressing on to my chest.

A piece of orange skin came flying over to strike me right in the face. It seemed to hit my eyes. I covered my eyes with my hands. I felt on them a soft smoothness a hundred times that of the kitten, like a cat which had caught a chill, a slight quiver, her hand.

Booo---, ridiculous, how can a small boat have such a big siren? After this, the tumult of people's voices, the hurried confusion of footsteps.

"The boat has pulled in to shore."

"This is 'X', we won't get to 'Y' before evening."

"Do you still want to catch the night train?"

"Probably not, I have plenty of time to stop in 'Y' for a few days and have some fun."

"Whenever you feel like it, draw me something."

"I'll go and see if my aunt has come to meet me; it's been agreed."

"Aunt? Are you going ashore?"

"Her temper isn't very good, actually she's all right: if she wants me to go I have to go."

I rubbed my eyes, handed her the muff, and watched her putting the sketchbook into her suitcase and buttoning up the collar of her coat; I realized she was telling the truth.

"I'll take the suitcase, it's awkward with your muff."

"Thank you, it really is awkward."

Of course, Lao Zhan's bell has started to strike again. The wind is strong, the boat sways violently. There were blackboards in every classroom, on them a lot of writing, a mysterious traffic emerging between the words, the bell sound acting as an intermediary. I do not know whether I am on the boat or on the water, or how I have lived till now. Sometimes I can not avoid being a little mad; at first it was mentioned by others, later on I thought of it myself. The bell!.....

Finished on the night of the 27th of April.

On the 29th I made a number of changes, added the last two sentences.

For a month I had not stayed up at night, felt unexpectedly tired. My tiredness seduced me. I remembered my birthday, remembered a few sentences.

## Appendix V

### Revenge

By Wang Zengqi

An avenger does not smash Excalibur.

-- Zhuangzi

A stick of white candle, half a jar of wild honey. He could not see the honey now, it was in the jar, the jar on the table, and he sat on the couch. But he was filled with the sense of it, thick and dense. There was no sour taste in his mouth though, his appetite was good. His appetite had always been good, he had not been sick many times in his whole life. Speaking of a whole life, he tried a calculation in his mind, how long should a whole life be, is mine a whole life? No matter, it is only a common phrase. Just like that monk - does the monk often eat honey? He narrowed his eyes, because the candle flame danced and set a whole heap of shadows dancing. He gave a laugh: putting together honey and monk, he arrived at a form of address in his mind, 'honey-monk'. It is understandable, though; honey, monk, behind them hiding the phrase 'a whole life'. But he shook his head, this will not do, the monk can be any kind, does not really have to be a honey-monk. Tomorrow, as I say good-bye before leaving I will address him, how is he likely to reciprocate it? The monk after all has a form of address, but what about me? If he indeed calls me any kind of traveller, it should be 'traveller with the double-edged sword', I suppose. (He saw the monk notice his sword!) This honey - when he thought of it, he seemed to hear honeybees buzzing. Yes, there were honeybees buzzing. And not just a few at that. (Enough to make a man float.) A lingering sound in his ears. (What is happening to me, if I really called this monk so, it would after all be good fun, I have simply become a child. This is really irrelevant. What is its meaning in a man's whole life? And from here I start my evening tonight, and tomorrow also continues from here. Human life really is inexplicably entertaining.).....From the sound of the bees, he suddenly felt it was autumn. From the subtleness of the sound, he felt his whole body light and well. There was no mistake about it, at this moment it was 'autumn' all over the world. He thought somewhere a sweep of mountain flowers blossomed, the monk, the monk plucks a flower, pretty indeed. In the temple hall there were flowers in a bowl, thriving, like a mass of mist rising from the bowl, so luxuriant. Suddenly he had a great liking for the monk.

The monk went out, a kow-tow, informal and yet full of feeling, making one feel good. Oh, monk, you have given innumerable salutes without harm to your naturalness; are these salutes natural to you? The monk put down the candle, and said a few words; hardly more than there was nothing much in the temple, that the mountains were high, the wind strong and the weather cool, and that turning in was early. Even if the monk had not said it, he would have heard it instinctively. The monk said it, but he did not listen. He was looking at the monk, the monk simply made him like him. He sat up a little, the sleeves of the monk's robe fluttered. What do they resemble, hard to say, a large, all black butterfly. I know the simile is not apt, they do not really resemble anything. Only, monk, I have fixed in my mind the fluttering of your sleeves. This candle keeps flickering.

At this moment he could not picture a monk in his mind. He thought, if the monk had not shaved his head, he would have had a splendid head of white hair. A head of shining white hair flashed for an instant. The monk's head was smoothly shaved yet betrayed the whiteness of his hair.

White-haired monk,

He thought of his white-haired mother.

Nights in the mountains come quickly. How quiet it was at this moment. It really is true, as the sun sets, all movements cease. A moment before, he felt a strange calm, but this one now was widely different. He walked into that village, there were children reading aloud in small huts, horsebells clinking, the well-sweep knocking, on a small path fresh, steaming cow dung, white clouds moving away from over the haystacks, a little girl with plaits wearing a silver-red jacket. All the things that described stillness, as a whole, represented a kind of movement at this moment. He even thought he could add a little sound by acting as an itinerant pedlar, but now he could not shake his small drum vigorously in the mountains.

The itinerant pedlar's drum was shaken in front of the small stone bridge. That was his home.

