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Appendix A: Text of "Dead Water"

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I have followed the Wade-Giles system of pronunciation for the Chinese words occurring in this thesis with the following exceptions:

1. For typographical reasons, the signs "" and "" have been omitted.

2. In certain cases the Wade-Giles pronunciation has been modified to accord with the pronunciation current in modern Peking Mandarin.

3. For common place nouns, the pinyin spelling has been used.
Note on Romanization

I have followed the Wade-Giles system of romanization for the Chinese words occurring in this thesis with the following exceptions:

1. For typographical reasons, the signs / and - have been omitted.

2. In certain cases the Wade-Giles romanization has been modified to accord with the pronunciation current in modern Peking Mandarin.

3. For common place names, the postal spelling has been used.
INTRODUCTION

1. Wen I-to

Wen I-to, poet, painter, scholar and revolutionary, was born in Hupeh province, China, in 1899 and died by assassination at the age of forty-six in Kunming on 15 July 1946. His life-span embraced some of the most tumultuous events of modern times in China. On the political front, it covered the 1911 revolution against the Manchu government, the establishment of the Republic, the rise of modern nationalism during and after the May Fourth Movement in 1919, the growth of the Nationalist and Communist parties, the Northern Expedition for the unification of the country, the Kuomintang coup of 1927 and the consequent campaign against the Communists, and the Sino-Japanese war of 1937-45.

On the literary front, the era in which Wen lived was equally exciting. The year 1917 saw the beginning of the so-called Literary Revolution which overthrew the classical language, wen-yen, as the medium of written communication, replacing it by a written style, pai-hua, based on the spoken language. The next few years witnessed the beginning of creative writing in pai-hua of novels, short stories, plays and poetry. After the anti-imperialist May Thirtieth Incident in Shanghai in 1925, there occurred a gradual drift to the left in the
political coloration of literary circles which was brought to a head by the great debate of 1928 on the Marxist interpretation of literature, the debate on "revolutionary" or "proletarian literature". This debate culminated in a victory for the pro-Communist writers, manifest in the establishment of the League of Left-wing Writers (Tso-i Tso-chia Lien-meng) in 1930. Paralleling the political moves for a united front against Japanese aggression in the mid-1930's, the Chinese writers regrouped to form a more overtly moderate, though still Leftist-dominated, Chinese Writers' Anti-aggression Association (Chung-hua Ch'ing-kuo Wen-i-chieh K'ang-ti Hsieh-hui). Its programme of "Literature for National Defence" (Kuo-fang Wen-hsieh) became the widely accepted policy of Chinese writers which continued throughout the war years.

Wen I-to's views on art, on literature and on politics were representative of the ideas and attitudes of a certain group which played a prominent part in the literary, social and political affairs of twentieth century China. As a returned student from America, Wen was a member of a small but influential group of liberal, anti-Communist intellectuals. In the years of the debate on "revolutionary literature" (1925-1930), the American returned students with whom Wen identified himself were the only group to show determined opposition to the Chinese Marxist writers' interpretation of the function of literature. Shortly after this, in 1928-29, Wen retired from the turbulent polemics on the literary front and, following the example of a great many other prominent intellectual writers of the early period of the Literary Revolution (e.g. Hu Shih, Yu P'ing-po, Liu Fu), he
turned his attention from creative writing to classical scholarship. In this pursuit he spent more than fifteen years. In the final chapter of his life, Wen re-entered active politics in the last years of the Sino-Japanese war. This period of Wen's life tells the story of the alienation of liberal intellectuals by Kuomintang corruption and repression during the war period.

Extensive studies already exist of some of the dominating figures among Leftist intellectuals and writers such as Lu Hsun and Kuo Mo-jo. On the other hand, very little has yet been written on the liberal, right-wing intellectuals who were also an extremely important influence in modern China. It is for the better understanding of the role of the Western-educated liberal intellectual in modern Chinese history that I have made an intensive study of a prominent representative of this group, Wen I-to.

But Wen I-to was not only significant as a representative political figure; he was also a pai-hua poet of great distinction. Though his period of creative writing lasted only ten years, within that short span he made an important contribution to the development of a new system of poetics for the new medium of literary expression, pai-hua. Wen's researches and experiments in poetic form marked him out as one of the major influences in the poetry of the 1920's, and his published poetry remains among the best produced in twentieth century China. In the present thesis I shall describe and discuss the nature of Wen I-to's poetry, his poetics, and his contribution to the New Poetry movement as a whole. This discussion of Wen's work will be related to (1) the story of his life, and (2) to the general
background of literary, social and political circumstances of modern Chinese history. Only in this dual context can the representativeness, as well as the uniqueness, of Wen's achievement be assessed.

2. The Sources

The major published source of information on the life and work of Wen I-to is The Complete Works of Wen I-to (Wen I-to Ch'ênan-chi), edited by Chu Tzu-ch'ing and Kuo Mo-jo, and published by the K'ai-ming Shu-tien, Shanghai, in 1948. The Complete Works is a compendium in four volumes (pp.2300), estimated to contain over a million words. In spite of its title, it does not include all of Wen's published works, but the remainder, mainly articles published in journals and newspapers during the war years, were not available at the time of the compilation of The Complete Works in 1948 and have apparently not become available since then.

Apart from The Complete Works, there also exist three one-volume selections of Wen I-to's poetry and prose writings, these differing among themselves on the basis of selection of material. These three are, in order of publication:

(1) The Selected Works of Wen I-to (Wen I-to HôMan-chi) with a preface by Li Kuang-tien (Peking, K'ai-ming Shu-tien, 1951, pp. 207).

(2) Selected Poetry and Prose of Wen I-to (Wen I-to Shih Wen HôMan-chi), edited by the poet Tsang K'e-chia (Peking, Jen-min Wen-hsûeh Ch'u-pan-she, 1955).

These three collections add no new material to that of The Complete Works.

There are four other main sources in Chinese on the biography of Wen I-to:

(1) The Heroes and Martyrs of the People (Jen-min Ying-lieh), published by the Memorial Committee for the Patriots Li Kung-p'u and Wen I-to (Li Wen Erh Lieh-shih Chi-nien Wei-yüan-hui), n.d. [?1946] pp. 380. This was a special memorial publication produced shortly after Wen's death containing details of the assassination and of the public reaction to it.

(2) The Road of Wen I-to (Wen I-to ti Tao-lu) by Shih Ching (Shanghai, Sheng-huo Press, 1947, pp. 165).

(3) Wen I-to (Wen I-to) by Mien Chih (Shanghai, Sheng-huo Press, 1949, pp. 95).

(4) The "Biographical Record" ("Nien-p'u") section of The Complete Works of Wen I-to. Much of the material contained in the "Nien-p'u" was drawn from The Heroes and Martyrs of the People, item (1) above, and from The Road of Wen I-to, item (2) above.

The only work in English dealing directly with Wen I-to is "The Life and Poetry of Wen I-to" by Hsü K'ai-yü (Harvard Journal
of Asiatic Studies, Vol. XXI, 1958, pp. 134-177). There are also three valuable short biographies in English dealing particularly with Wen's literary career. These are to be found in the following books:


In addition to these biographies dealing with Wen's literary career, there is a short biography emphasising Wen's role as a political figure in Howard Boorman, (ed.), Men and Politics in Modern China (New York, Columbia University Press, 1960).

Approximately three-quarters of the material in The Complete Works of Wen I-to is the fruit of Wen's many years of classical scholarship. I do not propose in this thesis to deal critically with these voluminous writings, for they range an extremely wide field - Shih Ching, Ch'u Tz'u, T'ang poetry, I Ching, Chuang-tzu and paleography - and are not of direct concern in assessing Wen's importance either as a poet or as a political figure. I shall, instead, attempt to reconstruct Wen's biography as accurately and sympathetically as possible and concentrate on his poetry and his literary criticism, in which two fields his contribution was more important than it was in the field of classical scholarship.
CHAPTER I

THE LITERARY REVOLUTION

1. The Chinese Response to the West

The military humiliations suffered by China in the nineteenth century at the hands of the imperialistic powers which culminated in the disastrous defeat of China in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, quickly brought home to at least a minority of Chinese scholars the realization that serious reforms along Western lines would have to be taken if China were to preserve her national integrity. At first these scholar-officials shared the view of Chang Chih-tung expressed in his tract Exhortation to Learn (Ch'üan Hsüeh P'ien) that "Chinese learning is for substance, Western learning for practical purposes" (Chung-hsüeh wei t'i, Hsi-Hsüeh wei yung). The would-be reformers were interested only in the adoption of Western technology and weapons of war for the purpose of military "self-strengthening" (tzu-ch'iang). They never doubted that, except in the realm of technology, China was in every way - especially morally - superior to the Western "barbarians". The Chinese conviction of moral superiority over the West was gradually undermined by the increasing circulation of Chinese
translations of Western works on philosophy, ethics, history and politics which showed that Western learning in the humanities, as in technology, offered a serious challenge to traditional Chinese scholarship. The first serious attempts at the reform of Chinese institutions were made in the period of the famous Hundred Days' Reform (Wu-hst³ Wei-hsin) of 1898 under the leadership of K'ang Yu-wei, T'an Ssu-t'ung, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, Liu Kuang-ti and Lin Hst³.¹ In advocating reforms along Western lines, these reformers were making a tacit admission that the traditional Chinese concepts of government, ethics and social philosophy had somehow failed, and had been shown to be inadequate under the Western impact. In reaction to these wider implications of the reforms, and because even limited reforms threatened the power of the traditional ruling elite, the Hundred Days' Reform movement was abruptly terminated by a coup d'état by the "Old Buddha" Empress Dowager, supported by conservative officials. But the seeds of reform had already been sown. The writings of K'ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, exiled abroad, continued to sway the imagination of the younger generation and paved the way for the downfall of the Manchu dynasty.

a. The Foundation of the Chinese Republic

The Chinese Republic, inaugurated in February 1912 following

1. A number of these early reformers will be referred to later in connection with their contribution to the "poetry revolution" (shih-chieh ke-ming) and to the modification of the traditional classical prose style for practical requirements.
the 1911 Revolution soon proved a bitter disappointment for its hopeful founders. The traditional Imperial government had proved inadequate to meet the new circumstances which arose as a result of contact with the West; the new Republic was no more successful in meeting the Western challenge.

Politically, the new Republic rested on very shaky foundations. Sun Yat-sen, who had been elected Provisional President of the Revolutionary National Assembly at Nanking, soon resigned in favour of Yuan Shih-k'ai, former general of the Manchus. Yuan Shih-k'ai subsequently betrayed this trust by declaring himself Emperor in December 1915. This reaction in favour of an Imperial government and a subsequent movement for the restoration of a Manchu emperor, were quickly defeated, but their very occurrence demonstrated the shaky political basis of the new republicanism. Economic pressures too were very severe and, after accepting a large loan from a foreign bankers' consortium in 1913, China found her resources virtually mortgaged to foreign powers.

In foreign relations, the new Republic suffered further humiliations. After the First World War, the interest of Western powers in gaining concessions in China diminished, but Japanese expansionist designs correspondingly increased. On January 18, 1915, Japan served on China the notorious "Twentyone Demands", aimed at gaining for Japan extensive powers in China. When the news of this became known, there was widespread popular protest and indignation in China, expressed in riots, demonstrations and the boycott of Japanese goods. The date of Japan's ultimatum to China,
May 7, and the date of the Chinese government's capitulation, May 9, were popularly named "Commemoration Days of National Humiliation". The Republican government had proved itself no more able to resist external aggression than the corrupt Imperial government which it had confidently supplantled.

b. The Need for Further Reform

The 1911 Revolution, and its subsequent course, left many Chinese intellectuals disillusioned and embittered. Ch'en Tu-hsiu, a veteran radical writer, spoke for many intellectuals when he said that the Revolution had proved to have "the head of a tiger and the tail of a snake", that is, that it was a revolution in form but not in substance. And the writer Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, looking back bitterly on the achievements of the Revolution wrote: "It is almost ten years since the success of the [1911] Revolution but all we hoped for has proved in vain, item by item. As we have gradually thought back, in our disappointment, we have realized that a social culture is a whole unit, and as such it definitely cannot make use of new institutions with an old psychology".


Gradually, a number of intellectuals became convinced that if the Republic were to succeed in realizing the great expectations placed upon it, a fundamental change in outlook and attitude was necessary among the Chinese people at large. All vestiges of the old regime, and of the Confucianist ethics which justified and underlay it, must be swept ruthlessly away.

c. The Founding of New Youth Magazine

The intellectual focus of these iconoclastic ambitions was the Youth Magazine (Ch'ing-nien Tsa-chih), later called New Youth or La Jeunesse (Hsin Ch'ing-nien) which was founded on September 15, 1915, significantly, only a few months after the government's acceptance of

4. *Youth Magazine* was published monthly. Less than one year after its foundation, publication was suspended with the issue of February 15, 1916. Publication was resumed on September 1, 1916, under the changed title of New Youth (Hsin Ch'ing-nien), with Ch'en Tu-hsiu still editor. After the issue of January 15, 1918 (Vol.6, No.1), the magazine was edited in rotation by Ch'en Tu-hsiu, Ch'ien Hsun-t'ung, Kao I-han, Hu Shih, Li Ta-chao and Shen Yin-mo. Editorship was again taken over by Ch'en Tu-hsiu from September 1, 1920, when the magazine became the organ of the newly-formed, Communist-inspired New Youth Society (Hsin Ch'ing-nien She). From this point until its demise in July 1921, the magazine was increasingly political in orientation. A brief description of the history of New Youth can be found in Chao Chia-pi (ed.), Chung-kuo Hsin-wen-hsueh Ta-hsi (hereinafter referred to as Ta-hsi), Vol.10, p.359.
Japan's "Twentyone Demands". Its editor was Ch'en Tu-hsiu\(^5\) already a veteran revolutionary.

Ch'en Tu-hsiu's aim in founding Ch'ing-nien Tsa-chih was to bring about an intellectual awakening of Chinese youth, to complete the transformation in Chinese life which he believed was merely started by the 1911 uprising. His opening article, "A Call to Youth" ("Ching-kao Ch'ing-nien")\(^6\), sent forth a vigorous call to action. He enumerated six practical ideals for young people: (1) to be independent, not submissive; (2) to be progressive, not conservative; (3) to be aggressive, not retiring; (4) to be ecumenical, not parochial; (5) to be practical, not formalistic; (6) to be scientific, not fanciful.\(^7\)

---

5. Ch'en Tu-hsiu was born in 1879 or 1880 of a rich and distinguished Anhwei family. Having passed the civil service examinations, he went, in 1902 to Japan, where he enrolled at the Tokyo Higher Normal School. Afterwards he studied for three years in France (1907-1910), and was greatly influenced by French literature and French political thought. In January 1917 he was invited by Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei, principal of Peking University to take up the position of Dean of the School of Letters at Peking University. He later developed an interest in Marxism, and became one of the founder members of the Chinese Communist Party. In 1928 he was accused of "erroneous rightest deviation" because of his former policy of co-operation with the Kuomintang, and was expelled from the Party. He was arrested by the Kuomintang in 1932 and imprisoned. He died in 1942.


The immediate effect of this plea was electrifying. One student wrote:

"When this number was published I was in Shanghai. It came to us like a clap of thunder which awakened us in the midst of a restless dream. The name of the magazine was, first of all, very fascinating. Students rushed to the Commercial Press for copies but they were all gone. Orders for more copies were sent post-haste to Peking. I don't know how many times this first issue was reprinted, but I am sure that more than two hundred thousand copies were sold".[8]

In a retrospective proclamation of the aims of New Youth Ch'en Tu-hsiu wrote:

"We believe that politics, ethics, science, art, religion and education should concentrate on the real needs of society for the present and future.

Because we want to create the sort of literature and ethics needed for the progress of the new age and new social life, we must discard the unsuitable aspects of conventional literature and morals.

We believe that honouring natural science and pragmatic philosophy and breaking down superstition and false belief are a necessary condition for social progress today.

We believe in honouring the humanity and rights of women, already a real need for the progress of contemporary society; moreover, we hope that they will all personally experience a thorough awakening to their social responsibilities".[9]

d. The Attack on Confucianism

Such a programme, of course, implied a rejection of Confucianist principles, and indeed it was not long before New Youth launched an

open attack. Ch'en Tu-Hsiu's famous article of December 1916, "The Principles of Confucius and Modern Life" ("K'ung-tzu chih Tao yü Hsien-tai Sheng-huo") pointed out that: "Confucius lived in a feudal age. The ethics he promoted were the ethics of the feudal age. The social modes he taught and even his own mode of living were teachings and modes of a feudal age. The political institutions he advocated were those of a feudal age. The objectives, ethics, social norms, mode of living, and political institutions did not go beyond the privilege and prestige of a few rulers and aristocrats and had nothing to do with the happiness of the great masses". Confucius was thus characterized as the arch-enemy of those causes that New Youth hoped to promote - Science and Democracy.

e. The Attack on Chinese Classical Literature

This attack on Confucianism was closely followed by an energetic attack on classical Chinese literature. Confucianist literary criticism, especially as it was interpreted by the T'ung-ch'eng school of prose writers, stressed that literature is


11. For Ch'en Tu-hsiu's discussion of Science and Democracy - personified as "Mr. Science" and "Mr. Democracy" - see Ch'en Tu-hsiu, "Pen-chih Tsui-an chih Ta-pien-shu".