This made him realize that a moment before he was thinking of his mother. But projected into the outline of his mother, in colour, was suddenly his younger sister. He truly wished he had a sister such as the one he had seen in this mountain village, wearing a silver-red jacket, spotlessly clean, drawing water from the well in front of the gate. The well-surround was made of black stone, next to the well a trellis of small red flowers. She wanted to pick one, but hearing her mother's spinning wheel, she felt it was late, she had to get home. "First thing tomorrow I'll come to pick you, I'll remember where you are." He too could have guided the man up the mountain, saying: "There is a temple at the top of the mountain, the monk in the temple is kind and will let you rest your feet." Then, looking at the mountain, the traveller would not have felt it so high. Both the little girl and the traveller have gone, the girl carrying the water, the traveller shouldering his backpack. Only the well remained. Long after they have left, the remaining drops on the well-surround were still dripping into the well. The big tallow tree on the edge of the village stood out, very black, in sharp outline; the night was starting to close in on it. The wheat-milling mule was unharnessed, the creaking stone roller stopped at a certain place. All mountain villages are alike.

When he thought of his sister, his mother had raven-black hair. How much he wanted to pluck a flower and give it to his mother to wear! But he had never seen mother wearing one. It was this never-worn flower that decided his whole fate.

"Mother, I have not called you mother for many years.

I have not seen you getting old."

His mother therefore had a youthful face with a head of white hair. This white hair had been shining in his mind for many a year. He really wished he had such a sister.

But he did not have a sister, he did not!

He acted as different characters in the two similar landscapes. "The landscapes are not different", how much did he change them? He was in the picture, yet he was not. Now he was on the mountain top: in one small temple on one mountain among many, in one tiny meditation cell of the many temples. Mountains are many in the world, the temples are too few. He felt a kind of solemnity.

In these last few days, he was going up, up; rising high, descending a little, then rising even higher. He had climbed too many mountains. The mountains became higher and higher, and more and more closely packed, the road narrower and increasingly

monotonous. Sitting on the mountain top, he could easily make out a small figure, leaning forward, walking step by step on a narrow white path amidst greens and browns, hanging his head then raising it again, looking at the sky then at the road. The road cut across; clouds came past, he was in the shadow; the clouds moved away, he was in the light. Dandelion seeds stuck to his clothes, he carried them to higher and further places. Opening his eyes, he could see only a single bird crossing the wilderness; the birds got fewer and fewer, until there was only an eagle. The mountains kept all the changes to themselves; as a result, they seemed eternal and constant. But he did not feel like looking back. He looked ahead of him, there was nothing ahead, he will cross over there. He thought, mountains, you come faster and faster, but I walk at the same pace all the time. Sometimes, though, he became a little anxious, until he walked into that village, raised his head and had a look, and decided he had to turn back the next day. This is the last point of a line, these mountains have become an end.

He closed his eyes for a while, almost fell asleep, almost had a dream. Smell of moss, smell of hay, the weathered stone under him cracked, emitting a sound and a smell. The leaf of a small plant sprang up, out leapt a grasshopper. A feather came floating from the distance, getting closer and closer, and was stopped by a medlar tree; from the sound he knew it was a black one. A small pebble came rolling down from the summit, lower and lower, and fell into the deep pool at the foot of the mountain. From a very low spot the sound of an ox, the noise of rumination rose (its lower jaw moves, a pink tongue) and was carried away by the wind. An insect was boring through an old chinaberry tree; at the bitter taste of a leaf, it gave a shudder. A pine-cone split open, the cold air penetrated under the scales. You, fish, living in the highest ponds, are you still not asleep? Good night, shady dampness of moss; good night, loose warmth of hay; good night, you stone sticking painfully into me under my shoulder blades. The old monk is striking the chimes, now the traveller wants to sleep: unknit his brows, relax the lines at the side of his mouth, undo the knots in his face, let his shoulders stretch out flat, his legs and feet rest.

When did the candle flame go out, did he blow it out?

He was wrapped in the middle of the boundless night, like a kernel. The old monk was striking the chimes.

Dreams on the water are floating, dreams on a mountain top could not even fly anywhere. He dreamt he was somewhere (this was really a 'somewhere'), in front of him a straight, wall-like darkness. He himself too became thin and tall, parallel to that darkness; the darkness was boundlessly high, so high that its limits could not be seen! He turned in one direction, it was still the same; another turn, the same; another turn, the same, the same, the same, the same straight, smooth, wall-like darkness. His dream lacked one dimension. Turn, turn, turn, he sank, like a long line falling to the ground. "Be slightly rounder, softer." Thereupon, the darkness became a lotus flower, he was among the layers and layers of petals, he was many, he could not find himself. Keeping close to the black inner wall of the lotus flower he went round once. Ding! - from time to time a star over the lotus flower, light fluorescent green, arising and dying out in a whirl. The lingering light lit up the haze, then faded into haziness. Ding! - another sound.

He woke up. The monk was saying the evening prayers. The candle smoke was emitting a fine soot. The smell of honey was just like it was inside the flower.

From how many flowers was this half a jar of honey collected!

The monk was saying the evening prayers, striking the chimes again and again. He followed it, then waited to find out how far apart the beats were. Gradually, as it struck



one at the monk's place, he too struck one; a natural rhythm of echo, neither fast nor slow. "If I had a chime now, I would also be a monk." A lamp, on the point of going out, never to go out; thriving flowers in a bowl. The fragrance followed the smoke, but while the smoke coming up against even a sheet of thin paper dispersed on contact, the fragrance was everywhere and passed into everything. He felt like going to see the monk.