12. The T'ung-ch'eng school of prose writers took its name from the T'ung-ch'eng county of Anhwei province whence came three of the famous prose writers of the Ch'ing Dynasty. They were: Fang Pao (Fang Feng-chiu 1668-1749), Liu Ta-k'uei (1698-1780) and Yao Nai (1731-1815). Prominent supporters of the T'ung-ch'eng school included Tseng Kuo-fan and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao.
didactic in purpose, i.e., "literature is meant to convey principles" (wen-i tsei-tao). The "principles" which it was meant to convey were, of course, the principles of Confucianism, a system abhorrent to the New Youth writers. From their attack on Confucianism, the latter moved next to an attack on the Chinese literary language, the avowed purpose of which was the expression and propagation of Confucianist ideas.

To the New Youth group, the long training and apprenticeship required to master the ornate classical language appeared as the means to preserve an undesirable social gulf between the educated elite and the uneducated masses, which only served to reinforce the traditional Chinese system of government by Confucianist-educated scholar-officials. Moreover, the examination system of Imperial China, based on the Confucian classics, ensured a ruling bureaucracy thoroughly indoctrinated with the principles of Confucianism. In launching their attack on inequalities in Chinese society, the New Youth writers were also paving the way for an attack on the Chinese classical language which, through the medium of the Imperial examinations, had become the vehicle for the dissemination of Confucianist ideals and was, in the end, identified with them.

13. This phrase was first used in Chou Tun-i's T'ung-shu, section 28, "On Literature" ("Wen-tzu'u"). It became a slogan for one of the main schools of Chinese literary criticism, the Didactic or Moralist school, which took as its authority the views of Confucius on the purpose and nature of poetry. See James Liu, The Art of Chinese Poetry, pp. 65-69.
f. The Need for Literary Reform

Towards the close of the nineteenth century, a number of Chinese scholars had already begun to feel that their powers of expression were severely inhibited by the inflexible nature of the Chinese classical language, wen-yen. The examination system, the avenue to office and wealth, also reinforced literary conservatism, discouraging the use of words or terms which were not to be found in the Chinese classics. Freedom of expression was particularly limited in the poetic forms (both shih and tz'u), and in the "eight-legged essay" (na-ku-wen), these being highly stylised forms.

Owing to the authority and weight of tradition, as well as to the undeniable elegance of classical writing, wen-yen vocabulary had failed to keep abreast of the times. Huang Tsun-hsien, a poet of the late nineteenth century and participant in the 1898 reform movement, severely criticised those poets who did not dare use characters lacking canonical precedent. He declared: "I write as I speak; how can antiquity bind me?" 14 Some years later, Hu Shih too satirized outmoded poetic vocabulary in a poem written to his friend Mei Kuang-ti. In this he derided the classical language as a "dead language", a phrase later to become a leading slogan in the literary revolution. 15

14. Huang Tsun-hsien, Jen Ching Lu Ts'ao Chien-chu, p. 16. For a biography of Huang Tsun-hsien see Jocelyn Milner, "The Role of Huang Tsun-hsien in the Reform Movement of the Nineteenth Century". The modest reform of poetic diction undertaken by Huang, T'an Ssu-t'ung and Haia Ts'eng-yu paved the way for the later literary revolution.

Because of its archaic qualities, wen-yen was also an unsatisfactory vehicle for the expression of new ideas on political and economic reform. Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, one of the 1898 reformers already mentioned, developed a new style which was closer to the style of vernacular novels in an effort to present his ideas on political reform with greater clarity, untrammelled by the inhibitions of the strict wen-yen style. However, Liang was in other respects an admirer of the T'ung-ch'eng school of prose writers and was not an advocate of literary reform as such. His modification of wen-yen was purely a particular and expedient modification.

The translations of Western books, which were exceedingly popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, also presented many problems to their translators who were faced with a multitude of new Western technical terms. The two most famous translators of Western books, Yen Fu and

16. Chou Tso-jen described Liang's prose style as an amalgamation of the style of the T'ang and Sung writers, the currently popular style of the T'ung-ch'eng school, and the styles of Li Yü (1611-1676), a great dramatist of the early Ch'ing dynasty, and of Chin Sheng-t'an (d. 1661), a famous literary critic. See Chou Tso-jen, "Wen-hsüeh Ke-ming Yün-tung", p. 9.

17. Yen Fu (1854-1921), a returned student from Britain, had been one of the leading liberal reformers of the late nineteenth century, advocating westernization and the introduction of democratic ideas. His translations of Western books, such as Huxley's Evolution and Ethics, Adam Smith's The Wealth of Nations, John Stuart Mills' On Liberty, Herbert Spencer's Study of Society, etc., had a great influence on many prominent reformers, revolutionaries and intellectuals of twentieth century China. In his later years, Yen became disillusioned with the West and more conservative in his beliefs, even to the extent of lending his support to Yuan Shih-k'ai's monarchical movement.
Lin Shu, nevertheless managed to render their translations effectively in wen-yen.

2. The Relationship of the Literary Revolution to the Chinese Nationalist Movement

The fact that in the late nineteenth century, a number of writers found that the inflexibility and stylization of wen-yen inhibited and limited them in the expression of new ideas, must not be regarded as constituting, of itself, the cause of the literary revolution. It is true that the defects and inadequacies of wen-yen were later listed by the reformers, Hu Shih, Ch'en Tu-hsiu, Ch'ien Hsüan-t'ung, Liu Fu and others, as convincing proof that the classical literary language was a "dead language" which should be replaced as the vehicle of expression by the "living" colloquial language, pai-hua. But it is also true that some writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Chang Shih-chao, and the translators Lin Shu and Yen Fu, had already evolved a modified wen-yen style which succinctly and efficiently answered to their various purposes. If it had only been a question

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18. Lin Shu (Lin Ch'in-nan, 1852-1924) was a veteran translator of Western novels. He translated about one hundred books, most of them from English and French, without knowing a word of any foreign language. The authors translated included Shakespeare, Defoe, Swift, Dumas, Balzac, Hugo, Tolstoy and Dickens. For a short biography of Lin Shu, see Cheng Chem-to, "Lin Ch'in-nan Hsien-sheng", in Chung-kuo Wen-hsüeh Yen-chiu, pp. 1214-1229.
of finding a vigorous style of writing suited to contemporary needs, the literary movement would simply have lost momentum and ended at this point. The considerations underlying the literary revolution were, however, not purely literary; they were also — and perhaps primarily — political and social.

As was remarked earlier, the inherent difficulty of learning the Chinese script, together with the remoteness of wen-yen from everyday speech, rendered the mastery of the written language a time-consuming occupation reserved only for the privileged few. Those able to master it were assured of rank and position. The educational system thus preserved those social distinctions on which Chinese society was traditionally based.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a number of Chinese intellectuals became convinced that the strength of the West in comparison to China lay not in Europe’s superior technology, but in its superior educational system. A number of reformers came to believe that the education of the ignorant and illiterate masses was a prerequisite for building a modern Chinese state on Western lines. This attitude was subsequently embodied in the slogan "education to save the nation" (chiao-yü chiu kuo). "Education" here meant not only education to the point of literacy, but education to bring about a new outlook and a new state of mind, i.e. education in democracy.

a. Early Efforts in Language and Script Reform

The first organized attempts in China to use the vernacular
language or dialect romanizations in the cause of mass education were made by Christian missionaries. The Amoy dialect was romanized in 1850, and a Mandarin **New Testament** was produced in 1870 or 1872. Though their avowed intention was the propagation of Christianity, not Chinese nationalism, their example nonetheless stimulated many Chinese scholars. In time, Chinese scholars, especially those from those coastal provinces which had had earliest contact with the West, began to appreciate the potential of a phonetic script for mass education. As Lao Nai-hsilan (b. 1843), an early exponent of phonetic scripts expressed it: "To-day, if we want to save China, we have no alternative but to extend education. If we wish to extend education we must have a script which is easily learnt, we must have a phonetic script".

Now that the programme of Hu Shih and his supporters for writing in **p'ai-hua** has long been accepted and practised, it is difficult to imagine that those who advocated complete abandonment of the Chinese script were not cranks on the outer fringe of the movement for

19. For a useful summary of the achievements in this direction of Christian missionaries from the time of the early Jesuits up to the nineteenth century Protestant and Catholic missionaries, see Ni Hai-shu, **Chung-kuo P' in-yin Wen-tzu Yün-tung Shih Chien-pien**, pp. 5-13.


education of the masses. However, the idea of writing in pai-hua in part arose from, and in part paralleled the movement for abandonment of characters in favour of a romanization or phonetic script. Wang Chao had early realised that any romanization must be based on pai-hua, not wen-yen, if its meaning were to be clear to the ordinary reader. Hu Shih put it this way: "To advocate a phonetic script and at the same time not to advocate pai-hua is to have a slogan without meaning; it must necessarily fail". Making pai-hua the style of writing was the necessary stepping-stone on the way to ultimate romanization or phoneticization.

The value of pai-hua had already been realised by the missionaries, who used it for their religious tracts and biblical translations. At the same time, there existed an active tradition of vernacular literature in China, which, though not recognised as "true" literature, produced plays and novels which were widely read and exceedingly popular. Among these, the satirical novels such as The Travels of Lao Ta'en (Lao Ta'an Yu-chi), greatly influenced public opinion.

The production of pai-hua newspapers was another development of the time - a trend also stimulated by the activities of missionaries. Such papers as Pai-hua Pao, the Hang-chou Pai-hua Pao, the Wusih Pai-hua Pao (founded 1898), and the Ching-yeh Hsfn-pao were all intended

22. John de Francis, Nationalism and Language Reform in China provides a full discussion of the movement for complete abandonment of the Chinese script.

to inform and educate ordinary people in current events. 24

b. The Failure of the Early Language and Script Reforms

Generally speaking, however, neither the move for abolishing the Chinese script, nor the circulation of pai-hua novels and newspapers, had evoked any great interest or enthusiasm from the scholars. The reason for this was the continuing prestige of the classical tradition, even after the abolition of the Imperial examinations in 1905. Since the script and language reforms were originally devised for the purpose of mass education, as was noted above, it was only natural that even the authors and propagandists of these reforms should think of the simplified written language as only an expedient instrument, not an end in itself. Hu Shih saw into this attitude clearly when he wrote:

"The basic concept of this psychology divides society into two classes: on the one hand, "we", the literati; on the other, "they", the common people. "We" are naturally intelligent and wise, so we can spare twenty or thirty years of intensive study of the "incomparable" classical script and literature. "They" are simple, "incapable of learning more than a thousand characters", so we should give them an easy way to increase their knowledge. "We" are not afraid of difficulties, but "they" must seek the easy way out. In this sort of psychology, the prestige of the classical literature and script is not at all under fire; the phonetic scripts are only charitable gifts bestowed by the literati on the common people; they definitely would have no hope of taking the place of the classical literature. If the literati on the one hand bury themselves in writing that dead script, and on the other advocate a phonetic script, they cannot be too eager for it. The people, too, are not willing to study a phonetic script which the literati do not deign to study. ... If they want their children to read and write, they naturally want them to be able to write the pa-ku-wen, to sit for the Imperial examinations and obtain high honours and office; they do not want to consign themselves to a class of "those incapable of recognizing more than a thousand

24. For a review of the history of journalism in modern China see Ko Kung-chen, Chung-kuo Pao-hsi Shih.
characters"! So, the decision to advocate an alphabetical script while not abolishing Chinese characters, cannot succeed. This is a fundamental reason for the failure of the movement for phonetic scripts".[25]

c. Hu Shih's Theory

This realization of the futility of discriminating between the language of mass education and the language of elite Chinese writing persuaded Hu Shih, then a student at Cornell University in America, to devote himself to the task of demonstrating that pai-hua was fully capable of displacing wen-yen in all fields of Chinese writing as well as providing the medium of mass education.

Later on Hu Shih was to try to make a distinction between the pai-hua literature movement, which he himself started in 1917, and the national language (kuo-yü) movement, the mass education programme inspired by Wang Chao's idea of a phonetic script based on the mandarin dialect. Hu Shih said:

"...But the kuo-yü movement is "in the cause of education"; its idea is to use kuo-yü to "extend the people's knowledge". The kuo-yü (i.e. pai-hua) literature movement is "in the cause of literature". It uses kuo-yü to "create literature". The former advocates pai-hua, not the abandonment of ku-wen; the latter advocates pai-hua literature and attacks ku-wen as a dead literature".[26]

However, when Hu Shih stated that the kuo-yü (or pai-hua) literature movement was "in the cause of literature", and not in the cause of education, he was merely reiterating his later

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rationalization. In actual fact, the aims of both movements were exactly the same; both were in the cause of mass education. Hu Shih's original interest, and that too of his chief supporters in the literary revolution (e.g. Ch'en Tu-hsiu, Chao Yüan-jen, Ch'ien Hsüan-t'ung and Liu Fu), was in education directed towards a national awakening.

Hu Shih himself, in 1906, had contributed a few essays and a novel in pai-hua to a pai-hua newspaper, Ching-yeh Hsün-pao. Later, while in America, he developed an interest in a phonetic script for the education of illiterates. In 1915, Hu Shih and his friend Chao Yüan-jen, later a distinguished linguist and expert on the romanization of the Chinese language, read two papers on the problem of the Chinese language to a meeting of the Chinese Students' Union of the Eastern States of America. Chao Yüan-jen talked on the possibility of phoneticizing the Chinese language and methods of implementing this. Hu Shih spoke on how to make the language easier to teach to illiterates. It was Hu's opinion that the central problem of the Chinese script was whether it could be used "as a tool for the extension of education". He felt that wen-yen, for a number of reasons, could not adequately fulfil this function. However, he opposed Chao's idea of a phonetic script for Chinese, not because he opposed a phonetic script as such, but because he believed that, under

the existing conditions in China, photicization would not be easy to implement. 28

These papers aroused little interest or comment, because, so it seemed to Hu Shih, the prestige of the classical language was too great. Hu gradually came to the conclusion that no reform of education could take place until the classical writings were completely toppled. His studies of the vernacular literature of the European Renaissance, his love of Chinese pai-hua fiction, and his previous experience of writing in the vernacular combined to convince him that it was pai-hua which could, and rightfully should, replace wen-yen as a dignified medium for the writing of Chinese. In order to justify this conclusion, he began a reanalysis of Chinese literature, much in the way that K'ang Yu-wei had reanalysed Confucianist doctrine to prove that Confucius was a reformer. Hu Shih's particular aim was to prove that pai-hua was not just a means of extending education to illiterates, but could produce — indeed it had already produced — good literature. This conclusion was calculated to appeal to those whose prejudice against the phonetic script and pai-hua reform movements arose from the fact that these movements were directed to despised illiterates. Though Hu Shih's effort to prove that pai-hua literature could be good literature would seem, from reading his later writings, to have become an end in itself, it must be borne in mind that his initial stimulus was the realization of the urgent need to educate China's illiterate millions, i.e. the stimulus of Chinese nationalism.

Hu Shih’s hypothesis required that pai-hua substitute wen-yen in all fields of literature. Since poetry was the most stylized and ornate form of classical writing, Hu Shih attempted to prove that some of the best of classical poetry was written, though not consciously so, in pai-hua. Hu’s championing of vernacular poetry naturally awakened strong conservative opposition. His friends, Mei Kuang-ti and Jen Hung-chün both wrote to him in strong terms saying that, while pai-hua might be used for novels, lectures, tz'u and ch'ü, it definitely could not be used for poetry (shih). Hu Shih took up the challenge. In an effort to justify his thesis that pai-hua could substitute all the functions of wen-yen, including the writing of poetry, Hu henceforth devoted much of his energy to experimenting with, and analysis of, pai-hua poetry.

3. The Start of the Literary Revolution

In October 1916, Hu Shih wrote a letter to the correspondence columns of New Youth magazine accusing its editor, Ch'en Tu-hsiu, of an inconsistent attitude to literature; while Ch'en had declared in an article that Chinese literature was "in a stage of classicism and idealism", and should begin to proceed towards "realism", he had almost immediately awarded high praise to an archaistic and cliché-ridden poem. Hu concluded his letter with eight suggestions for

29. This argument - that some of the best of Chinese poetry was written in pai-hua - was presented in a large number of Hu Shih’s essays. See e.g., Hu Shih, "Wen-hsüeh Ke-ming Yün-tung", pp. 15-16.


literary revolution which had emerged from his discussions on this subject with his friends in America. Heading the list was: "Do not use classical allusions".

Then, in an article published in Volume 2, Number 5 of New Youth (1st January, 1917), simultaneously published in The Chinese Students' Monthly, Hu Shih restated and elaborated on these eight points, the "eight don'ts" (ua-pu-cha-i), as he called them. This article entitled "Tentative Proposals for the Reform of Literature" ("Wen-hsueh Kai-liang Ch'u-i"), though it was phrased in mild terms and did not mention the phrase "literary revolution" (wen-hsueh ke-ming), is regarded as the starting point of the literary revolution.

Hu Shih's eight points are as follows:

"(1) Have something worth saying.
(2) Do not imitate the ancient writers.
(3) Pay attention to grammatical construction.
(4) Do not indulge in imaginary melancholy.
(5) Eliminate cliches and superfluities.
(6) Do not use allusions.
(7) Do not be bound by the rules of antithesis.
(8) Do not avoid the use of every-day language."[35]

32. Ibid., p. 3. These points were first mentioned in a letter to his friend Chu Ching-nung on 19th August 1916. See Hu Shih, "Pi Shang Liang Shan", pp. 54-55.

33. There is good reason to believe that Hu Shih's eight-point programme was influenced by the programme of the American Imagist school. For a discussion of this question, see Chapter III below. Other writers see the influence of the Kung-en school of the late Ming dynasty. See Chou Tso-jen, "Wen Hsueh Ke-ming Yü'n-tung", p. 11.

34. This phrase was, however, mentioned in his "Chi Ch'en Tu-hsiu", p. 3.

35. Hu Shih, "Wen-hsueh Kai-liang Ch'u-i", p.5. The translation here is from Huang Sung-k'ang, Lu Hsun and the New Culture Movement of Modern China (hereinafter referred to as Lu Hsun), p. 12.
It was in elaborating the eighth point — "do not avoid the use of everyday language" — that Hu Shih stated the main thesis of his essay. Pai-hua literature, he said, had reached a high level of sophistication during the Yuan dynasty and would have developed as the mainstream of Chinese literature were it not for the action of conservative literati in the Ming dynasty who again made the "eight-legged essay" (pa-ku-wen) the standard for selecting officials in the Imperial examinations. Hu concluded:

"...So to-day, looking at it in historical perspective, we can clearly see how pai-hua literature is the mainstream of Chinese literature and that pai-hua will be the inevitable vehicle for the literature of the future... Because of this, I think that to-day we should use the vernacular for writing prose and poetry. The dead literature of three thousand years ago...does not compare with the living language of the twentieth century..."

Hu's article was warmly welcomed by Ch'en Tu-hsiu who obviously appreciated its revolutionary potential. One month later (February 1917), Ch'en followed it up with an article entitled "Discussion of the Literary Revolution" ("Wen-hueh Ke-ming Lun") in which he said:

"...I am willing to brave the enmity of all the pedantic scholars of the country and hoist the great banner of the "Army of the Literary Revolution" in support of my friend. On this banner in big, clear letters my three great principles of the Revolutionary Army:

(1) To overthrow the painted, powdered, and obsequious literature of the aristocratic few, and to create the plain, simple, and expressive literature of the people;
(2) To overthrow the stereotyped and over-ornamental literature of classicism, and to create the fresh and sincere literature of realism;

(3) To overthrow the pedantic, unintelligible, and obscurantist literature of the hermit and recluse, and to create the plain-speaking and popular literature of society in general."[37]

Though it might be supposed that Hu's article and Ch'en's challenge would be viewed with alarm by conservative scholars, the traditionalists made no immediate show of opposition. In fact, in an attempt to stimulate discussion of the literary revolution in the correspondence columns of New Youth, one of the New Youth writers, Ch'ien Hsiian-t'ung, was himself forced to fake a letter from a "typical traditionalist" opposing the views set forth by Hu and Ch'en.38 On the other hand, Hu's proposals for literary reform received enthusiastic support from young intellectuals in Peking, chief among them being Liu Fu, Ch'ien Hsiian-t'ung, Fu Sau-nien and Lo Chia-lun. Issue upon issue of New Youth was filled with articles, discussions and correspondence on the subject of the literary revolution. In February and June of 1917, Hu Shih published some of the pai-hua poems with which he had

37. Ch'en Tu-hsiau, "Wen-hsüeh Ke-ming Lun", p. 72. Translation from Chow Tse-tsung, The May Fourth Movement, pp. 275-276. The first and third of these principles show clearly that the objections of the literary reformers to the classical literature were objections to the social implications of that literature, i.e. that it was the literature of a minority and for a minority, designed to preserve the social distinction between the educated elite and the illiterate masses.

38. For the text of this letter see Wang Ching-hsüan (pseud.), "Wen-hsüeh Ke-ming Chih Fan-hsiang". This letter was eloquently answered by Liu Fu in his "Fu Wang Ching-hsüan Shu".
been experimenting for almost two years, and in January, 1918, Shen Yin-mo and Liu Fu began to publish their pai-hua poems. With this same issue (Volume 4, Number 1), the various writers of New Youth wrote in the vernacular. It was a great triumph for the champions of the literary revolution.

Yet Hu Shih was not entirely satisfied with the results of the literary revolution to date. In "Towards a Constructive Literary Revolution" ("Chien-she ti Wen-hsüeh Ke-ming Lun"), published in April 1918, he wrote:

"My 'Tentative Proposals for the Reform of Literature' was published more than a year ago. Contrary to my expectations, in these ten or so months this question has inspired a lot of worthwhile discussion and has received a very pleasing response. I think that those of us who advocate literary revolution must necessarily start from a destructive position. But, when we look into it carefully, the old-style literature is really not worth any discussion now. The ku-wen of the T'ung-ch'eng school, the writings of the Wen-hsüeh school, [39] the poetry of the Kiangsi school, [40] the t'zu of the Meng-chuang school, [41]...

39. The Wen-hsüeh school was a school of late Ch'ing prose writers who imitated the style of the Wen-hsüeh, an anthology of writings from 3rd century B.C. to 5th century A.D. Writers of this school included Wang K'ai-yin (1832-1916), Liu Shih-p'ei (1884-1919) and Huang K'an.

40. The poets of the Kiangsi school imitated the style of the Sung poet Huang T'ing-chien (1045-1105). Among them were Ch'en San-li, Cheng Hsiao-hsü and Ch'en Yen. In the early 20th century many poets of this school joined an organization of poets called the Southern Society (Nan-she). For information on the Southern Society see Liu Ya-tzu, Nan-she Chi-lieh.

41. The Meng-chuang school took its name from the hao of the poet Wu Wen-ying (c. 1210-c. 1270) of the Southern Sung Dynasty. His tzu'lu are laden with allusions, obscure and difficult to interpret without detailed commentaries.
and the novels of the Liao Chai Chih I school, [42] - none of these are worth destroying. The reason why they are still in existence is just that there is still no really worthwhile, really vital new literature deserving the name of "literature" to supplant them. If we have "true" literature and "living" literature the "false" and "dead" literature would decay of its own accord".[43]

As though in answer to this plea for real literature in pai-hua, in the next issue of New Youth (May 1918) was published the first pai-hua work of fiction, The Diary of a Madman (K'ung-jen Jih-chi) by Lu Hsun. Publication of this work introduced a writer who was to become the leading figure on the Chinese literary scene in the 1920's and early 1930's, and at the same time heralded the birth of the most successful form of pai-hua literature, the short story.

a. The Opposition to the Literary Revolution

The first determined opposition to the new literature movement came from conservative scholars of Peking University whose organ was a magazine called The National Heritage (Kuo-ku). Kuo-ku held little appeal for youth; its style was archaic and dull, and its writers were untrained in Western thought and criticism. The magazine was shortlived - only four issues. [44]

42. The Liao Chai Chih I is a collection of short mystery stories in the classical style by the early Ch'ing writer P'u Sung-ling. There is an English translation by Herbert Giles under the title, Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio.


Outside the Peking University, groups opposing the new literature considered enlisting the help of Anfu Club (An-fu Chü-lo-du) members, politicians and militarists sympathetic to the warlord Tuan Ch'i-jui, to crush the movement. In late February and early March, 1919, rumours were rife that the Ministry of Education would interfere and that Ch'en Tu-hsiu, Hu Shih, Ch'ien Hsüan-t'ung and others had been dismissed from their teaching posts at the University.45

About this time, the veteran translator and erstwhile reformer Lin Shu went into print voicing his belated opposition to the pai-hua literature movement which, ironically, his translations had helped to inspire.46 In February and March, 1919, he published in the newspaper Hsin Shen Pao two short stories, "Nightmare" ("Yao-meng")47 and "Ching-sheng the Giant" ("Ching-sheng"),48 in which he ridiculed the leaders of the new culture movement. He followed this attack with an open letter to Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei, the principal of the Peking University, in which he alleged that the Peking University had destroyed the principles of Confucius and had elevated the language of


46. The other famous translator of that age, Yen Fu, also strongly disapproved of the new culture movement. However, since he was convinced that wen-yen was imperishable, he had not bothered to take an active part in the dispute on pai-hua literature. See Ch'en Tzu-chan, "Wen-hsieh Ke-ming Yün-tung", pp. 31-32.

47. The text of this story is in Chao Chia-pi (ed.), Ta-hsi, Vol. 2, pp. 435-437.

ricksha boys and peddlars. 49

Lin Shu's rebuff in the form of an open letter from Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei championing individual freedom of belief did not mark the end of opposition to the pai-hua movement. In January, 1922, a number of Western-educated professors at Nanking Higher Normal College began to publish a magazine called Critical Review (Hsi-teh-heng Tsa-chih). These critics, chief among whom were Hu Haien-su, Mei Kuang-ti and Wu Mi, were much more sophisticated than the writers of Kuo-ku, and attacked Hu Shih's arguments with his own weapons - Western literary criticism.

Later on, in July 1925, Chang Shih-chao, then Minister of Education and Minister of Justice, began to publish his Tiger Weekly (Chia-yin Chou-k'an) in which he attacked the new culture movement. 50 However, neither of these two magazines, Hsi-teh-heng Tsa-chih and Chia-yin Chou-k'an, attained much influence, for by this time the battle for the acceptance of pai-hua had already been won.

49. Lin Shu's letter has been reprinted in Chao Chia-pi (ed.), Ta-hsi, Vol. 1, pp. 199-201. Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei's reply is in Ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 193-198. A partial translation of this can be found in Ssu-yu Teng & John Fairbank, China's Response to the West, pp. 238-239.

50. For some of Chang Shih-chao's criticisms of the new culture movement see Ch'en Tzu-chan, "Wen-hsi-teh Ke-ming Yün-tung", pp. 40-43.
b. The May Fourth Movement and the Success of the Literary

Revolution.

Hu Shih himself had expected that success in establishing pai-hua as the medium of communication would only be achieved after thirty or fifty years of experimentation. But in May 1919, shortly after Lin Shu's criticism of pai-hua writing, the new literature and the new culture were suddenly swept to victory on the tide of the first great Chinese nationalist movement. This movement is known as the May Fourth Movement (Wu-ssu Yün-tung). The May Fourth Movement started with a patriotic march on May 4, 1919 by some thousands of Peking students protesting against the decision of the Versailles Peace Conference to hand over Germany's former holdings in Shantung province to Japan. The student march and the ensuing struggle between the intellectuals and the pro-Japanese government, evoked a nation-wide sympathy expressed in strikes, protest marches and boycotts of Japanese goods, eventually resulting in the refusal of the Chinese delegation in Paris to sign the peace treaty.

The leaders of the new literature movement were also leaders of, and inspiration to, the May Fourth Movement. Thus it was that in the popular mind the new literature movement came to be identified with the cause of Chinese nationalism. Once this identification had


52. A full account of the May Fourth Movement and its repercussions is given by Chow Tse-tsung in The May Fourth Movement, and by Hua Kang in Wu-ssu Yün-tung Shih.
taken place, the success of the May Fourth Movement ensured the success of the movement for *pai-hua* literature. Within half a year after the May Fourth incident, about four hundred new periodicals in *pai-hua* made their appearance.\(^{53}\) Shortly after this (January 1920), the Ministry of Education issued an ordinance providing for the substitution of *pai-hua* for *wen-yen* in the first and second years of primary schooling. The battle for the "Literary Revolution" had been won.

CHAPTER II

WEN I-TO'S CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

1. Wen I-to's Childhood

On November 24, 1899, Wen I-to was born into a rich and distinguished family from Hsia-pa-ho village in Hsi-shui hsiien, Hupeh. The Wen family had a tradition of scholarship. Wen's father, a stern scholar in the old tradition and inflexible champion of Confucianist morality, had attained the official rank of hsiu-ts'ai under the Manchu government. He was ambitious for his sons and took pains to ensure that they all received an excellent classical education.

Young I-to was a source of great satisfaction to his father for, while still very young, he showed a capacity for, and delight in, study. In fact, the lad was so studious and serious-minded that he

1. Wen's name was originally I-to, the character "I" later being changed to a different character with the same romanization, "I", but pronounced in the first tone (see glossary). Wen's tzu was Yu-san, and his hao, Yu-shan. Within the family, he was known as Chia-hua. See Wen I-to, Wen I-to Ch'ian-ch'i, Vol. 1, "Nien-p'u" ("Biography") section (hereinafter referred to as "Nien-p'u"), p. 30.

2. Hsia-pa-ho village is on the confluence of the Pa and Yangtze rivers.

preferred reading his books to indulging in the normal childish
delights of watching New Year celebrations or colourful bridal
processions. At the age of five, Wen started study under the
private tutorship of Mr. Hsu. He studied such books as the Three
Character Classic (San Tzu Ching), Yu-hsiheh Ch'iung-lin, the Erh Ya
and the Four Books (Ssu-shu) of the Confucianist canon. The next
year, Mr. Wang Mei-fu was employed as tutor, and under him young
I-to had his first introduction to the "modern studies" which had
become popular as a result of contact with the West, e.g. history,
natural science, ethics etc.

When he was ten years old, Wen went to Wuchang, the Hupeh
provincial capital, where he attended the primary school attached to
the Hunan-Hupeh Normal College, and at the same time studied Chinese
and English at a modern-style private school run by his paternal
uncle Wen Tan-ch'en. His study here was interrupted two years later
by the outbreak of the 1911 rebellion in Wuchang, and I-to returned
home.

In the Spring of 1913, Wen's father, on a visit to Wuchang,
noticed an advertisement for scholarships to Tsing Hua College (Tsing
Hua HaMe-hsiao) in Peking where students were given special training
before being sent to America on government scholarships. By this
time the Imperial examinations, which previously had been the avenue
to office and wealth, had been abolished (1905), and it had become

4. Ibid., p. 9.
increasingly obvious that it was Western knowledge, not Confucianist learning which was to be the future passport to success. From 1905 onwards, the number of students seeking education abroad at their own expense increased rapidly. Wen's father, anxious to have his son become a yang-chuang-yüan (foreign first-class scholar-official), sent I-to to sit for the entrance examinations for Tsing Hua College. I-to's essay in Chinese after the style of Liang Ch'i-ch'ao was highly commended by the examiners, and, despite the fact that his standard in other subjects was somewhat patchy, Wen was chosen as the second of the two students selected from Hupeh province. Wen's family were quite delighted with his success, and a maternal uncle, Mr. Kao, anticipating a bright future for the young scholar, betrothed his daughter, Hsiao-chen, to I-to.

2. Education at Tsing Hua College

Tsing Hua College, later known as Tsing Hua University (Tsing Hua Ta-hstleh), was established in 1911 with funds from the Boxer Indemnity Fund returned by America to China. Its purpose was to prepare students for higher education in America. The original

6. Shu Hsin-ch'eng, Chin-tai Chung-kuo Liu-hsìeh Shih, p. 83, gives figures for those going to America for education at their own expense. In 1924, for instance, out of an estimated 1637 Chinese students studying in the United States, 1075 were private (i.e., not government-sponsored) students. Because of the relative cheapness of education in Japan and the comparative ease of adjustment for Chinese students there, thousands more flocked to Japan for higher education. See Ibid., pp. 224-231, 147-148. See also Chow Tse-tsung, The May Fourth Movement, pp. 31-32.

7. Mien Chih, Wen I-to, p. 11.
policy of the school required that eighty per cent of the students study technical or scientific subjects and twenty per cent study the humanities. This policy was not strictly maintained and eventually the numbers of students studying literary and scientific subjects were approximately equal. After graduating from Tsing Hua College, students spent, on the average, five years in America completing their training.

Both John Dewey and Bertrand Russell visited Tsing Hua during their tours of China in 1919 and 1920-21 respectively, and both were favourably impressed by the college. Russell, for instance, wrote:

"Tsing-Hua College, delightfully situated at the foot of the Western hills, with a number of fine, solid, buildings in good American style, owes its existence entirely to the Boxer indemnity money. It has an atmosphere exactly like that of a small American university, and a (Chinese) President who is an almost perfect reproduction of the American College President. The teachers are partly American, partly Chinese educated in America, and there tends to be more and more of the latter. As one enters the gates, one becomes aware of the presence of every virtue usually absent in China: cleanliness, punctuality, exactitude, efficiency. I had not much opportunity to judge of the teaching, but whatever I saw made me think that the institution was thorough and good. One great merit that belongs to American institutions generally is that students are made to learn English. Chinese differs so profoundly from European languages that even with the most skilful translations a student who knows only Chinese cannot understand European ideas; therefore the learning of some European language is essential, and English is far the most familiar and useful throughout the Far East.

The students of Tsing Hua College learn mathematics and science and philosophy and broadly speaking, the more elementary parts

8. Shu Hsin-ch'eng, Chin-t'ai Chung-kuo Liu-hsiaeh Shih, p. 250.
of what is commonly taught in universities. Many of the best of these go afterwards to America where they take a Doctor's degree. On returning to China they become teachers or civil servants. Undoubtedly, they contribute greatly to the improvement of their country in efficiency and honesty and technical intelligence. "[9]

I-to's scholarship to Tsing Hua, more or less fortuitously acquired, was the most decisive single factor influencing his subsequent career. With his admission to Tsing Hua school Wen was destined to become a member of a small, but extremely influential class in China - the so-called "returned students". Returned students played a major part in the modernization of China during the Nationalist period. Almost all leading figures in the literary revolution, the new culture movement, the May Fourth movement and the ideological controversies of the 1920's and 1930's had been educated abroad, chiefly in America and Japan.