Monk, I feel sure you are not lonely!

Traveller, what you mean by loneliness is tiredness; perhaps you are still not tired?

This accords with an ancient saying: The heart asks the mouth, the mouth asks the heart. The traveller's hand lightly touched his sword. When holding this sword all day long, he always felt a little unfamiliar with it; the more he wanted to get rid of this unfamiliarity, the more he felt it impossible. But when he seemed to have forgotten about the sword, he realized how close it was to him. When one day he will suddenly draw it, everything will then be made clear. Sword, it is not that you belong to me; the fact is, I am yours. What does it mean? Having lived this life, I end up with this sentence, a very pitiful one. Monk, nobody can gather the sound of your chimes. Then, resting his head on his hand, the traveller tried to sleep, but his eyes were open. Monk, your meditation cell is basically not for sleeping. Let us say that I have spent a night here; I have spent all kinds of nights, do I count this one among them or not? Good, as soon as the sun rises, it is daytime; when the day comes, we will see. Tomorrow I will leave.

The sun is shining upon the harbour, covering the leaves of the dockside poplars with salt.

The sea is green and smelling of fish,

On a large unknown fruit, as big as a head and rotten, palm-sized, large black stains are crawling with flies.

The shells on the sand are gradually turning into lime.

A solitary bird circles above the white foam. The sun is setting,

The rays of twilight shine upon people's foreheads, half spreading them with gold.

Many people press close to the tip of the delta, then turn around and disperse. Life is like:

A cartful of eggs, broken one by one, then tipped out and smashed to pieces,

Smashed to pieces and congealing. Far-off places look misty to people,

I am inside the mist, watching the sails go into the distance.

A boatful of melons have come, a boatful of colour and desire.

One boat full of stones is competing against the edges and corners. Perhaps

A boatful of birds, a boatful of white flowers.

In deep alleys apricot blossoms are sold. There are camels,

The camels' bells ring in the willow-mist. Ducks quack, a deep red dragonfly.

Will-o'-the-wisp on dark green frost,

A whole town of lights. Hey, traveller!

Traveller, this is just one night.

Your hunger, your thirst, repletion after hunger, finding a drink in the midst of thirst, the weariness of a day and the dispersal of weariness, all kinds of beds, all kinds of dialects, all kinds of illnesses - more than one can remember, you forget them entirely one after the other. You know there is no disappointment and there is no hope; just whatever in your turn befalls you. You have passed through a certain place, you will get to a certain place, yes, the mountains are high. A small figure, leaning forward, walking step by step on a narrow white path amidst greens and browns. Are you moved by your own plight?

"But I know I don't want to become a monk here!"

He was startled by his own voice. Soon afterwards, as if hiding the truth from himself, he thought of the hall of the Buddha. This monk is pretty strange, he is alone, yet there are two rush kneeling mats. Rush mat, who has been praying on you? This monk always gives the impression of more than one person. When he prostrates himself, there appears to be another man doing it with him. When he opens his sutras, there appears to be somebody opening another at the same time. And this meditation cell where he was now, was clearly not the monk's originally.

As soon as he walked into this room, he had a strange feeling. The wall was extraordinarily white and smooth. Everything was square and straight, and threateningly severe. (This proves it could not have been the old monk's.) But among the squareness and straightness there was an object which looked extraordinarily round. Immovable, unchangeable, blackness set into the whiteness, the line between them clearly marked. It was an extremely large bamboo hat. Originally of a different colour, it yellowed, turned brown, deepened, then finally became black. On its top was a pagoda-shaped, copper cone, also turned black, in a few places a green patina coming through. With the hat hanging there, the traveller did not feel at ease. Drawing his sword, he left the room.

He was brandishing his sword.

With his dance he expressed himself, his love and his hatred, the highest excitement, the greatest joy, the most raging anger; he was intoxicated by his dancing.

Stopping his sword, he gave a start - someone was breathing.

"It's me, you dance well."

It was the monk, he was really startled, the monk stood very close, I almost killed him.

His whole body was full of strength, down to the tip of his fingers. Half proud, half rebellious, he shouted:

"I will walk all the roads there are."

He looked at the monk. The monk's eyes were clear, he looked to see if there was any irony in them. If the monk had angered him, he would have killed the monk! But the monk did not seem to be affected by his words, by his voice. After a pause, calm and tranquil, he said clearly:

"Very well. Some people would even walk through places with no roads.

Listen, this is him."

In the dead silence of the myriad mountains there was a sound, clanging, determined, unhurried, bursting forth from somewhere deep.

I almost forgot, this traveller was a posthumous child.

His mother was still carrying him, when his father was killed by an enemy. When he was brought home, he had just enough life in him to say the enemy's name before he died. The mother removed the sword from his hand. She tattooed the enemy's name onto her son's arm and rubbed indigo into it. That sword was in his hand. Going by the name on his arm, he searched everywhere for that man, to avenge his father.

Perhaps this is very important.

But he had never in his whole life called anyone 'father'.

Truly, when one day he finds that enemy, he will kill him with a single stroke, without saying anything to him. He was afraid he would not be able to say a word.

Sometimes he even wished he would be killed by that enemy.

Father and the enemy, he was equally unable to visualize their appearances. When he was young, people said he resembled his father. Now he was not clear even about his own appearance.

Sometimes he felt well-disposed towards the enemy, even though he did not know him at all.

Having killed that man, what was he going to do? This was indeed a question.