That the returned students wielded a disproportionate influence in the Chinese community can be judged from the nature of the criticism levelled against them in this period. It was said that they were a parasitic class; that study abroad was not a preparation for a particular career, but an avenue to wealth and fame; that many students returned excessively Westernized and advocated indiscriminate reform in China; and that the students on return home from any one country formed a clique monopolizing jobs to the detriment of those who had not trained abroad, and of those who had trained abroad in different countries. [10] These criticisms of returned

students were in some ways justified. Statistics published by Shu Hsin-ch'eng in his book, *A History of Chinese Students Studying Abroad in the Modern Period*, show that very few students returned to practise the professions for which they were trained. In a survey of Tsing Hua students it was found that of fifty-eight students who had studied engineering, only twenty-nine practised it; of twenty-five who had studied mining, only two returned to practise it. On the other hand, while only sixteen students studied commerce, over six times that number - 102 - were engaged in banking, company management, etc.; only one student studied education, but 189 engaged in tertiary or secondary education on return. These figures indicate that openings in technical fields were both few and unprofitable in comparison to the profits to be gained in China's developing commerce and industry. But, more than this, it is obvious that education abroad had neatly taken the place of the examination system of the Imperial era - it was the education of the gentleman which qualified him for any profession. It was, indeed, fittingly symbolic that the term for a person trained abroad was *yang-chuang-yian* (foreign first-class scholar-official).

Within this select and privileged class of returned students, Wen was a member of an even more select group - the "American returned students" (*liu-Mei haiDeh-sheng*). The returned students from America were influenced by English literature, English and American philosophy, and American political ideals. Their views on all these subjects

11. Ibid., pp. 256-257.
were fundamentally opposed to those of the returned students from Japan who were influenced by those Russian, French and East European writers and thinkers whose works were currently in vogue in Japan. The literary and ideological controversies of the 1920's can be seen as a battle for power between American-trained, West European-oriented conservatives and Japanese-trained, Russian-oriented radicals. In later life, Wen's difficulties in the interpretation of Chinese literary history and politics arose from his attempts to reach a conclusion in terms of the liberal American training he had received and believed in.

Wen was not only a returned student from America - he was a Tsing Hua student. Tsing Hua students were a very privileged group. Chosen in highly competitive examinations, these students were, indeed, the intellectual elite of the country. They were early persuaded that they had a mission to fulfil, that they were to be the architects of the China of the future. Because of their American training and their sheltered life at Tsing Hua College, they were, and generally speaking remained, politically conservative in terms of the Chinese political scene at that time. This tendency to political conservatism and conventionality was further reinforced by the fact that many Tsing Hua students found immediate employment in government service on their return from the United States. Many became loyal to, and eventually identified themselves with, the aims and ambitions of the Kuomintang.

The friendships which Wen I-to formed at Tsing Hua endured throughout his life. Liang Shih-ch'iu (the literary critic), Lo Lung-chi (politician and later active member of the Democratic
League), P'an Kuang-tan (also a member of the Democratic League), Jao Meng-k'an (writer and member of the Crescent Society), Wu Ching-ch'ao (the sociologist), Ku Yu-hsiu (engineer and playwright), and Hsiung Fo-hsi (also a playwright) were all friends of Wen's at Tsing Hua and were associated with him in later political, literary or educational activities. It is symbolic of the significance of Wen's education at Tsing Hua in determining the nature of his subsequent career that the name under which he achieved fame, I-to, was chosen for him by a close friend from Tsing Hua, P'an Kuang-tan. 12

Wen was loyal to his alma mater throughout his life. While still at school (July, 1919), he had even published two seven-word classical poems about the Tsing Hua gymnasium and the Tsing Hua library! 13 After he left the college, at least one poem, "Hui-ku" ("Recollection"), was inspired by his life at Tsing Hua and his friends there.

"As I look back on
My nine years at Tsing Hua -
Like a firefly appearing
In the desert of the autumn night
It grows brighter as one looks,
Yet all around is murky, impenetrable, chilling darkness.
Now at the Lotus Pond [14]

13. Ibid., p. 35.
Silence weighs heavy on the water -
The surface shows no ripple -
Dead quiet!
Suddenly the quietness recedes,
The mirror is broken,
Everything breathes.
Look! The sun's smiling flame - a golden beam
Seeps through the trees, anointing my forehead;
Now Hsi-ho [15] has crowned me
King of the universe". [16]

Later, while in America, he started to write a long poem, "Yüan- nei" ("In the Courtyard"), describing life at Tsing Hua, but
apparently did not finish it. [17] In 1932, Wen returned to Tsing Hua
to take up a teaching post and remained with the University (which
during the war was incorporated into the National United South-West
University) until his death in 1946.

At Tsing Hua College Wen developed interests which remained with
him for the rest of his life. He was, and remained, studiously
interested in the Chinese classics. Wen's elder brother recorded
that on one occasion, as Wen was studying, a centipede crawled up his
leg. Wen was so immersed in his books that he did not notice it, and
when his mother brushed it away, he angrily scolded her for
interrupting his reading. [18] Wen spent his summer vacations from
Tsing Hua reading in his study at home - he referred to his study as
his Two Month Cottage (Erh Yüeh Lu), two months being the duration of

15. Hsi-ho is the charioteer of the sun, usually represented as
female.
18. Li Wen Erh Lieh-shih Chi-nien Wei-yüan-hui, Jen-min Ying-lieh,
p. 375.
his summer vacation. It was at this time that he began to write his "Erh Yüeh Lu Man-chi" ("Random Jottings from the Two Month Cottage"), a collection of notes and commentaries on classical (mainly T'ang dynasty) poetry. The "Erh Yüeh Lu Man-chi" was serialised in sixty or seventy parts in the Tsing Hua Chou-k'än (Tsing Hua Weekly.)

By this time, I-to had developed a serious interest in classical poetry, an interest attested by an entry in his diary for February 10, 1919:

"I lay in bed reading Selections of Ch'ing Dynasty Poetry (Ch'ing Shih P'ieh-ts'ai). [21] I have recently decided to dedicate myself to the study of poetry. I will start reading poetry from the Ch'ing and Ming periods and work backwards to the Wei, Han and pre-Ch'in periods. Having first read the P'ieh-ts'ai, I will then take a look at Ming poetry, next selections from Yüan poetry, selections of Sung poetry, then the Complete T'ang Poetry (Ch'üan T'ang Shih), and then selections of poetry of the Eight Dynasties period. In two years time I will have completed this task."[22]

Whether or not I-to completed this self-appointed task we do not know, but later in life he wrote extensively on Chinese poetry, in particular, T'ang poetry and the Ch'ü Ts'ü (Songs of Ch'ü).

19. Wen wrote a poem with the title "The Two Month Cottage" ("Erh Yüeh Lu"). See Wen I-to, Hung Chu, pp. 64-65.

20. The Tsing Hua Weekly was the student newspaper of the Tsing Hua College. It was founded in 1914. In 1915-1916, Wen I-to was one of its editors. ("Nien-p'u", p. 32). The Tsing Hua Weekly should be distinguished from the Tsing Hua Paper (Tsing Hua Hseih-pao) of which Wen was student editor in 1919 and 1920, This latter was a joint publication of staff and students. (Ibid. p. 35).

21. The Ch'ing Shih P'ieh-ts'ai is a volume of selections of early Ch'ing poetry edited by the poet and literary critic, Shen T'ech'ien (1673-1769).

At the same time, it was while he was at Tsing Hua that Wen first came into contact with, and developed an interest in, English poetry, especially nineteenth century Romantics such as Keats, Shelley, Wordsworth, Byron and Elizabeth Browning. These poets greatly influenced his own poetry and his poetic theory.

Wen was also interested at this time in drama. In April, 1919, he wrote in his diary:

"For the last few months, I have been very busy with dramatic activities, day and night with no time for eating or sleeping ...."[23]

Though drama never became Wen's dominant interest, he returned to it several times during his life, e.g., while he was a student in America, and many years later in Kunming.

In 1915–1916, Wen was one of the editors of the Tsing Hua Chou-k'an, and in 1919–1920 he was the student editor of the Tsing Hua Hsin-pao, a joint publication of staff and students at Tsing Hua. To these two magazines, Wen contributed a great variety of items – poems in the five-word and seven-word styles, translations, essays on poetry, and commentaries on Tsing Hua life and current affairs. It was not until the very last years of his life that Wen again began to write on such a wide range of topics.

Last, but not least, in July, 1920, Wen published the first of his poems in pai-hua, "Hsi-an" ("The Western Bank").[24]

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23. Ibid., p. 34.
3. Wen I-to and the New Culture Movement

As we have seen in Chapter I above, Hu Shih's essay, "Wen-hsieh Kai-liang Ch'u-i" ("Tentative Suggestions for the Reform of Literature"), published in January, 1917, and the subsequent discussions of the "literary revolution" in the pages on New Youth, had provoked great excitement among the intellectuals, students and teachers of Peking University. From the beginning of January, 1918, all the articles in New Youth were in the colloquial language. Lu Hsün published his K'uang-jen Jih-chi (Diary of a Madman) in May 1918, and Hu Shih and others had already begun publication of their pai-hua experimental poems. Peking was seething with the new, liberal, Western-inspired ideas of the so-called "new culture movement".

Yet Tsing Hua College, only twelve miles from Peking, seemed strangely indifferent to all this. The reason probably lay in the fact that the more conservative students of Tsing Hua were unwilling to jeopardise their opportunity to go abroad by joining movements unpopular with the authorities. As late as February 1919, I-to mentioned in his diary how very impressed he had been by the polished elegance of Yen Fu's wen-yen translation of Huxley's Evolution and Ethics (translated under the title of T'ien Yen Lun). But, events were moving fast. Only one week later, a meeting of the Hsüeh-pao editors decided that henceforth contributions to Hsüeh-pao would be

written in pai-hua. An entry in Wen's diary for March 1, 1919, said: "Hstteh-pao has been written in pai-hua — I am hoping for good results. I don't want to join with all the others in ridiculing it."26

Nevertheless, it was not until after the May Fourth Incident that the Tsing Hua students were really roused from their complacency to throw in their lot with the supporters of the new literature and new culture movements. Probably it was Wen I-to who was instrumental in encouraging the Tsing Hua students to support the May Fourth movement, for it was he, who, early on the morning of May 5, had secretly posted on the dining-room door a copy of Yo Fei's rousing patriotic poem to the tune of "Man Chiang Hung".27

"My hair bristles in my helmet.
Standing in my porch I see that the pattering rain has ceased.
I raise my eyes to the skies and shout with the vigour of my ambitions.
At the age of thirty fame and great deeds are nothing but earth and dust.
Eight thousand li away lie the clouds and the moon.
Do not tarry: the hair of young men grows white with empty sorrow,
The shame heaped on us in Chingkung [sic, Ching-k'ang] is not yet wiped away.
When will the sorrow of the Emperor's subjects come to an end?
O let us drive endless chariots through the Ho-lan pass.
Now our sweet ambitions are directed upon the flesh of the Huns.
Laughing we thirst for the blood of the Hsiung-nu.

26. Ibid., p. 34.
27. Ibid., p. 34.
O let everything begin afresh!
Let all the rivers and mountains return to us
Before we pay our respects once more to the Emperor."[28]

Because of his literary talent and excellent calligraphy, Wen was chosen as secretary to the Tsing Hua Students' Union, and in fulfilling these duties, he spent all his time in Tsing Hua College and was never able to participate actively in the demonstrations and speech-making. This was a cause of shame and regret to him all his life.

After the May Fourth Movement there was a dramatic expansion of the intellectual horizons and political awareness of the Tsing Hua students, as can be seen from a comparison of student activities at Tsing Hua before and after the Movement:

"Prior to the incident, from the establishment of the Republic in 1918, students had founded organizations for religious affiliation, such as the Y.M.C.A. and the Buddhist Club, for boxing, science, Confucianism, and the like. In the post-incident period these organizations still existed, but their activities were expanded and sometimes changed to include more social survey and social service work. In the years 1919-1922, the students created a night school and library for servants and janitors, societies for the study of agriculture, art, political science, economics, poetry, drama, and music, and organizations for the promotion of public speeches and debating, and of Esperanto. A student court similar to American student judicial organizations was also founded. And, most important, the student union established in 1919 became the nucleus of all the student activities at the college in the following years."[30]

29. Wen I-to, "Wu-sau Li-shih Tso-t'an", p. 7.
Wen was a prominent member of the Tsing Hua Literary Society (Tsing Hua Wen-hsiêh she), established in October 1921, which emphasised both literary criticism and creative writing. In December of that year, Wen presented a paper to the Literary Society entitled "A Study of Rhythm in Poetry", which is probably the embryonic form of his theory of rhythm and poetic form.

Although there is no record of Wen's artistic activities while he was at Tsing Hua, the fact that he had elected to go to the Art Institute of Chicago is sufficient evidence of his continuing interest in painting. 31

Wen was scheduled to go to America in July, 1921. However, the University authorities, in recrimination against those students who had participated in the May Fourth Movement, 32 ordered students to sit for a supplementary examination, additional to the regular terminal examinations, before they would be permitted to go abroad. The students were indignant, and all refused to take the examination. The authorities eventually broke the strike by declaring that students who apologised to the school authorities would be allowed to go abroad; those who did not, would be obliged to remain an extra year at school. Wen held firm, and, in consequence, his study in America was delayed for one year.

31. As a child, Wen showed considerable artistic talent. After the rebellion at Wuchang in 1911, for instance, he painted a set of paintings depicting the course of the rebellion. He was then twelve years old. ("Nien-p'u", p.32). Two of Wen's ink drawings are reproduced in the first volume of The Complete Works.

32. Mien Chih, Wen I-to, p. 18.
During this year, Wen concentrated on pai-hua poetry which he had begin to write in July 1920 (some considerable time, it should be noted, after the publication in 1917 of the first experiments in pai-hua poetry). By the time he left for America he had published fourteen "new poems", and two pieces of criticism, "P'ing Pen-hse-hnien Chou-k'an li ti Hsin Shih" ("Criticising the New Poetry in Tsing Hua Weekly During this Academic Year"), and "A Study of Rhythm in Poetry", already mentioned. The poems, strongly influenced by English poetry, compare very favourably with other poetry being written in China at this time (1920-1922). But this is the subject of another chapter.

In February 1922, Wen went home to Hsi-shui for his marriage to Miss Kao Haiao-chen to whom he had been betrothed after his success in the entrance examinations for Tsing Hua College nine years earlier. It does seem strange, in view of Wen's participation in the May Fourth Movement and the boycott of examinations at Tsing Hua in 1921, and in view of his contact with, and support for, the "new thought", that he should have agreed to a marriage arranged by his parents in the traditional style. Arranged marriage was an institution which

33. Wen did, however, lead his Tsing Hua friends in the writing of pai-hua poems. In his essay, "Criticising the New Poetry in Tsing Hua Weekly During this Academic Year" (June 1921), he stated that of the sixteen pieces of new poetry published during the preceding year, he himself had composed six. ("Nien-p'u", p. 36.)

34. The achievements of Chinese new poetry up to this point will be the subject of Chapter III; Wen's own poetry will be treated at length in Chapter VI, and his literary criticism in Chapter V.
had been under strong attack by the leaders of the new culture movement. The answer to this question perhaps lies in the fact that Hsiao-chen was herself a product of the modern-style education, having been a talented student at the Hupeh Women's Normal College (Hu-peH Ng-tzu Shih-fan Hsueh-t'ang) where she, too, had become interested in the new thought movement. Though Wen submitted to an arranged marriage, he did make some protest against the old morality. To show his distaste for traditional etiquette, I-to refused to kowtow to his parents, but only bowed three times. On his wedding night, as well-wishers crowded the house, Wen stayed in his room reading, and had to be forced by his friends and relatives to come out and take part in the ceremonies.

In May of that year (1922), Wen's nine years as a student in the sheltered atmosphere of Tsing Hua College came to an end. Regretfully he left the college where he had spent so many happy and creative years, and returned home to Hsi-shui to prepare for his journey abroad.

35. Mien Chih, Wen I-to, p. 21. It would seem that despite the passionate attacks by young intellectuals on the system of arranged marriages, very few indeed at that time actually chose their own spouses. A survey of the marital circumstances of 631 male college and high school students in 1921 (one year before Wen was married), revealed that of 184 married students, only five had chosen wives for themselves. The proportions among engaged students were similar. See Chow Tse-tsung, The May Fourth Movement, p. 286c.


CHAPTER III

NEW POETRY

1. Hu Shih and the New Poetry

The dominant figure in the early years of the new poetry movement, was, undoubtedly, the poet, theorist and literary critic, Hu Shih. The substance of his theory is summed up in a number of important essays written from 1917 to 1921. These are:

"Tentative Proposals for the Reform of Literature" ("Wen-hsüeh Kailiang Ch' u-i", January, 1917); "Towards a Constructive Literary Revolution" ("Chien-she ti Wen-hsüeh Ke-ming Lun", April, 1918);

"On New Poetry" ("T'an Hsin Shih, October, 1919); and the prefaces to his first volume of new poetry, "Ch'ang-shih Chi Tzu-hsü" (August, 1919), and "Ch'ang-shih Chi Tsai Pan Tzu-hsü" (August, 1920). All the poetry produced in the early years of the literary revolution can be seen as an attempt to implement at least some of Hu Shih's ideas, and from a negative viewpoint, the new poetry of later years was directed towards counteracting the trends arising from the implementation of these ideas.
The Revolution in Form

Because of the great influence of Hu Shih's writings on the history of the development of new poetry, we shall now examine the most important of these, "T'an Hsin Shih" ("On New Poetry").