Since the enemy's name almost replaced his own, did he not owe his existence to that name? What would happen when the enemy died?

"I must have revenge!

Day by day I am getting nearer to you.

If I bump into you, just one glance and I'll know it's you.

Even if I never find you, this life of mine is for looking for you."

What a ring to that last sentence!

Next day, as it became light, he walked to a rockface. This was really an end, only by turning round could he see the sky. Jade green and rugged, irresistible force pressed down on him. His breathing was shallow and fast, the blood pulsated in his temples, his face became sickly, his thighs were pressing close to each other and sweat was pouring off him. The sword was on his back, very heavy. From inside the rockface, as if from the bowels of the earth, came a clanging sound, determined and unhurried.

He went inside. It was very dark, he could not see anything for a long while. To retreat? He seemed to have been drenched by iced water. Gradually his eyes began to make out a foot or two in front of him, he stood for a while, steadying himself. Clang - a sound, a red spark. Clang - another. The wind came in through the cave's opening, blowing on his back. He swallowed and went further in. He heard the sound of his own footsteps, this sound encouraged him, made him walk properly, without staggering. The further in he got, the narrower it became; he had to bend low. Looking straight ahead, he saw sparks upon sparks bursting forth. Right, the end has been reached. At the end, a mass of long hair, a man, crawling, chisel in one hand, hammer in the other, was chiseling away at a square inch space in front of his knees. He did not turn his head, did not appear to hear that someone had come. Gradually he worked upwards, his hands were raised higher and higher, and the traveller saw the sleeves of a monk's robe. His long hair reaching below the waist trembled. As the hands were rising, the traveller noticed how thin they were, all sinews, the bones showing through. The traveller retreated one step. The monk turned his head round. A pair of eyes flashed forth from behind the long matted hair. The traveller was stupified. Rising, rising, a spark, another one! He almost fainted: there were three awesome characters tattooed on the monk's arm - his father's name. For a moment, he could see nothing but those three characters. Stroke by stroke, he traced those three characters in his mind. Clang - a sparkle, the characters moved up and down. Time fled from the cave, a white cloud passed by the opening. He simply forgot the sword on his back, or else his whole self vanished, leaving behind this sword. He shrank and shrank, until he ceased to be. Then he came back, came back. All right now, the colour of his face turned red from blue, his self filled out his body: the sword! He drew his sword.

Unhurried, determined, clanging sounds; sparks, purplish red and glittering.

Suddenly he was convinced that his mother was already dead.

A jangling sound,

His sword fell back into the sheath. The first spot of rust.

He looked under his feet and saw fresh chisel marks there. And in front of his feet lay another set of hammer and chisel. He bent down and picked them up. The monk moved slightly to one side.

Two tears glistened in the eyes of the white-haired monk in the temple.

One day, two chisels would cut simultaneously into the emptiness. The first ray of light coming from the other side.

## Appendix VI

### Selected Biographies

Pre-49 biographies of significant but less well-known contributors to  
*Literary Renaissance*

In the following biographies 'style' and 'sobriquet' are used as translations of  
the Chinese terms 字 and 號, respectively.

Chen Jingrong 陳敬容 (1917-1989)

Pen-names: Lan Bing 藍冰, Cheng Hui 成輝, Wen Gu 文谷, Mo Gong 默弓. Born in Leshan 樂山, Sichuan. Attended First Provincial Girl's College in Chengdu. In 1935 went to Beijing to study at a university, but for financial reasons had to give up her dream. She studied English and French on her own, eavesdropped at lectures on foreign literature, read classical Chinese poetry, English Romantic and French Symbolist poetry and new Chinese literature. Got acquainted with Bian Zhilin 卞之琳 and He Qifang 何其芳, and published poems in the literary supplements to the dailies in Beijing. In 1937, after the war broke out, she left for Chengdu; in 1940, following a brief stay in Chongqing, went to Lanzhou; in 1945 she arrived in Chongqing. During this period of vagrant life she wrote some of her finest poems and prose. In the summer of 1946 she went to Shanghai, where she became established as a poet and translator. In two and a half years she published two volumes of poetry, 交響集 [Symphony] (1947) and 盈盈集 [Overflow] (1948), one volume of prose, 星雨集 [Star-rain] (1947), and seven volumes of translations. She also took part in initiating and editing 中國新詩 [New Chinese poetry], as well as contributing to 詩創造 [Poetry creation], two important poetry magazines of the period. She was a member of the group of poets that gathered around these magazines and were later called the 'Nine Leaves' (九葉) poets.

Cheng Hexi 程鶴西 (1908-)

Pen-names: Cheng Kansheng 程侃聲, Hexi 鶴西. In the twenties he wrote poetry and prose. He also produced translations, among them 鏡中世界 [World in the mirror] and 夢幻與青春 [Dreams and spring].

Du Yunxie 杜運燮 (1918-)

Pen-names: Wu Jin 吳進, Wu Dahan 吳大翰. Born in Malaysia; ancestral home: Gutianxian 古田縣 in Fujian. After primary and junior middle school in Malaysia he returned in 1934 to Fujian for senior middle school. In 1939 he enrolled at the Foreign Languages Department of South-west Associated University (西南聯合大學) in Kunming. There, with other students, he founded the Evergreen Literary Society (冬青文藝社), edited a wall newspaper, published street verses and paintings (街頭詩畫),

organized a lecture society and a society for 'publicly declaimed poetry' (朗誦詩). At the same time he started publishing his poetry in the literary supplement of the Hong Kong 大公報 [L'Impartial], in the Kunming 文聚 [Literary collections] and elsewhere. While still at university, he joined the army and served as interpreter to American troops in Burma and India. After graduating in 1945, he worked as editor of the Chongqing 大公報, as secondary school teacher in Singapore, and as editor and translator in Hong Kong's 大公報 and 新晚報 [New evening paper]. In Singapore he and a friend edited and published 學生週報 [Student weekly]. His poems were published in the Shanghai magazines 文藝復興 [Literary renaissance], 詩創造 [Poetry creation] and 中國新詩 [New Chinese poetry]. The collection 現代詩抄 [Modern poetry] (1944), edited by Wen Yiduo 聞一多, included three of his poems, among them "滇緬公路" [The Yunnan-Burma road]. His collection 詩四十首 [Forty poems] was published in 1946, his essays 熱帶風光 [Tropical scenes] in 1951. One of the poets of the 'Nine Leaves' group.

Fan Quan 范泉 (1916-)

Real name: Xu Wei 徐煒. Born in Jinshanxian 金山縣, Shanghai. From 1933 to 1934, while attending the secondary school attached to Guanghua 光華 University, Shanghai, he helped edit the school's fortnightly publication (光華附中) and started writing. In 1936 he went to Zhangjiakou 張家口 and his works appeared in the fortnightly 光明 [Brightness], edited by Hong Shen 洪深 and Shen Qiyu 沈起予. The following year he returned to Shanghai, was main editor of the fortnightly 作品 [Works], and with Shao Zinan 邵子南 and Qiu Dongping 邱東平 jointly edited 燎原文學叢書 [Burning prairie literary series]. In 1938 he went to study at Fudan 復旦 University, where he also edited the university magazine. After this he was the main editor of the monthly 學生生活 [Student life], the 堡壘 [Fortress] supplement of the 中美日報 [Chinese-American daily], the 生活和實踐 [Life and practice] series, the 文藝春秋 [Literary annals] monthly (October 1944-April 1949) and the series (叢刊) associated with it. He also edited the monthly 文學 [Literature], the 寰星文學叢書 [Remote star literary series] and the 中原文學叢書 [Central Plain literary series]. He published a short story collection 浪花 [Spray] (1946), and two collections of essays, 綠的北國 [The green North] (1946) and 創世紀 [Genesis] (1947).

Fang Jing 方敬 (1914-)

Born in Wanxian 萬縣, Sichuan. Was educated in Wanxian, Chongqing and Shanghai. In 1933 he enrolled at the Foreign Languages Department of Beijing University. After graduation he first taught in secondary schools in Luojiang 羅江, Sichuan and in Kunming, then at Guizhou University in Guiyang, at the College of Education for Women and Xianghui 相輝 College in Chongqing. At the same time he translated and researched foreign literature and wrote poetry and essays. In October 1938 he joined the Communist Party and the Chinese National Anti-aggression Association of the Literary and Art World (中華全國文藝界抗敵協會). Took part in patriotic literary movements in Chongqing and Guilin, and with He Qifang 何其芳 and Bian Zhilin 卞之琳 jointly edited the fortnightly magazine 工作 [Labour]. In 1943 he organized the Labour Society in Chongqing, which published the 工作文學叢書 [Labour literary

series]. While teaching at Guizhou University in 1945 he was main editor of the 陣地 [Frontline] supplement of the 大剛報 [Great strength] newspaper and one of the editors of 時代週報 [Times weekly]. In 1947 he suffered persecution and moved to Chongqing, where he taught at the College of Education for Women and at Chongqing University. Poetry collections: 雨景 [Rainy scene] (1942), 聲音 [Voice] (1948), 行吟的歌 [Songs of a stroller] (1948), 受難者的短曲 [The victim's brief song] (1949). Essay collections: 風塵集 [Hardship] (1937), 保護色 [Protective colouring] (1944), 生之勝利 [The victory of life] (1948), 記憶與忘卻 [Remembering and forgetting] (1949).

Fang Yuchen 方宇晨 (1925-1969)

Real name: Fang Yingyang 方應陽. Born in Guanyun 灌雲, Jiangsu. In the forties his poems were published in 詩創造 [Poetry creation], 中國新詩 [New Chinese poetry] and 詩星火 [Poetic sparks].

Lao Xin 勞辛 (1914-)

Real name: Lao Jiashun 勞家順. Born in Hepu 合浦, Guangxi. In the late thirties he published essays in the 哲學 [Philosophy] supplement of the 廣州日報 [Guangzhou daily] under the pen-name Jia Zhun 嘉諄. In the forties he wrote critical reviews, such as "評卞之琳的「十年詩草」" [On Bian Zhilin's *Poems of Ten Years*], published in 1944 in Chongqing's 新蜀報 [New Sichuan paper].