Hu Shih began by stating that all literary revolutions start with a revolution in form, and thence proceed to a revolution in spirit.

"I have often said that probably all literary revolutionary movements, whether ancient or modern, Eastern or Western, start with [the question of] "literary form"; for the most part, all seek first of all an emancipation in such things as language, script, and style. When, three hundred years ago, the vernacular writings of the various European countries displaced writings in Latin, this was an emancipation in language. The literary reform advocated by such people as the French poet, Victor Hugo, and the English poet, Wordsworth, is an emancipation in the language of poetry. The revolution in poetry in the West over the last few decades is an emancipation in language and style. Our present literary revolution also seeks [to effect] first of all an emancipation in respect of language and style. The language of new literature is pai-hua, and the style - free and unrestricted."[1]

Hu Shih later went on to explain what he meant by the "free" and "unrestricted" form of new poetry. New poetry, he said, "is not bound by [prosodic] rules, does not conform to [the rules for] level (p'ing) and deflecting (tse) tones, and is not of regulated length. It can be written on any subject you like, and however you like."[2]

2. Ibid., p.171.
Communist commentators and others, on the basis of statements such as those above, have accused Hu Shih of being interested only in the formalistic aspects of literary reform. This criticism is unjust, for it is clear from Hu Shih's remarks in "T'an Hsin Shih", that he believed that emancipation in literary forms was only the beginning, not the end, of the literary revolution. Hu Shih wrote:

"At first glance this (i.e., his idea of the need for emancipation in form) would seem to be only a question of "literary form", and [therefore] not of special importance. [Such a criticism] does not recognise the close connection between form and content. Restriction of form does not allow the free development of the spirit, or the full expression of good content. If one aims to have new content and new spirit [in poetry], one must destroy those fetters which hamper the spirit. - The new poetry movement in China can be regarded as "an emancipation in poetic form". Once one brings about an emancipation in poetic form, rich material, close observation, deep thought and complex feeling can enter into poetry. The five-character and seven-character regulated poem (lù shìh) cannot contain rich material; the twenty-eight character chüeh-chü cannot describe close observation; the five-character and seven-character line length really cannot easily bring out deep thought and complex feeling."[5]

Though in "T'an Hsin Shih" Hu Shih did not elaborate on these four points - material, observation, thought and feeling, it is clear from his remarks in other contexts that he regarded these four aspects as crucial in the development of new poetry. Moreover, his remarks on this subject had a great influence on his contemporaries who tried to embody these ideals in their own work.

b. "Rich Material"

On the question of "rich material" (feng-fu ti ts'ai-liao), Hu Shih had already given his opinion in "Chien-she ti Wen-hsüeh Ke-ming Lun" when he wrote:

"It is insufficient just to draw for [literary] material on the three [conventional] topics of officialdom, prostitution, and lower class society. Such subjects as: the poor in modern society, male and female factory workers, ricksha pullers, farmers in the interior, big compradors and petty shop-keepers and the hardships of life - [these subjects] have not yet found their place in literature. Moreover, contemporary problems such as the conflict of the new and old cultures, family tragedies, marital sorrows, the position of women, and the unsuitability of education... all can be the material of literature."[6]

Indeed, Hu Shih, Shen Yin-mo and Liu Pan-nung (Liu Fu) in the very first batch of new poems to appear in New Youth in January 1918, had already shown their preoccupation with some of the subjects listed by Hu Shih as suitable literary material. Both Hu Shih and Shen Yin-mo (and Liu Pan-nung in a subsequent issue) had written poems on ricksha pullers.

The poor, factory workers, farmers, domestic tragedy, the position of women - the humanitarian bias of all these recommended topics is quite obvious. This humanitarian trend, one of the most important trends in new literature (poetry, prose and drama), will be discussed at length later, but meanwhile one should note a possible connection between this trend and Hu Shih's contention that a free poetic form can allow the poet to explore a wider range of

poetic material.

c. "Close Observation"

What Hu Shih meant by "close observation" (ching-mi ti kuan-ch'i) is not explained in "T'an Hsin Shih", but from remarks in another essay, again on the question of the subject matter of literature, it would seem that Hu was making an attack on the descriptive clichés of ku-wen, and advocating personal observation as the basis of description. He said:

"To-day literary materials are dreamt up from behind closed doors... The materials of real writers are based on "actual observation and individual experience". If you cannot observe reality, you cannot be a writer; if you have no personal experience [of what you write] you also will not make a writer."[7]

d. "Deep Thought"

Hu Shih's advocating "deep thought" (kao-shen ti li-hsiang) in the new poetry was to have great influence on contemporary and future experiments in pai-hua verse. In the early period of new poetry, this "deep thought" was characterised by a strong preoccupation with humanitarian questions - in particular, the social problem of poverty and the great barrier between rich and poor. Preoccupation with these topics, as we have seen, was also a natural development for writers who followed Hu Shih's advice and expanded their range of materials to deal with such topics as "male

7. Ibid., pp. 67-68.
and female factory workers", etc.

But the romantic, humanitarian trend in the new literature was not merely a sign that the arbitrary recommendations of one prophet had been put into practice. It was more a reflection of the intellectual climate of the time. In the pre-May Fourth period, the writers clustered around New Youth and Hsin Ch'ao showed strong reformist zeal. During and after the May Fourth period, this feeling was shared by many students and intellectuals throughout China who had begun to devote themselves to serious study of China's social problems, particularly the problem of poverty. Thus in the May Fourth period, students and intellectuals in many universities started to tackle the problem of illiteracy by way of education campaigns, free schools, script reform, and pai-hua writing.

Hu Hsien-su criticised Hu Shih's Experimental Verse (Ch'ang-shih Chi) for, among other things, "dead and tasteless didacticism", and "meaningless philosophising". It is unfortunately true that whatever effect this moralising didacticism may have had at the time (1917-1920), in retrospect the approach of the philosophising

8. Hsin Ch'ao (The Renaissance) was a pai-hua monthly started by students at Peking University who were strongly in favour of the "new culture" and "new literature". It started publication on January 1, 1919. Its editors were Fu Ssu-nien and Lo Chia-lun. For a statement of the aims and intentions of the editors of Hsin Ch'ao, see Chao Chia-pi (ed.), Ta-hsi, 10, pp. 62-64, "Hsin Ch'ao Fa-k'an Chih-ch'U Shu".

humanitarian writers seems very heavy-handed.  

For this heavy-handedness, Hu Shih's theory of "concrete presentation of an abstract topic" was in a great measure responsible. For time after time, with unending monotony, these poems sought to contrast rich and poor by juxtaposing "concrete" descriptions of the different ways of life. Hu Shih's "Jen-li-ch'ê-fu" ("Ricksha Boy"), Shen Yin-mo's "Jen-li-ch'ê-fu" ("Ricksha Boy") and "San-hsien" ("Guitar"), Liu Pan-nung's "Hsiang-ke I-ts'eng Chih" ("Separated by one Sheet of Paper") and Ch'en Tu-hsiau's "Ch'ü-hsai Ko" ("Song of the New Year") are good examples of the didacticism of this sort of poetry. Liu Pan-nung's "Hsiang-ke I-ts'eng Chih" will illustrate this genre:

"Inside a fire has been set,  
And the master orders water-melon.  
'It's not cold, and the fire is too hot', he says;  
'Don't let it roast me!'  
Outside lies a beggar,  
His teeth gritted, he cries to the north wind - 'Oh let me die!'

10. Poems with a humanitarian theme were by no means unknown in classical poetry, especially on such topics as poverty, the distress of war, conscription, deserted wives, etc. A famous example is "Ku-erh Hsing" ("The Orphan"), in Ting Fu-pao (ed.), Ch'üen Han San-kuo Chin Nan-pei-ch'ao Shih, pp. 72-73. Translation in Arthur Waley, One Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems, pp. 27-29. Indeed, Shen Yin-mo's poem, "Ricksha Boy" ("Jen-li-ch'ê-fu") has been likened to this very poem. See Hu Shih, "T'an Hsin Shih", p. 172. Tu Fu, especially, was noted for his poems of social protest, e.g., "Ch'un Wang", in Ch'ien Ch'ien-i, Ch'ien Chu Tu Shih, ch'ian 9, p. 314. The classical poems on these themes were infinitely more subtle than their modern counterparts, perhaps because they were written spontaneously, not programmatically.

11. See below.
So sad that separating inside from outside
Is only one sheet of paper!"[12]

Some writers sought to express their humanitarian ideals
through a parable-like form. Liu Pan-nung's "O" ("Hunger"), quoted
below, is a good example.

"He is hungry; quietly sitting in the doorway he thinks of
nothing; just languishing; he gnaws his fingers.
Looking across the vacant allotment, he sees a crowd of
children singing and playing hide-and-seek.
He thinks to himself; why don't I go and join them? But,
I always feel so weak. I will sit in the doorway and watch.
He looks at the shadows slowly growing longer, and watches
the sunlight growing dim. 'Mummy says the sun is going home
to sleep'.
He watches the smoke from the houses everywhere rising up;
he watches the crows calling as they fly towards a distant
tower. He says: 'Are you all going home to sleep? Have
you all had enough food to eat?..."[13]

Whatever the method used to express this humanitarian idealism,
the general preoccupation of the new literature with humanitarian
questions was enduring.

Indeed, by the time Hu Shih wrote "T'an Hsin Shih", the
literary critic, Chou Tso-jen had already published his famous essay,
"Humane Literature" ("Jen ti Wen-hsüeh") giving theoretical
justification to the writing of humanitarian literature. These
ideas were developed and put into practice by the Literary Research
Society (Wen-hsüeh Yen-chiu Hui), of which Chou Tso-jen was a
foundation member. This society was established in January, 1921
to promote the study of literature and the translation of Western

books. Literature, its members believed, "is a mirror of humanity which, by its compassionate and dignified light can fuse together all classes of man, all countries and all individuals, and in its deep humanitarian spirit, can gently sweep away all differences. Only literature, in this tumultuous and murderous modern world can call out the gospel for all mankind, and can make the oppressor class [develop] deep sympathy for the oppressed classes...."

Though the "deep thought" expressed in the new poetry according to the prescription of Hu Shih was often concerned with social problems, it was not necessarily so. A number of writers liked to use their poetry as a vehicle for the individualistic expression of their personal philosophies of life. Chief among these was the poetess Ping Hsin (Hsieh Wan-ying) whose two collections of verse, Fan Hsing and Ch' un Shui, were greatly influenced in both philosophy and style by the poetry of Tagore. This sort of poetry, known as "philosophising poetry" (li-lun shih or che-li shih), was scathingly criticised by the left-wing Ch' eng Fang-wu in his essay "Defence

14. For a discussion of the Literary Research Society, see William Ayers, "The Society for Literary Studies, 1921-1930".


16. Ch' eng Fang-wu was a prominent member of the Creation Society and a personal friend of Kuo Mo-jo. It was Ch' eng Fang-wu with his essay "From Literary Revolution to Revolutionary Literature" ("Ts'ung Wen-hsüeh Ke-ming Ts'ao Ke-ming Wen-hsüeh") who in 1927 opened the great battle over "revolutionary literature". After 1928 he went to Europe, and on his return about a year later, took no further interest in literary polemics.
of Poetry" ("Shih ti Fang-yü-chan"). He wrote:

"Of course, in classical poetry there was quite a lot of philosophy, but this was only an accidental phenomenon; certainly no-one set about writing poetry by first working themselves into a philosophical state of mind. Nowadays, our so-called philosophising poets often write poetry simply for the purpose of presenting their so-called philosophies ... and the result is only truncated ideas and abstract writing. ..."[17]

Ping Hsin (against whose poetry the above attack by Ch'eng Fang-wu was largely launched) was, as we have seen, an admiring and imitator of the Indian poet Tagore who visited China in 1924. Tagore's great popularity with several other major poets of the era (e.g., Kuo Mo-jo, Chou Tso-jen and Hsü Chih-mo) to some extent guaranteed the continuation of "philosophising" as a major element in the new poetry. This poetic philosophising, with its humanitarian bent, tended easily towards didacticism, which no doubt facilitated the Leftist "proletarian literature" movement of the 1920's.

e. "Complex Feeling"

When Hu Shih said that new poetry should contain "complex feeling" (fu-tsa ti kan-ch'ing), he was no doubt voicing criticism of what he considered to be the emotional insipidity and bankruptcy of the imitative old poetry. Now, when one looks at the corpus of new poetry produced in the early years after the literary revolution, it is clear that this poetry with "complex feeling" had

developed into a new trend in Chinese poetry - love poetry in the European style. Whereas the most conspicuous feature of European poetry has been its preoccupation with "love", Chinese poetry produced few poems dealing frankly with "love", and none which idealised "love".

Hu Shih himself wrote a number of love poems (e.g., "T'ao", "I Hsiao", "I Nien" and "Ying-kai") of which "Ying-kai" ("I Should") was especially admired and widely imitated. For this reason I shall quote it here:

"Perhaps she loves me - perhaps still loves me, -
Yet she always urges me to stop loving her.
She often scolds me;
To-day with tearful eyes, she looked at me
And said: 'How is it that you still long for me?
If you long for me, how must you be towards her?
If you truly love me,
You should love her as you love me,
And give her the love you give me.'
She was right:
Lord help me!
'I should' do as she says." [19]

This poem is scarcely impressive, but, taken in context it can be seen to represent a completely new departure in the history of Chinese poetry - a love poem.


19. Text in Chao Chia-pi (ed.), Ta-hsi, Vol. 8, pp. 33-34. The poem "Ying-kai" is thought to refer to a particular incident in Hu Shih's life. During his period of study in America, Hu Shih had become very friendly with a girl student at Columbia University, Miss Ch'en Heng-che, whom he hoped to marry. However, Hu's marriage had already been arranged by his mother and, after painful deliberation, Hu decided to respect his parents' wishes on the question of marriage.
This new trend was developed by the four poets of the Hu-p'an (Lakeside) group, Wang Ching-chih, P'an Mo-hua, Feng Hadeh-feng, and Ying Hsiu-jen, who all specialised in writing love poems.

The development of love poetry, however, was not only a sign of the introduction of a new theme into poetry; it was also closely connected with the atmosphere of protest against traditional mores which accompanied the May Fourth Movement. During and after the May Fourth Movement, there was a great deal of spirited criticism by intellectuals of the traditional marriage system, and the inferior social position of women. Exploration of the tragedy of arranged marriage was one of the most frequent topics of authors, poets and playwrights after the May Fourth Movement, and although this was particularly noticeable in novels and plays, one should note a connection between the development of love poetry and the spirit of social protest of that era.

f. Rhythm and Rhyme

Returning to discussion of "T'an Hsin Shih", let us see what Hu Shih has to say on the rhythm of new poetry.

"To-day those who attack new poetry all say that new poetry has no rhythm. Unfortunately, a few of the writers of new poetry are also of the opinion that new poetry need not emphasise rhythm. They are all wrong. Those who attack new poetry themselves fail to understand what rhythm is; they think that rhythm consists of end-rhyme and a pattern of level and deflecting tones."[20]

In fact, Hu Shih pointed out, a number of famous and well-loved poems sound quite harmonious to the ear, despite the fact that, when transcribed in terms of level and deflecting tones, they do not conform to the accepted standards of tonal harmony. Hu Shih continued:

"The rhythm of poetry is dependent upon two important factors: one is the natural rhythm of speech; the second is the natural harmony of the words in each line. As for [such matters as] end-rhyme, and level and deflecting tones, none of these is important. So long as the speech is natural and the words harmonious, it does not matter if there is no rhyme ..."

Hu shih's concept of "natural rhythm" (tzu-ji an ti yin-chieh) is something quite new in the history of Chinese verse, in which, traditionally, a stylised and emphatic rhythm was a feature of all poetry. But, Hu explained, since pai-hua, the language of new poetry, is very different to wen-yen, the traditional concept of rhythm would have to be adapted to accord with the peculiar characteristics of pai-hua. There were two main determinants of rhythm in classical poetry; the first was regulated line length and regulated foot length (each foot in sense-group scansion consisting of two characters, one character being a half-foot); the second was the arrangement of level and deflecting tone words. In pai-hua, a more verbose language than wen-yen, each sense-group foot could consist of two, three, four or even five characters. Hu Shih proposed that there should be no restrictions either on the length

21. Ibid., pp. 174-175.
22. Ibid., p. 175.
of the poetic line (for this would cramp the poet's inspiration) or on the length of the poetic foot (for this would imply a denial of the linguistic properties of pai-hua). The implementation of these rules would ensure that pai-hua verse would have the rhythm of "natural" (i.e., random) speech. As regards the second determinant of poetic rhythm in classical verse - the system of arrangement of level and deflecting tone words - Hu Shih felt that, due to sound changes over the years, the old tone categories were no longer relevant. He therefore proposed that the important consideration in tonal harmony should be the harmonious and natural distribution of high and low, and light and heavy sounds. In addition he recommended that the poet should enhance the "natural harmony" by the use of alliteration and assonance, devices used, incidentally, extensively in classical verse.

As regards rhyme in new poetry, Hu Shih said that it could be "free" in three ways:

"Firstly [new poetry] uses rhymes based on modern [pronunciation], and is not bound to rhymes in level and deflecting tone categories. Secondly, level and deflecting tones can rhyme with each other, as they do, not only in the new poetry, but also in tz'u and ch'u. Thirdly, if you use rhymes, that is all right; but if there are no rhymes, that does not matter. The tone of new poetry is in its essence - in the natural [distribution] of light and heavy, high and low [sounds] and the natural divisions of speech, and therefore, whether there are rhymes or not is not important."

23. Ibid., pp. 177-179.
24. Ibid., p. 177.
25. Ibid., p. 179.
In summary, Hu Shih's stricture on the form of new poetry stressed that new poetry should be "free" and "unrestricted". The poetic lines were to be preferably of uneven length, the rhythm was to be "natural rhythm" achieved by the harmonious arrangement of words within the line, and rhyme was unnecessary.

2. The "Prose-poem" and the "Little Poem"

Though Hu Shih himself experienced difficulty in putting his own ideas into practice (for he never really escaped the influence of traditional poetry), his contemporary imitators, chiefly Liu Pan-nung, Shen Yin-mo and Chou Tso-jen were more successful. For instance, writing to Hu Shih's programme for "free and unrestricted" form, Shen Yin-mo composed the following "poem", "San-hsien" ("Guitar").

"Chung-wu shih-hou huo i-yang ti t'ai-yang mei fa ch'ü che-lan, jang t'a chih shai-che ch'ang chieh-shang. Ching-ch'iao-ch'iao shao jen hsing lu, chih yu-yu feng lai, ch'ui-tung lu-p'ang yang-shu..." etc. [27]

26. This was the result of a conscious effort by Hu Shih to free himself from the influence of the old five-character and seven-character poetry by deliberately writing lines of uneven length. See Hu Shih, "Ch'ang-shih Chi Tzu-hsü", p. 201. Many of Hu Shih's earlier poems (e.g., "T'a" and "T'eng-yu") were unconsciously written in regular five-character form.

27. Partial romanization has been given here to illustrate the free-verse form of the poem. It is neither rhymed nor divided into lines.
"At midday the fiery sun has nowhere to hide and beats down on the long road. Scattered people silently walk the roads. From afar a breeze [blows up] and rustles the trees beside the road.

Within the broken gate, a courtyard luxuriant with green grass, all flashing in the gold sunlight. At the side, a low wall blocks off the guitar player, but it cannot shut off the sound of strumming.

Outside sits a poor old man, his hands clasping his head. He cannot hear a thing."[28]

This poem belongs to the type known as "prose-poem" (san-wen shih), and its form is the logical result of the implementation of Hu Shih's ideas on "free" poetic form. Generally speaking, the san-wen shih (of which "San-hsien" is quite typical) were dull, serious, didactic and unlyrical; in fact, the very antithesis of Chinese traditional poetry. Of course, the san-wen shih writers were not without their supporters among a limited circle, though among conservatives, understandably, they aroused strong opposition.

Another poetic genre of the day, which was regarded by critics as a sub-group of the san-wen shih was the so-called "little poem" (hsiao shih). The hsiao shih had its origin in the translation of Japanese waka and haiku into Chinese by Chou Tso-jen. The identification of hsiao shih and san-wen shih is purely superficial. For although to Chinese familiar with traditional shih the waka and haiku might seem to be a complete revolution in poetic form, the Japanese poems were themselves the product of strict


29. For articles in support of the san-wen shih, see Hsi Ti, "Lun San-wen Shih" and T'eng Ku, "Lun San-wen Shih".
prosodic rules. In fact, as the critic Ch'eng Fang-wu pointed out, the writing of hsiao shih could be regarded as a complete, though unconscious, reversal of the tenets of the literary revolution. Criticising the hsiao shih genre he made two main points:

"1. Our new literature is right now in the constructive stage; we wish to develop our natural talents and freely and without restriction create new forms and new contents. We cannot be hampered by regulated forms....

2. Our new literature should be based on sincere emotions. We cannot tolerate the frivolous attitude of the haikai poems."[30]

The "little poems" found devoted practitioners in such writers as Ping Hsin (against whom Ch'eng Fang-wu's attack was largely directed), Chou Tso-jen and the Hu-p'au group of poets, but they enjoyed only brief popularity. For all these writers were soon eclipsed by the Whitmanesque brilliance of Kuo Mo-jo.

3. The Influence of American Imagism

Achilles Fang in his paper "From Imagism to Whitmanism in Recent Chinese Poetry: A Search for Poetics that Failed", attributes the barrenness of new poetry in the early years not to lack of talent in the poets themselves, nor yet to the actual programme of literary revolution, but to the fact that Hu Shih never acknowledged to his followers his debt to American Imagism. Instead, he put the case for the literary revolution purely in terms of Chinese literary history (with occasional illustrations

from Western literary history), and failed to inform his bemused disciples of the origin or significance of the theory that they were enthusiastically putting into practice. Inevitably the poetry produced under these circumstances was mediocre.

That Hu Shih had been influenced by the American Imagist school of poets is quite clear if one looks at his famous eight points for literary revolution (ma-pu-chu-i)\(^1\) alongside Amy Lowell's "Imagist Credo". The first injunction in the "Imagist Credo" was: "To use the language of common speech, but to employ always the exact word, not the nearly exact, nor the merely decorative word!" "The language of common speech", she explains, "means a diction which carefully excludes inversions and clichés of the old poetic jargon...."\(^2\)

The first principle, clearly an injunction against stylised poetic diction, found its echo in five of Hu Shih's eight points, although these latter naturally refer specifically to the Chinese literary scene: "Pay attention to grammatical construction"; "eliminate clichés and superfluities"; "do not use allusions"; "do not be bound by the rules of antithesis"; and "do not avoid the use of everyday language".

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31. See above.

32. Amy Lowell, *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry*, p. 239.
The second Imagist principle was: "to create new rhythms - as the expression of new moods - and not to copy old rhythms, which merely echo old moods.... In poetry a new cadence means a new idea". The spirit of this injunction was similar to that of Hu's remaining three principles: "have something worth saying"; "do not imitate the ancient writers"; and "do not indulge in imaginary melancholy"; that is, that changes in metre and form can effect changes in the spirit of the poem. This is, moreover, reminiscent of Hu Shih's contention expressed in the beginning of "T'an Hsin Shih" that freedom in the form of the poem will correspondingly affect the tone and contents.

The third Imagist principle - "to allow absolute freedom in the choice of subject", brings to mind Hu Shih's statement that the new literature should draw on "rich material".

As we have noted above, the formal requirements of Hu Shih's eight points were energetically followed by aspiring poets, so that, by the time that Chou Tso-jen was advocating hsiao shih, the new poetry had broken completely away from the classical tradition. Up to the fifth and last section of "T'an Hsin Shih", Hu Shih had made no new revelations as to the sources of the theoretical basis of his own poetry writing - all of his ideas on content, rhythm and rhyme could be deduced from careful reading of his earlier writings, e.g., "Chi Ch'en Tu-hsiu", "Wen-hsüeh Kai-liang Ch'u-i", and "Chien-

33. Ibid., p. 239.
34. Ibid., pp. 239-240.
she ti Wen-hsueh Ke-ming Lun. But in the fifth section, Hu Shih made a revelation which, by its proximity to the fourth and fifth Imagist principles given by Amy Lowell (and reinforced by the observed similarity between Hu Shih's eight points and others of the Imagist principles) shows without doubt the great debt which the new poetry movement, or, more particularly, its prophet Hu Shih, owes to the American Imagist movement.

Hu Shih wrote:

"I say that poetry should be written in concrete terms; it cannot be written in abstracts. All good poetry is concrete; the more it tends towards concreteness, the more it has the flavour of poetry. All good poetry must awaken in our minds one, or more, clear and salient images. This is what is meant by concreteness in poetry." [35]

Hu Shih then went on to give examples from Chinese classical poetry of sensory impressions created by "concrete" imagery, and abstract ideas conveyed in "concrete" terms. It was Hu Shih's opinion that the reason for the failure of much of modern Chinese poetry was that the writers presented abstract ideas in abstract

35. Hu Shih, "T'ian Hsin Shih", p. 182.

36. The best known of these is Ma Chih-yuan's poem to the tune of T'ien Ching Sha" which Hu Shih explained "has images strung together one after another". These images are what Hu calls visual images. See Ibid., p. 182. "T'ien Ching Sha" reads: "Withered vines, aged trees, twilight crows. Beneath the little bridge by the cottage the river flows. On the ancient road and lean horse the west wind blows. The evening sun westwards goes, As a broken-hearted man stands at heaven's close." (Translation from James Liu, The Art of Chinese Poetry, p. 33.
terms. Finally, as an example of what can be done with "concrete presentation of an abstract topic" (ch'ou-hsiang ti t'i-mu yung ch'ii-t'i ti hsieh-fa), Hu Shih, immodestly, quoted one of his own poems "Lao Ya" ("Crow").

"Rising at dawn,
I stand and sing on man's windowsill.
But people hate me,
And say I'm unlucky:
I cannot hurt man's happiness just by singing." [38]

For insipid symbolism, this poem is on a par with his earlier, and much quoted poem, "Hu-tieh" ("Butterflies") of which Harold Acton quite correctly wrote: "its symbolism and sentiment could hardly be more colorlessly "orthodox"." [40]

Whether or not the end result of this "concrete presentation of an abstract topic" method was unsuccessful, the programme which underlay it as described in the fifth section of "T'an Hsin Shih" was quite obviously based on the fourth and fifth points of the American Imagists which are: "To present an image (hence the name Imagist). We are not a school of painters, but we believe that

38. Ibid., pp. 185-186.
39. This poem also has the title "P'eng-yu" ("Friends"). "Butterflies" was the inspiration for Achilles Fang's article, "From Imagism to Whitmanism in Recent Chinese Poetry". See pp. 177-182 of that article for a discussion of this poem.
poetry should render particulars exactly and not deal in vague
generalities, however magnificent and sonorous..."; and (5) "To
produce poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred nor
indefinite." ⁴¹

At least one person, Hu's friend Mei Kuang-ti saw a link
between the Imagists and the new poetry movement in China when he
wrote:

"The so-called pai-hua poetry is nothing but the scum of the
free verse movement and modern American Imagism. Free
verse and imagism are both part of the Decadent school." ⁴²

However, Hu Shih himself never publicly acknowledged his
obligation to the American Imagists and his followers never seemed
to have understood the real meaning and origin of Hu's literary
theory, though they accepted his theory as gospel. As Achilles
Fang wrote: "The followers of the literary revolution danced blindly
to a tune whose true significance they had no means of knowing,
while their leader was executing his five-finger exercises à la
Imagisme." ⁴³

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⁴². By "Decadent school" was meant Impressionism, Mysticism and
Futurism. Mei Kuang-ti, "P'ing T'i-ch'ang Hsin-wen-hua Che", p. 145. Mei had some years earlier expressed the same
opinion in a letter to Hu Shih in July, 1916. See Hu Shih,
Hu Shih Liu-hsüeh Jih-chi, pp. 970-982. However, the content
of this letter did not appear in print until the publication
of Hu Shih's diary (then under the title of Ts'ang Shih Che-
chi) in 1939.

⁴³. Achilles Fang, "From Imagism to Whitmanism", p. 181.
4. The Advent of Kuo Mo-jo

But while Hu Shih failed to acknowledge the influence of the American Imagists on his poetry, one writer appeared who vociferously proclaimed his debt to the West in poems like the following one, "Pi-li-shan t'ou Chan-wang" ("Panorama from Fudetate Yama"):

"Pulse of the great city, 
surge of life, 
beating, panting, roaring, 
spurring, flying, leaping, 
the whole sky covered with a pall of smoke; 
my heart is ready to leap from my mouth. 
Hills, roofs, surge on, 
Wave after wave they well up before me. 
Symphony of myriad sounds, 
marrige of man and Nature. 
The curve of the bay might be Cupid's bow, 
man's life his arrow, shot over the sea. 
Dark and misty coastline, steamers at anchor, 
steamers in motion, steamers unnumbered, 
funnel upon funnel bearing its black peony. 
Ah! Emblem of the Twentieth Century! 
Stern mother of modern civilization!" [44]

This poet was Kuo Mo-jo, unashamed admirer of Whitman, Tagore, Goethe, Heine and Shelley; passionante, romantic hero of Young China. Publication of his volume of poetry entitled The Goddesses (Nu-shen) in 1921 marked the real end of the old poetry and, too,

44. Kuo Mo-jo, Nu-shen, pp. 74-75. Translation in Kuo Mo-jo, Selected Poems from 'The Goddesses', p. 23. Note that in the original the words "symphony" and "Cupid" were written in English.

the decline of the Imagist school of Hu Shih and his imitators.

As regards poetic form, Kuo Mo-jo broke away from the style espoused by the earlier pai-hua poets. His lines were more even; many of his poems were rhymed; the stanzas were often of regular length, sometimes with a regular refrain.

It was not, however, for his invention in poetic form that Kuo Mo-jo achieved his great contemporary fame and following. As with earlier writers, poetry was the vehicle for the presentation of his personal philosophy of life. This philosophy was not, in the case of Kuo Mo-jo, the dull, self-righteous humanitarianism of such poets as Liu Pan-nung, nor yet the gentle other-worldliness of Ping Hsin; it was his savage, materialistic, earthy pantheism. For instance, in his poem, "Three Pantheists" ("San ko Fan-shen-lun Che"), he wrote:

"I love our old Chuang-tzu
because I love his pantheism,
because he got a living by making straw shoes.

I love the Dutchman Spinoza
because I love his pantheism,
because he got a living grinding lenses.

I love the Indian Kabir
because I love his pantheism,
because he got a living by knotting fishing-nets." 46

Poems such as this one well illustrate the extent to which Kuo Mo-jo's poetry had broken away from both classical and contemporary example.

In literary theory, too, Kuo blazed a new trail - new both in respect of classical poetry and of modern pai-hua poetry.

Literature, he felt, should be the outpouring of human emotion and inspiration. "I believe our poetry should be the full and true expression of our personal poetic inspiration; the strains flowing forth from the spring of life; the melody of our heart-strings; the pulse of life; the call of the spirit; that is real poetry, good poetry; that is the fount of man's happiness, the dregs of intoxication, the peace of Heaven."47

Kuo Mo-jo and a number of other Japanese returned students of similar ideas (Yü Ta-fu, Ch'eng Fang-wu, Cheng Tzu-p'ing, Cheng Poch'i, T'ien Han, et al.) in the summer of 1921 formed a literary society known as the Creation Society (Ch'uang-t Sao She). Their motto was "Art for Art's Sake" (I-shu wei I-shu) in opposition to the "Art for Humanity" programme of the Literary Research Society.

Under the volatile leadership of the romantic Kuo Mo-jo, the Creation Society dominated the Chinese literary scene in the next decade and eventually led the movement for "revolutionary literature" which marked the swing to the left of the majority of Chinese writers and intellectuals. But that is the story of another chapter. 48

48. See Chapter VII.
5. Summary

In summing up the history of the new poetry movement from the beginning of the literary revolution in 1917 to the publication of Nü-shen in 1921, we find that the early years were characterised by iconoclastic opposition to the old poetry, which, it was felt, was too rigid in form and language to allow the expression of contemporary ideas and sentiments. Hence the earliest new poets under Hu Shih strove to write poetry of "free and unrestricted" form, an effort which led directly to the development of the prose-poem or free verse.

The effect of American Imagism on the new poetry movement was very marked. Not only was it the basis for Hu Shih's eight principles which launched the new literature movement, but it was also the source for Hu Shih's ideas on "the concrete presentation of an abstract topic" which greatly influenced the style of new poetry.

At the same time, the new poetry, as with all the literature of the May Fourth period, was characterised by a strong preoccupation with humanitarian questions. This is a further indication of how closely the new literature movement was related to the total Chinese nationalist movement.

The appearance of Kuo Mo-jo's Nü-shen marked the virtual end of the imagistic era and heralded the brief reign of "Whitmanism". At the same time, Kuo's poetry showed a return to more regular
poetic form, in contrast to the prose-poetry written under the influence of Hu Shih.

The old poetry was finally dead; but the young poets were still searching for poetics suited to the pai-hua medium. In this search, Wen I-to and his friends played an important part.

On July 29, 1929, Wen I-to reluctantly set out for the United States where he enrolled at the Art Institute of Chicago. In Chicago, he met with Chi-ien Tang-ch’i and with So Long-tih, then a member of the Yang Sun Literary Society and a lifelong associate of Wen’a.

Wen was not very happy in America, and it was not long before he began writing to his family saying that he hoped to shorten the length of his stay in America by studying in the summer vacation. "America," he wrote, "is not the sort of place where I could live for any length of time. I am not sure whether the feelings of a foreign Chinese youth living in America. At the end of the two years, I am determined to return to China."
CHAPTER IV

THE CREATIVE YEARS, 1922-1927

PART A: WEN I-TO ABROAD

1. Wen Goes to America

On July 16, 1922, Wen I-to reluctantly set out via Japan for the United States where he enrolled at the Art Institute of Chicago. In Chicago, he roomed with Ch'ien Tsung-pao and with Lo Lung-chi, also a former member of the Tsing Hua Literary Society and a lifelong associate of Wen's.

Wen was not very happy in America, and it was not long before he was writing to his family saying that he hoped to shorten the length of his stay in America by studying in the summer vacations. "America", he wrote, "is not the sort of place where I could live for any length of time. Pen and ink cannot describe the feelings of a thinking Chinese youth living in America. At the end of the

1. "Nien-p'u", p. 36.