Li Guangtian 李廣田 (1906-1968)

Sobriquet: Xi Cen 洗岑. Pen-names: Li Di 黎地, Xi Chen 曦晨. Born in Zouping 鄒平, Shandong. In 1924-27 he studied at the First College of Education of Shandong and joined the Communist Youth League. Because he had organized a society that introduced the works of Lu Xun 魯迅, Guo Moruo 郭沫若 and Soviet writers, he was arrested, put in prison and was only released when the Northern Expedition reached Jinan. After this he enrolled at Beijing University, where he read English, Japanese and French. Around 1930 he started writing and publishing poetry and prose. After graduation he returned to Jinan to teach at a secondary school. His poems of this period were collected (with those of Bian Zhilin and He Qifang) in 漢園集 [The Han garden] (1936), his essays in the collections 畫廊集 [Gallery] (1936) and 銀狐集 [The silver fox] (1936). After the outbreak of the war he moved with his school to Sichuan. On the journey he met some underground members of the CCP, disseminated Communist ideas among the students and was dismissed from his job. In 1941 he became a teacher at the South-west Associated University in Kunming, started using Marxism-Leninism in teaching literary theory and took part in various literary movements. The assassination of Li Gongpu 李公樸 and Wen Yiduo 聞一多 further politicized him. During this time he published the essay collections 金罈子 [The golden jar] and 灌木集 [Shrubs]. After 1945 he taught at Nankai University in Tianjin and supported student movements that opposed famine and the civil war. In 1948 he joined the CCP. In the same year he published 日邊隨筆 [Jottings on the day's margin], 文學枝葉 [Literary details], 創作論 [On creative work] and the novel 引力 [Gravitation].

Li Tuozhi 李拓之 (1914-1983)

Pen-names: Li Dian 李點, Li Chiyun 李馳雲, Li Youxi 李又曦, Yao Yi 姚苡. Poet, essayist.

Lu Ling 路翎 (1923-1994)

Real name: Xu Sixing 徐嗣興. Pen-name: Bing Ling 冰菱. Born in Nanjing, Jiangsu. His father died when he was two and he took on his mother's surname. After the battle for Shanghai started in August 1937 and the capital was moved west, he went with his family first to his stepfather's ancestral place in Hebei, then further West into Sichuan. He enrolled in a secondary school in Hechuanxian 合川縣, where with classmates he organized the Sentry (哨兵) literary society and in the summer of 1939 published the Sentry literary supplement of Hechuan county's 大聲日報 [Loud voice daily]. The 戰線 [Frontline] supplement of Chongqing's 大公報 published his "在游擊戰線上" [At the guerilla frontline]. Because his publications offended official interests he was expelled from the second year of senior middle school. Between 1939 and 1948 he joined the publicity team of the 三民主義青年團 [Three Principles of the People] youth league] (but lost his job because of leftist thinking), worked in the accounts department of a mining research institute and as administrator in the library of the Central Political Institute. In 1939 he sent a short story to 七月 [July] magazine, got to know its editor Hu Feng 胡風, and from then on almost every issue of the magazine carried a contribution from Lu Ling, who became the group's most important fiction writer. In 1948 he became a lecturer at Central University in Nanjing. Short story and novella collections: 青春的祝福 [The blessing of youth] (1944), 蝸牛在荊棘上 [Snail on brambles] (1944), 求愛 [Courtship] (1946) and 在鐵煉中 [In the smelting of iron] (1947). Novels: 饑餓的郭素娥 [The hungry Guo Su'e] (1942), 財主的兒女們 [The rich man's children] (Vol.I:1945, Vol.II:1948) and 燃燒的荒地 [The burning wasteland] (1948).

Mu Dan 穆旦 (1918-1977)

Real name: Zha Liangzheng 查良鏞. Other pen-name: Liang Zhen 梁真. Born in Tianjin; ancestral home: Ninghaixian 寧海縣, Zhejiang. While attending secondary school in Tianjin he developed a liking for literature and started writing poetry. In 1935 he enrolled at the Foreign Languages Department of Qinghua University, Beijing. When the war broke out he went with the university through Changsha to Kunming. After graduating from South-west Associated University in 1940 he stayed on as associate professor. During his time in Kunming he was already a well-known young poet, his works were mostly published in the literary supplement to the Hong Kong 大公報 and Kunming's 文聚 [Literary collections]. In 1945 his first poetry collection 探險者 [Explorer] was published and four of his poems were included in 現代詩抄 [Modern poetry] edited by Wen Yiduo. His second collection 穆旦詩集 (1939-1945) [Mu Dan's collected poems] came out in 1947, the third one, 旗 [Flag], in 1948. After 1945 most of his poems were published in the Shanghai magazines 詩創造 [Poetry creation] and 中國新詩 [New Chinese poetry]. In the latter was published Tang Shi's 唐湜 article "穆旦論" [On Mu Dan], discussing his poetry. In August 1949 he went to the United States for advance studies in the English Literature Department of



Chicago University, where in 1952 he got an M.A. He was one of the 'Nine Leaves' poets.

Qian Zhongshu 錢鐘書 (1910-)

Style: Mocun 默存. Sobriquet: Huaiju 槐聚. Pen-name: Zhongshujun 中書君. Born in Wuxi 無錫, Jiangsu. He graduated from the Foreign Languages Department of Qinghua University in 1933. In 1937 he finished his studies at the English Department of Oxford University, having written the thesis 十六, 十七, 十八世紀英國文學里的中國 [China in the English literature of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries] (pub. 1943), then went to Paris to study French literature. After his return to China, he taught at the Foreign Languages Department of South-west Associated University in Kunming, was Head of the English Department of the National College of Education, professor at the Foreign Languages Department of Jinan 暨南 University in Shanghai, advisor to the English language publication of Beijing Library and editor-in-chief in the Foreign Section of Central Library. Major publications: essay collection 寫在人生邊上 [Written on the margin of life] (1941); short story collection 人獸鬼 [Men, beasts, ghosts] (1946); novel 圍城 [Fortress besieged] (1947); literary criticism 談藝錄 [On art] (1948).