2. Lo was later a member of the Crescent Society (Hsin-yeh She) in Peking. In Kunming during the War, he was a leader of the Democratic League (Min-chu T'ung-meng) with which Wen I-to was also closely associated.
year after next when I return home and can chat with my family around the fire, I will pour out my pent-up anger in bitter tears."³

After a year in Chicago, Wen moved to Colorado Springs where, with his former Tsing Hua friend Liang Shih-ch'iu, newly arrived from China, he entered the Colorado College. Here Wen quickly attracted the attention of his art teachers who said of him: "Mr. Wen is really a rare artist. Aside from his [actual] paintings, he himself is a work of art. Just look at the perfect rhythm of the lines on his face and the smile in the corner of his mouth!"⁴ Liang Shih-ch'iu wrote of I-to, the artist, in Colorado:

"It was here that Wen began to paint, not in water-colours [as he had before], but in oils. He grew his hair very long down the back of his neck. With his black tie and that red and green water-soaked, oil-stained smock which he used for everything – wiping his nose, brushing the table, cleaning his hands and keeping off the rain, he was the perfect artist!" [⁵]

Wen's move from Chicago to Colorado symbolised the shifting of his interests from the field of art to literature. After his arrival in America, Wen began to realise that his decision to study art as against literature was a wrong one, both because he believed that if he had real talent in art he should not have to make a formal study of it,⁶ and because he felt his interest in literature

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3. Wen I-to, Ch'Man-chi, section keng, p.69.
5. Ibid., p. 43.
6. Wen I-to, Ch'Man-chi, section keng, p. 69.
to be greater than his interest in art. 7 While still in Chicago, Wen had begun to take an increasing interest in the local literary scene. He attended local literary meetings 8 and met a number of prominent American writers such as Harriet Monroe, Carl Sandburg and Amy Lowell. 9

Wen's association in Colorado with Liang Shih-ch'iu (later a prominent literary critic) also no doubt encouraged his renewed interest in a career in literature, although Wen was disappointed that, while living with Liang, his poetic output was surprisingly small. Both students at this time attended courses on modern poetry, studying the works of about twenty authors including Tennyson, Byron, Kipling, Hardy and Housman. 10 This course made a considerable impression on both students and much of the poetry of Dead Water, Wen's second volume of poetry, reflects the influence of these writers.

In September, 1923, Wen I-to's first volume of poetry, Red Candles (Hung Chu) was published by the T'ai-tung Book Company in Shanghai. With the publication of Red Candles, Wen I-to established his reputation in China as a poet of promise. This

7. Ibid., p. 70.
8. Wen I-to, Ch'Man-chi, section keng, p. 75.
volume was apparently popular enough to encourage its author to consider printing a second edition.  

After one year living with Liang Shih-ch'iu at Colorado Springs, Wen went to New York where he entered the Art Students' League of New York. In New York Wen was quickly embroiled in the many cultural and political activities of his fellow students who were at that time all interested in "Chinese cultural nationalism" (Chung-hua wen-hua ti kuc-chia chu-i). About this time, Wen became associated with a nationalist (kuc-chia chu-i) party, the Yangtze Group (Ta-chiang Hui). In the party organ, Ta-chiang Chi-k'an, Wen published a number of poems.

During his year in New York, Wen renewed a friendship with a former Tsing Hua student, the playwright Hsiung Fo-hsi, and again

11. Wen I-to, Ch'uan-chi, section keng, p.34.
13. The Ta-chiang Hui, a nationalist group formed by Chinese students studying in America was one of the many nationalist groups which were eventually absorbed into the Chinese Youth Party (Chung-kuo Ch'ing-nien Tang). The Chinese Youth Party had its origin in June 1918 when a number of Japanese returned students in Peking formed a patriotic group known as the Young China Study Association (Sheo-nien Chung-kuo Hseih-hui). In December, 1923, the same group in Paris formed the Young China Party. The programme and name of the Party were not officially promulgated until September, 1929, when the Party held its Fourth National Conference. For information on the Chinese Youth Party see Ch'ien Tuan-sheng, The Government and Politics of China, pp. 351-353, and Liu Hsia, Shih-pa Nien-lai chih Chung-kuo Ch'ing-nien Tang.
began to take an active part in dramatic production. Wen and Hsiung collaborated on the writing of a one-act play in English called *Yang Kuei-fei* based on the life of the famous concubine of the T'ang Emperor, Ming-huang. After some time, Wen realised that drama was not his vocation and returned to his poetry writing. 14

In May 1925, together with two friends, Yu Shang-yuan and Chao T'ai-mou, Wen set out for China, arriving home just three years after he had set out.

2. The Development of Wen's Poetry

Wen's three years abroad had a considerable impact on his poetry, as can be seen by comparison of the poetry written before and after his arrival in the United States.

a. Romantic Themes in Wen's Poetry

Strange as it may seem, when Wen began writing poetry in 1920, he was not greatly influenced by the poetry of contemporary Chinese writers. He had, indeed, little regard for any of the established poets with the notable exception of Kuo Mo-jo. For the most part, Wen found his inspiration and his models in nineteenth century English romantic poetry, rather than in either contemporary Chinese or classical Chinese poetry.

In the early period of Ven's poetic career - while he was still a student at Tsing Hua - his two favourite poets were Li Shang-yin and Keats. These two poets he admired as the best exponents of the idea of "art for art's sake". "Those of us who believe in the primary importance of [the principle of] art for beauty," he said, "must pay allegiance to Li Shang-yin in the East, and Keats in the West. I think that one day when I feel in the mood I will write an essay comparing these two poets." 15 Ven at this time wrote a poem, "Loyal Minister of Art" ("I-shu ti Chung-ch'en"), dedicated to Keats, in which he said:

"...
Oh poet of poets!
In this whole court there are
A few great ministers of art;
But only you are loyal.
'Beauty is Truth; Truth is Beauty'..." 16

As a passionate admirer of Keats' poetry, Wen often wrote of Beauty. In fact, so great was the influence of the English Romantics on Wen's work that the young poet, though a product of the May Fourth era, seemed completely unaware of the social issues involved in the new poetry movement. It was, indeed, many years before Wen reached an understanding of the social relevance of the new literature. At a time when Hu Shih and his coterie were writing poems on humanitarian and social questions (on ricksha

15. Wen I-to, Ch'Man-chi, section keng, p. 75.
16. Wen I-to, Hung Chu, p. 86.
boys and factory workers, on poverty and arranged marriage), when
Kuo Mo-jo was writing of pantheistic worship of materialism and
modernism, when left-wing writers were on the verge of writing
poems for the "masses", Wen I-to was writing exquisite verse
concerned with the portrayal of absolute Beauty. Two of Wen's
earlier poems, "The Death of Li Po" ("Li Po Chih Ssu") and "The
Sheath" ("Chien-hsia P'ien"), show clearly his idealization of
Beauty. In "The Death of Li Po", he describes the death of the
famed T'ang poet while trying to embrace a reflection of the moon
in the water, the reflection of the moon being a symbol of perfect
beauty. "The Sheath" tells of an imaginary work of art so
perfectly beautiful that it hypnotises its maker to his death.

Other romantic themes also abound in Wen's earlier poems.
Many of his poems show a preoccupation with Death, as in the poem
entitled simply that - "Death" ("Ssu"):

"O, my soul's soul!
My life's life!
All my failures, all my debts
Now have to be claimed against you,
But what can I ask of you?

Let me be drowned in the deep blue of your eyes.
Let me be burnt in the furnace of your heart.
Let me die intoxicated in the elixir of your music.
Let me die of suffocation in the fragrance of your breath.

Or may I die ashamed in front of your dignity,
Or frozen in your unfeeling chill,
Or crushed between your merciless teeth,
Or stung by your relentless poison-sword.

For I shall breathe my last in happiness
If my happiness is what you decree;
Otherwise I shall depart in endless agony
If my agony be your desire.
Death is the only thing I beg of you,  
And to you I offer my life, my supreme tribute." [17]

Another frequent theme in I-to's early poetry was Love, as shown for instance in the following poem, "Confession" ("Ch'an-hui"):  

"Ah, the romantic life!  
It is but the word 'love' written on the water.  
Obliterated as soon as it is written;  
Vainly stirring up those bitter waves."[18]

Again, in "Champion" ("Kuo-shou"), he wrote:  

"My love! You are the champion;  
Let us play a game of chess;  
My aim is not to win you,  
But to lose to you -  
To lose my body and soul  
Completely to you!"[19]

I-to, like many romantic young poets, also believed in the special nature, the superior inspiration of the poet. In "Red Candles" ("Hung Chu"), title poem of Wen's first volume of poetry, he wrote:  

"Red candle!  
What a red candle!  
O poet!  
Spit our your heart and compare -  
Are they not equally red?"...[20]

After Wen went to America, these romantic themes - Beauty, Art, Love, Death and the emphasis on the special nature of the poet -

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18. Wen I-to, Hung Chu, pp. 84-85.
19. Ibid., p. 79.
20. Ibid., p. 22.
were still present in his poetry. However, admiration of Beauty, still a popular theme, had developed into a colourful and sensitive description of the physical world rather than an adoration of idealized Beauty. His poetry was given added depth by his sensitive use of colours, to which his study of art had undoubtedly contributed. In his "Colours" ("Se-ts'ai"), he described the effect of various colours on him:

"Life is a worthless sheet of white paper;
From green I developed;
Red gives me passion,
Yellow teaches me loyalty,
Blue teaches me purity,
Pink gives me hope,
Grey brings me sorrow;
And to finish this colour chart,
Black brings me death.
After this,
I will surrender myself to life,
For I love its colours." [21]

In this period, too, though he still wrote of love, he was no longer thinking of love as an ideal or abstract, but of love as a real, emotional experience. When one knows that the forty-two poems collected under the title of "Red Beans" ("Hung-tou") were dedicated to his wife whom he was sadly missing, 22 poems such as

21. Ibid., p. 113.
22. Wen I-to, Ch'nan-chi, section keng, p. 22. Also Hsu K'ai-yü, "The Life and Poetry of Wen I-to", p. 151. The phrase hung-tou (red beans) is an allusion to a poem, "Hsiang-ssu" ("Thinking of You") by the T'ang poet Wang Wei. (See Fu Tung-hua (ed.), Wang Wei Shih Hadan, p. 86.)
"Red beans grow in the south;
In Spring they sprout branches.
Why don't you pluck some more?
They are a symbol of love."
"Red beans" (hung-tou) are also known as "love seeds" (hsiang-szu tzu).
the following two from "Red Beans" acquire an added dimension of meaning.

10. "We are one body!
   Our union
   Is round like the earth.
   You are the Eastern sphere,
   And I the Western sphere.
   We ourselves shed the tears
   Which made this misty Pacific
   Separating us one from the other."[23]

6. "Longing is a silent mosquito,
   Which stealthily bites,
   And suddenly hurts,
   And leaves a strange itch." [24]

After Wen went abroad, Death was, as before, a frequent motif in his poetry. The poem quoted in part below is an example.

"... Be off!   Walk again that endless road.
   Ah! My wound is too severe,
   My step gets heavy.
   My fresh life blood,
   Slowly stains the dead grass beneath my feet."...[25]

However, Death was, by then, no longer a poetic abstraction; it was a subject on which Wen, newly released from the seclusion of his school life, had been dwelling in adolescent romanticism. For instance, writing to Liang Shih-ch'iu after hearing of the deaths of two Chinese students in America, he said: "News of these two deaths makes me think of an even bigger problem - the meaning of

23. Wen I-to, Hung Chu, pp. 116-117.
24. Ibid., p. 115.
life and death — the great riddle of the universe." 26

Certain romantic themes of Beauty, Love, Death, etc., are to be found in all Wen I-to's poetry, both that written before, and after, leaving China for America. The later poetry differs from the earlier in that these themes were no longer merely fashionable poetic symbols based on his imitation of the English Romantics, but derive from his actual emotional experience. More important, these themes were no longer the dominant themes in his poetry, for his life in America had given a new thematic preoccupation, the significance of which was enhanced by the addition of Wen's earlier romantic ideas. This new theme, directly the result of Wen's experience in the United States, permeated his poetry thereafter. It was his newly awakened patriotism and national feeling.

3. The Stirring of Patriotic Feeling

No sooner had Wen left the shores of his native land than he was troubled by feelings of loneliness and isolation. In one poem, "Solitary Wild Goose" ("Ku Yen"), significantly the title poem of the collection of poems in Red Candles written after his leaving China, Wen likened himself to a lost goose.

"Sad lost wanderer!
Who let you leave your fellows,
Break your ranks,
And drift to the remote frontiers of this watery land,
To sacrifice your life in endless misery,
Lamenting your endless sorrows?

Ah! From the dense screen of that floating cloud,
Issues forth such a mournful sound;
Such bitterness! Such passion!

Lonely outcast bird!
Where are you going?
Can you know what that far Pacific shore
Holds for you?"... [27]

Again in nostalgic vein, he wrote "Song of the Sun" ("T'ai-yang Yin") in which the following lines occur:

"... Oh sun! These are not my mountains and rivers, oh sun!
The winds and clouds wear another hue;
And the songs of birds here are especially sad."... [28]

Explaining this poem to his friend Wu Ching-ch'ao, he wrote:

"You should not make the mistake of thinking that I am longing for 'home' in the narrow sense. No! What I long for is China's mountains and rivers, China's trees and plants, China's birds and beasts, China's houses - and Chinese people."[29]

Though education at Tsing Hua College had prepared the Chinese students in some respects for life in America, they were in no way prepared for the humiliations they were to suffer on account of

27. Wen I-to, Chung Chu, pp. 92-93.
28. Ibid., p. 103.
29. Wen I-to, Ch'fan-ch'i, section keng, p. 17.
their race. For while a minority of Americans of the time associated Chinese with an exotic and ancient culture, unfortunately the great majority associated Chinese with coolies, laundry managers, restaurateurs, drug-peddlars, kidnappers, vice rings and the "yellow peril." I-to was greatly shocked to find himself a victim of this prejudice. In protest against the humiliations suffered by Chinese in America, he wrote his famous ballad, "Laundry Song" ("Hsi-i Ko"), which he prefaced with the following explanation: "Laundering is the most common profession of overseas Chinese in America. Because of this, people often ask [Chinese] students abroad 'Is your father a laundry-man?"

"(One piece, two pieces, three pieces,)
Washing must be clean.
(Four pieces, five pieces, six pieces,)
Ironing must be smooth.

I can wash handkerchiefs wet with sad tears;
I can wash shirts soiled in sinful crimes.
The grease of greed, the dirt of desire...
And all the filthy things at your house,
Give them to me to wash, give them to me.

30. Alice Dewey, who visited Tsing Hua College in 1919, foresaw some of the difficulties the students would face in the United States. See John & Alice Dewey, Letters From China and Japan, p. 244.

31. While in America, Wen met a number of people whom he described as having "a passion for things Chinese" (Chung-kuo Je). Most of these people were interested in Chinese painting and porcelain. See the incidents described in Ch'Man-chi, section keng, p. 22, and Ibid., p. 24.

Brass stinks so; blood smells evil.
Dirty things you have to wash.
Once washed, they will again be soiled.
How can you, men of patience, ignore them!
Wash them (for the Americans), wash them!

You say the laundry business is too base.  
Only Chinamen are willing to stoop so low?  
It was your preacher who once told me:  
Christ's father used to be a carpenter.  
Do you believe it?  Don't you believe it?

There isn't much you can do with soap and water.  
Washing clothes truly can't compare with building warships.  
I, too, say what great prospect lies in this -  
Washing the others' sweat with your own blood and sweat?  
[But] do you want to do it?  Do you want it?

Year in year out a drop of homesick tears;  
Midnight, in the depth of night, a laundry lamp...  
Menial or not, you need not bother,  
Just see what is not clean, what is not smooth,  
And ask the Chinaman, ask the Chinaman.

I can wash handkerchiefs wet with sad tears,  
I can wash shirts soiled in sinful crimes.  
The grease of greed, the dirt of desire...  
And all the filthy things at your house,  
Give them to me - I'll wash them, give them to me!" [33]

Indignation at the treatment of Chinese in the United States
and homesickness sowed the seeds of Wen's new feeling of national
pride, an emotion which directed the nature of his poetry, and of
his life and studies thereafter.  As he wrote to his family in
January, 1923:

"We have our people and our five thousand years of history and
culture.  In what way are we not the equals of the Americans?
Is it because we cannot make firearms to slaughter people that
they are more renowned and honoured than we are?"[34]

33.  Wen I-to, Sau Shui, pp. 28-30.  Translation from Hsu Kai-yu,
    Twentieth Century Chinese Poetry, pp. 55-56.
34.  Wen I-to, Chüan-chi, section keng, p. 69.
a. Wen I-to's Interest in Cultural Nationalism

In an attempt, conscious or unconscious to justify his claim of Chinese cultural superiority, Wen set about working for the reanalysis and revival of traditional culture, and the arousing of patriotic feeling.

Wen was not alone in this ambition, for when he went to New York he found that all of the students there were interested in "Chinese cultural nationalism". They began to make plans for publishing a magazine of the arts to serve their designs for the rejuvenation of Chinese culture. Wen wrote to Liang Shih-ch'iu about his plans:

"I have decided that when I return home I will devote myself to the study of Chinese art and promote revival of our traditional art as a means of elevating our national culture. Thus in the first issue [of our magazine] there will be [articles on the poet and painter] Ch'en-Shih-ts'eng, on calligraphy, appreciation of traditional drama, pottery, analysis of the spirit of Li Shang-yin, and also the influence of Chinese painting in the West. The future threat to our country lies not only in the danger of an attack on the political or economic [systems] but also in the calamity of an attack on culture. An attack on culture is many times worse than an attack on these other things."[36]

In his poem, "On Chrysanthemums" ("I Chû"), Wen praised the flower which for him represented the distillation of Chinese culture.