Qing Bo 青勃 (1921-)

Real name: Zhao Qingbo 趙青勃. Born in Longpingxian 隆平縣, Hebei. His father was in the postal and telecommunications service and the family moved to Tianjin when his work required. Before 1949 he worked as editor of literary supplements to newspapers in Luoyang, Xi'an, Zhengzhou and Beijing. During the natural disasters in Henan, in the Central Plains in 1942, he saw the suffering of the people and started writing poems that exposed the darkness of life under the Guomindang government. The main subjects of his poems of this period were the villages laid waste, the open country stricken by disasters and the people's struggle for survival. His early poetry was strong on images; he likened the countryside to an "anaemic old man", the starving masses to "dried-out firewood" and "stone figures". Later, reading Mao's *Yan'an Talk* had a profound influence on him. In the spring of 1946 while at Zhengzhou he joined the underground organization of the CCP. After this he used his poems as weapons, writing political lyrics and popular satirical poems with political themes. His first poetry collection 號角在哭泣 [Bugle crying] was published in October 1947 as part of the 創造詩叢 [Creative poetry series] edited by Zang Kejia 臧克家.

Ren Jun 任鈞 (1909-)

Real name: Lu Jiawen 盧嘉文. Other pen-names: Lu Senbao 盧森堡, Sen Bao 森堡, Kong Bo 孔博. Born in Meixian 梅縣, Guangdong. Before 1949 he taught at Daxia 大夏 University and the Institute of Drama in Shanghai. Was a member of the Sun Society (太陽會), of the League of Left-wing Writers (左翼作家聯盟), of the Chinese National Anti-aggression Association of the Literary and Art World (中華全國文藝界抗敵協會) and one of the initiators of the Chinese Poetry Association (中國詩歌會). He was among the first to promote 'publicly declaimed poems' (朗誦詩). In 1935 he advocated that poets "should directly take the blood-soaked reality and make

it the flesh and blood of their works, to produce powerful and trenchant poems. With these poems they should urge and encourage the great masses of the country, who have been trampled on and exploited by the enemy, to fight bravely to save the nation and the country from peril". His own poems followed this prescription and were close to the spoken language.

Shi Huafu 石華父 (1905-1969)

Real name: Chen Linrui 陳麟瑞. Other pen-name: Lin Shuai 林率. Ancestral home: Xinchang 新昌, Zhejiang. In 1928 he graduated from Qinghua 清華 University, then went to America to study drama at Harvard University. After returning to China in 1933 he was head of the Foreign Languages Department of Jinan 暨南 University, and also taught in succession at Fudan 復旦 and Guanghua 光華 Universities, and at Zhendan 震旦 College for Women in Shanghai. During the War of Resistance he published play-scripts in Shanghai under the pen-name Shi Huafu, most important of which were the original play 職業婦女 [Women in profession]; the plays 尤三姐 [You Sanjie] and 海葬 [Sea burial], adapted from novels; and 晚宴 [Evening banquet], an adaptation of the play *Once in a Lifetime* by George Kaufmann and Edna Ferber, and 雁來紅 [Yanlaihong], an adaptation of *The Magistrate* by A. W. Pinero.

Shi Tuo 師陀 (1910-1988)

Real name: Wang Changjian 王長簡. Other pen-names: Lu Fen 蘆焚 (transliteration of 'ruffian'; not used after 1946), Junxi 君西, Kanglezhai 康了齋. Born in Qixian 杞縣, Henan. Attended private and primary schools in Qixian, secondary school in Kaifeng. In 1931 he went to Beijing to find a job. After the seizure of Shenyang, his two short stories "請願正篇" [Petition - main text] and "請願外篇" [Petition - additional text] appeared in 北斗 [Big dipper] and 文學月報 [Literary monthly], respectively. In Beijing he joined the Anti-imperialist Patriotic Alliance (反帝大同盟). In May 1932 with Wang Jinding 汪金丁 and Xu Ying 徐盈 he set up the magazine 尖銳 [Sharp point]. His short stories appeared in magazines and were collected in 谷 [Valley], 里門拾記 [Sketches gathered at my native place], 落日光 [Rays of the setting sun] and 野鳥集 [Wild birds]. In the autumn of 1936 he went to Shanghai and worked as literary editor at the Soviet Union's broadcasting station. During the war he wrote eighteen short stories which formed the collection 果園城記 [Records of Orchard City], another short story collection 無名氏 [The nameless], a novella 無望村的館主 [The restaurant owner of No Hope village] and the play 大馬戲團 [The big circus]. He also published three novels: 荒野 [Wilderness], 結婚 [Marriage] and 馬蘭 [Ma Lan].

Su Jinsan 蘇金傘 (1906-)

Real name: Su Hetian 蘇鶴田. Born in Suixian 睢縣, Henan. Studied at No.1 College of Education in Kaifeng, then at the Henan College of Physical Education. He liked to read literature and write modern poetry. His first works appeared in 洪水 [Flood] magazine, sponsored by the Creation Society (創造社). After graduation he became a physical education teacher, but continued with his literary endeavours. In the thirties and forties his poems were published in the magazines 現代 [Les

Contemporaines], 文學 [Literature] and 新詩 [New poetry], and in the 大公報. During the war against Japan his poems appeared in magazines in Chongqing and Kunming, and were later collected in the volume 無線琴 [Stringless lute]. After the victory works that were originally published in some Shanghai magazines were collected in 地層下 [Under the earth] (1947). At the same time he was main editor of a supplement to Kaifeng's 中國時報 [China times], and also edited 春潮 [Spring tide], 沙漠文藝 [Desert literature] etc. In 1948 he went to the Communist-held areas, and worked and studied at the Literary Research Institute of the North China 華北 University in Shijiazhuang 石家莊. His poems written after the war were published in the collection 窗外 [Outside the window] (1949).

Tang Shi 唐湜 (1920-)

Style: Diwen 迪文. Formal name: Yanghe 揚和. Pen-name: Chen Luo 陳洛. Born in Wenzhou 溫州, Zhejiang. Graduated from the Foreign Languages Department of Zhejiang University in 1948. While still at university he took part in the editing work of the magazine 詩創造 [Poetry creation], which started publishing in July 1947. From 1948 on he was a member of the editorial committee of 中國新詩 [New Chinese poetry] and taught in secondary schools. A great number of his essays, poems, critical articles and short stories appeared during the war in newspaper supplements in the South-west, and after the war in Shanghai's literary publications such as 文藝復興 [Literary renaissance], 希望 [Hope], 春秋 [Spring and autumn], 詩創造 and 中國新詩. He published two collections of lyric poems: 騷動的城 [Disturbed city] in 1947 and 飛揚的歌 [Soaring songs] in 1949, and a long narrative poem 英雄的草原 [The heroic grasslands] in 1948. He was the theoretical representative of the poetic group that surrounded the magazines 詩創造 and 中國新詩, and which was later christened the 'Nine Leaves' 九葉 group. His essays and theoretical articles on poetry were collected in 意度集 [Conjectures].

Wang Xindi 王辛笛 (1912-)

Real name: Wang Xindi 王馨迪. Other pen-names: Xindi 心笛, 辛笛, Yimin 一民, Niu Hezhi 牛何之. Born in Tianjin; ancestral home: Huai'an 淮安, Jiangsu. Early in his career he worked as literary editor on the 清華大學週刊 [Qinghua University weekly] and taught in secondary schools. After returning from Edinburgh, where he studied English literature, he taught at Guanghua 光華 and Jinan 暨南 Universities in Shanghai. From his student days on he published poems, prose and translations in the Tianjin 大公報 [L'Impartial], in 國聞週報 [National news weekly], 文學季刊 [Literature quarterly], 北京晨報 [Beijing morning paper], 水星 [Mercury] and in Shanghai's 新詩 [New poetry]. In 1935 his first volume of poetry, 珠貝集 [Pearls and shells], was published in Beijing. After 1945 he was elected alternate council member and secretary of the Chinese National Association for Literature and Arts (中華全國文藝協會). His poems and prose of this period appeared in 民主 [Democracy], 文藝復興 [Literary renaissance], 大公報, 文匯報 [Literary collection], 僑聲報 [Overseas voice], 世界晨報 [Morning news of the world], 詩創造 [Poetry creation] and 中國新詩 [New Chinese poetry]. In 1946 he edited 民歌 [Folk songs], a progressive poetry publication, which was closed down after one issue. His second collection of poems,

手掌集 [Palm], was published in 1947, and a collection of essays and reviews, 夜讀書記 [Night readings], in 1948. He was one of the 'Nine Leaves' poets.

Wang Zengqi 汪曾祺 (1920-)

Born in Gaoyouxian 高郵縣, Jiangsu. In 1939 he enrolled at the Chinese Literature Department of South-west Associated University in Kunming. There he attended Shen Congwen's 沈從文 creative writing course and in 1940 started publishing fiction under Shen's guidance. After his graduation in 1943 he taught in various secondary schools in Kunming and Shanghai, and worked in a museum of history. He emerged as a real fiction writer around 1947, on the strength of works published in 文學雜誌 [Literature magazine], ed. by Zhu Guangqian 朱光潛, in 文藝復興 [Literary renaissance] and in 文藝春秋 [Literary annals], ed. by Fan Quan 范泉. His short story collection 邂逅集 [Chance meetings] was published in 1948. He is regarded as one of the rearguards of the Peking School 京派.

Yang Jiang 楊絳 (1911-)

Real name: Yang Jikang 楊季康. Born in Beijing. She was educated in Shanghai and Suzhou. In 1932 she graduated from Suzhou's Dongwu 東吳 University with a B.A., then became a foreign language research student at the Research Institute of Qinghua University. Between 1935 and 1938 she studied in England and France. After her return to China she taught at the Foreign Languages Department of Zhendan 震旦 College for Women in Shanghai and at the Western Languages Department of Qinghua University. In the early forties three of her comedies were staged with success in Shanghai: 稱心如意 [As you desire it], 弄真成假 [Truth into jest] and 遊戲人間 [Sport with the world]. Her tragedy 風絮 [Windswept blossoms] was published in 1946. She also wrote short stories, which were published in the literary magazines of the day. After 1949 she translated from English, French and Spanish literature.

Yuan Kejia 袁可嘉 (1921-)

Born in Xianggongdian 相公殿 in Cixi 慈溪, Zhejiang. In 1946 he graduated from the Foreign Languages Department of the South-west Associated University in Kunming with a B.A. Later he taught at the Foreign Languages Department of Beijing University until 1950. His poems, essays and reviews of this period were published in 文學雜誌 [Literature magazine], in 文藝復興 [Literary renaissance], in 中國新詩 [New Chinese poetry] and in the 星期文藝 [Sunday literature and art] supplement of the Tianjin 大公報. He was one of the 'Nine Leaves' poets.