"...
You are a flower with both history and customs.
Ah! Famous flower over China's four thousand years!
You have a superior history, exquisite customs!"37

35. Ibid, p. 33.
37. Wen I-to, Hung Chu, pp. 105-106.
Wen was not only interested in the cultural regeneration of China; he was also deeply concerned about the disturbed political conditions within China at this time. In a letter written to his family from Chicago, he said:

"How are conditions at home now? Are people very worried about it all? I hope you will confide in me and lessen my worries. With bad years and rapacious soldiers again and again, how can the peasants make a living? I wonder whether people in their hearts blame nature or man. Natural calamities cannot be helped, but as for human calamities, as happened in Europe and America, these foxes and snakes will soon be hacked to death. The American, French, and Russian revolutions were all like this...

... Fan Ching-sheng [38] passed through Chicago to give lectures to the Chinese students here. His general idea was that Europe and America are eroding our national wealth, and the only way of resistance is to rely on the peasants. Thus, education of the peasants is our immediate duty."[39]

Although he was not a member of the Nationalist (Kuomintang) party, Wen was an enthusiastic admirer of Sun Yat-sen whom he had heard speaking in Shanghai in 1919. When Sun Yat-sen died in March, 1925, the New York Chinese students held a memorial meeting for which Wen painted a large portrait of the great leader. About this time, Wen also wrote a poem about Sun Yat-sen, entitled "Spirit of the South Seas" ("Nan-hai Chih Shen"). Unfortunately for our understanding of Wen's politics at this juncture, this poem,

38. Fan Ching-sheng (Fan Ỵan-lien) was a distinguished educationalist in the early years of the Republic. He held a number of important posts in the government including Secretary to Ỵan Shih-k'ai (1912), Minister for Education and Minister for the Interior (1916-1917) and acting Minister of Education (1920-1921). For two years (1922-1924) he was President of the Peking Normal University.

39. Wen I-to, Ch'Han-chi, section keng, p. 75.
published in _Ta-chiang Ch’i-k’an_, is no longer available.

Though Wen was, as a student in America, undoubtedly politically naive (he remained so all his life), the strength of his nationalist feeling and patriotism cannot be questioned. It was a driving force throughout his life.

When Wen I-to returned home in July 1929 from his study abroad, China was still smouldering with the excitement generated by that second great nationalist demonstration, the May Thirtieth Movement. 40 This movement, though it was, like the May Ninth Movement, primarily a political movement, succeeded in having a great effect on the direction taken by modern Chinese literature. Almost all commentators see the May Thirtieth Movement as a landmark in the history of modern literature, for it signalled the turning at the left in literary circles which culminated in 1930 in the movement for “Revolutionary Literature”.

Despite the flush of enthusiasm produced by the May Thirtieth Movement, conditions in North China were as depressing as ever. North China was still in the control of the warlords and the realisation of democracy seemed as far away as ever.

During the three years abroad, Sun I-to had idealised his country, regarding it as the beauty and perfection of the oldest nation. He returned to find a land ravaged by successive bloody civil wars and groaning under the weight of enforced

40. For details of the May Thirtieth Movement, see A.C.W. Henderson (ed.), _The China Year Book_ (1926), pp. 919-332.
PART B: RETURN TO CHINA

1. Wen Returns Home

When Wen I-to returned home in July 1925 from his study abroad, China was still seething with the excitement generated by that second great nationalist demonstration, the May Thirtieth Movement. This movement, though it was, like the May Fourth Movement, primarily a political movement, was to have a great effect on the direction taken by modern Chinese literature. Almost all commentators see the May Thirtieth Movement as a landmark in the history of modern literature, for it signalled the turning to the left in literary circles which culminated in 1928 in the movement for "revolutionary literature".

Despite the flush of enthusiasm produced by the May Thirtieth Movement, conditions in North China were as depressing as ever. North China was still in the control of the warlords and the realization of democracy seemed as far away as ever.

During his three years abroad, Wen I-to had idealized his country, comparing it to the beauty and perfection of the chrysanthemum. He returned to find a land ravaged by successive bloody civil wars and groaning under the terrors of warlord

40. For details of the May Thirtieth Movement, see H.G.W. Woodhead (ed.), The China Year Book (1926), pp. 919-1002.
government. In the poem "Discovery" ("Fa-hsien") Wen recorded his profound disappointment in the land he had idealized:

"I've come, I shout, bursting out in tears of woe, 'This is not my China - Oh, no! No!'
I've come because I heard your summoning cry.
Riding on the wind of time, raising a torch high,
I came. I knew not this to be unwarranted ecstasy.
A nightmare I found. You? How could this be!
This is terror, a bad dream over the brim of an abyss,
But not you, not what my heart continues to miss!
I ask heaven, ask the winds of all directions.
I ask (my fist pounding the naked chest of the earth)
But there is no answer. In tears I call and call you
Until my heart leaps out - ah, here you are!" [41]

Feelings of anger, bitterness and disappointment permeated and dominated Wen's poetry thereafter. In the poem "Desolate Village" ("Huang Ts'un") Wen passionately denounced the devastation caused by civil war in a little village. "Dead Water" ("Ssu Shui"), Wen's most famous poem, is a bitter expression of its author's pessimistic view of the Chinese scene. Likening contemporary China to a ditch of stagnant water, he wrote:

"Here is a ditch of hopelessly dead water.
No breeze can raise a single ripple on it.
Might as well throw in rusty metal scraps or even pour left-over food and soup in it.

Perhaps the green on copper will become emeralds.
Perhaps on tin cans peach blossoms will bloom.
Then, let grease weave a layer of silky gauze, and germs brew patches of colorful spume.

42. Wen I-to, Ssu Shui, pp. 24-26. A translation can be found in Hsu Kai-yu, Twentieth Century Chinese Poetry, pp. 60-61.
Let the dead water ferment into jade wine covered with floating pearls of white scum. Small pearls chuckle and become big pearls, only to burst as gnats come to steal this rum.

And so this ditch of hopelessly dead water may still claim a touch of something bright. And if the frogs cannot bear the silence - the dead water will croak its song of delight.

Here is a ditch of hopelessly dead water - a region where beauty can never reside. Might as well let the devil cultivate it - and see what sort of world it can provide."[43]

a. Wen’s Association with Nationalist Groups

In Peking, where Wen took up a post in the Arts’ Academy in the Autumn of 1925, Wen continued his association with the Yangtze Group (Ta-chiang Hui), the nationalist (kuo-chia chu-i) organization he had joined while in America. The Ta-chiang Hui had in March 1925 joined with the Hsing Shih She (The Wakened Lion Society), the Kuo-hun She (The Spirit of the Nation Society), the Ta Shen-chou Hui (The Great China Association), the Shao-nien Chung-kuo Tzu-ch’iang Hui (The Young China Self-Strengthening


44. On October 10, 1924, the Hsing Shih She began publication of the Hsing Shih Chou-pao, a nationalist magazine which had a wide circulation. Among its editors were Tsang Ch’i, Li Huang, and Chang Meng-chiu (all of them founding members of the Young China Party) who had just returned to China from Paris, and Ch’en Ch’i-t’ien, Tso Shun-sheng, Yu Chia-ch’i and Li Kuan-ch’ing who had all been associated with patriotic groups in China. See Liu Hsia, Shih-pei Nien lai chih Chung-kuo Ch’ing-nien Tang, p. 34.
Association) and the Lü-Ou Kung-jen Chiu-kuo T'uan (The Chinese Workers in Europe Save the Nation Group) – all of them nationalist groups – to form the Peking Association of Nationalist Organizations (Pei-ching Kuo-chia Chu-i T'uan-t'ı Lien-ho-hui). 45

The Ta-chiang Chi-k'an, official organ of the Ta-chiang Hui, continued publication, and in this journal Wen published a number of patriotic poems such as "Ch'ang-ch'eng Hsia chih Ai-ko" ("Elegy at the Great Wall"), "Wo Shih Chung-kuo-jen" ("I am a Chinaman"), and "Hsi-i Ko" ("Laundry Song").

In practice, the Nationalist groups in North China took sides in the struggle for power among the various warlords, despite their anti-warlord front. The nationalists favoured the cause of the militarist Wu P'e-i-fu 46 who, in alliance with the Manchurian general Chang Tao-liang drove the "Christian General", Feng Yu-hsiang, from Peking in April 1926. This support by the Peking nationalists for a warlord government needs some explanation in view of the fact that at that very time in Canton Kuomintang forces were preparing for unification of the country and an end to warlordism. The answer lies in the fact that the Peking nationalists were strongly anti-Communist and viewed with great suspicion the policy of co-operation between the Kuomintang and the Communists first proclaimed in the Sun-Joffe Announcement of January 1923. They saw the alliance as evidence of Soviet imperialist ambitions in China. As one spokesman for the Chinese Youth Party (the party to which all the nationalist

45. Ibid., p. 35.
groups were eventually affiliated) stated the case:

"After the Russian Revolution, the Russians announced that they would renounce all their privileges in China. For this reason, all Chinese at that time felt favourably disposed towards the Soviet government. Afterwards events proved that Russia was, in the pretence of assisting weak peoples, on the one hand, joining together the oppressed peoples of Asia, but on the other hand, establishing Communist organizations within each country in the name of the Third International in order to control the internal affairs of the various nations and divide the national groups into conflicting classes. In South China [the Russians] succeeded in dividing the Kuomintang by their policy of allowing the Communists to join the Kuomintang. In the North they supported the People's Army (Kuo-min-ch'ufu) in the hope of creating a pro-Russian faction. [The Russians] encouraged Outer Mongolia to break away from China.... After the Hsing Shih Chou-pao was published it did its best to expose Soviet penetration of China. Naturally this aroused the anger of those who had been deceived by the Russians. From 1924–1926 the nationalists (kuo-chia chu-i) everywhere came into collision with the Communists."[47]

Wen I-to, it seems clear, supported the anti-Communist stand of the nationalist groups at this time. In fact, Wen was one of the speakers at a public meeting in March 1926 called to protest against the presence of Japanese and Russian troops in Shantung and against the treatment of Chinese citizens in Russia.48 This meeting was broken up by Communist-inspired agitators.49

b. Campus Politics

At the same time - shortly after he took up his position as

47. Liu Hsia, Shih-pa Nien lai chih Chung-kuo Ch'ing-nien Tang, p. 36.
49. Liu Hsia, Shih-pa Nien lai chih Chung-kuo Ch'ing-nien Tang, p. 38.
dean at the Peking Arts' Academy (I-shu Chuan-k'o Hsueh-hsiao), Wen became involved in the intrigues of campus politics. It was rumoured that Wen was scheming to become principal of the Academy, but Wen strongly denied this. Indeed, Wen was not very happy in the atmosphere of the Arts' Academy. He wrote in a letter to his friend Liang Shih-ch'iu: "I have been recently very miserable. Being a dean is not my vocation, but now I am in a mess, for once having started on a course it is difficult to back out." 51

Wen had no doubt expected that education abroad would lead immediately to wealth and prestige. But conditions in China had changed considerably since Wen went abroad for education. 1925-1926 was a year of crisis for all government-supported educational institutions in China. Finance earmarked for education was appropriated by the warlord government. Salaries were unpaid; there were consequent strikes and widespread unrest among both staff and students. One report of the time said that institutions of higher learning were "on the verge of collapse". 52 Wen I-to found himself in very difficult circumstances and was eventually forced to send his wife and daughter back to the family home in Hupeh.

50. Wen I-to, Ch'Man-chi, section keng, p. 39.
51. Ibid., p. 38.
2. Experiments in Poetic Form

It is no wonder that in these particularly troubled circumstances Wen found it very difficult to concentrate on writing poetry. In a letter to Liang Shih-ch'iu in March 1926, he wrote: "Since I returned home, everyday affairs have intruded themselves on my attention. In the course of nine months I have only managed to complete two poems." 53

Though his output of creative work was retarded, Wen continued to develop his interest in poetics. He soon became a prominent member of a group known as the Crescent Society (Hsin-yeh She) which met regularly for discussion on art and literature. Most of the members of this group were, like Wen himself, returned students from the West. 54 Wen I-to's three-roomed studio which he himself had painted and decorated in most unusual style 55 soon became the headquarters of a group of writers interested in experimenting with various new poetic forms. These discussions resulted in the publication on 1 April 1926 of Shih-k' an (Poetry Magazine), a weekly supplement to the (Pei-ching) Ch'en-pao. Though short-lived (it survived only eleven issues), the Shih-k' an

53. Wen I-to, Ch'ian-chi, section keng, p. 39.
54. Shih Ching, Wen I-to ti Tao-lyu, p. 23.
was one of the most important magazines in the history of Chinese new poetry. Shih-k'ăn was edited by Hsü Chih-mo who had already acquired a formidable reputation as a poet. Other writers associated with Shih-k'ăn included Liu Meng-wei, Chu Hsiang, Chu Ta-nan, Yü Shang-yüan, Tung I-chih, Yang Tzu-hui and Sun Chih-ch'ien.

In Shih-k'ăn Wen I-to published his most important critical work, "On Form in Poetry" ("Shih ti Ko-lü"), the fruit of his many years of research in poetic form. He also published a number of poems, including the famous "Dead Water" ("Ssu Shui") which are an eloquent testimony to his poetic theories.

Shih-k'ăn made way for a drama supplement (Chü-k'ăn) after only eleven issues (10 June 1926) yet Hsü Chih-mo was still able to give a most impressive summary of the achievements of Shih-k'ăn in its short existence. He wrote:

"We feel that a poem should be a vital whole, each part related to each other part and each part in a proportional relationship with the whole. Just as the secret of man is the flow of his blood and pulse, the secret of a poem is the regularity and flow of its internal rhythm.... Once we realise that the life of poetry lies in its internal rhythm, we can then understand the real point of poetry. No matter whether the thought is deep or the feeling very passionate, only if it is thoroughly rhythmic (that is, poetic) can it be regarded as poetry. Otherwise, thought is only thought and feeling only feeling - it cannot be classed as poetry."[56]


After Summer holidays spent at the family home in Hsi-shui, Wen did not return to the Arts Academy but instead, after a few months of idleness, took up a teaching appointment at the Wusung Academy of Political Science (Cheng-chih Ta-hstteh) on the invitation of his friend, P'an Kuang-tan. Shortly afterwards Wen returned home because of the illness of his elder daughter Li-ying who with her mother had remained at Hsi-shui when Wen went to Wusung. Li-ying died shortly afterwards, aged just four years. Wen was greatly upset by this event. According to one source, Wen blamed Li-ying’s death on the unenlightened treatment given her by his old-fashioned parents. Thereafter he vowed never to separate from his wife and children. It was probably at the time of Li-ying’s death that Wen wrote the touching poem, "Forget Her" ("Wang-tiao T'a"):

"Forget her, as a forgotten flower,
That ray of morning sun on a petal,
That whiff of fragrance from a blossom -
Forget her, as a forgotten flower.

57. The Academy of Political Science was apparently founded by the nationalist (kuo-chia chu-i) organizations.

58. Shih Ching, Wen I-to ti Tao-lu, p. 38.
Forget her, as a forgotten flower,
    As a dream in a wind of spring,
    As in a dream, a bell's ring.
Forget her, as a forgotten flower.

Forget her, as a forgotten flower.
    No longer does she remember you.
    Nothing now lingers in her memory.
Forget her, as a forgotten flower.

Forget her, as a forgotten flower.
    If anyone should ask,
    Tell him she never existed.
Forget her, as a forgotten flower.

Forget her, as a forgotten flower.
    As a dream in the wind of spring,
    As in a dream, a bell's ring.
Forget her, as a forgotten flower."  [59]

Meanwhile, the political scene in China had been changing dramatically, for it was in July 1926 that Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek at the head of combined Kuomintang and Communist troops set out from Canton to unify China. The success of the Northern Expedition was astonishing. By October 10 (while Wen was at his home in Hsi-shui), nearby Wuchang, capital of Hupeh province, had fallen to the Kuomintang troops. At about the beginning of March, 1927, Wen took up a position in the newly-established Wuhan government on the invitation of the head of the Political Bureau, Teng Yen-ta. Wen was appointed head of the Arts section, responsible for artistic propaganda work. He himself, in the

course of this work, painted several anti-warlord paintings and murals. 60

It would seem that in the course of a year, Wen's political ideas had been considerably modified. In March 1926, as a member of the Ta-chiang Hui, he had spoken strongly against Communist penetration of the Kuomintang and Soviet ambitions in China. In March 1927, he joined the propaganda section of the revolutionary Wuhan government on the invitation of a Kuomintang radical, Teng Yen-ta, who was described by Western observers at the time as "a rabid Communist". 61 It is obvious that Wen must have come to the conclusion that the unification of the country under the Kuomintang held greater hope for peace and stability in China than did the continuation of the warlord government.

However, Wen found that he was not suited to political life and, within a month, resigned his job. After leaving Wuhan, he returned to Wusung and again joined the staff of the Academy of Political Science.

Once again there was a dramatic change in the political situation. A meeting of the Central Executive Council of the Kuomintang in Wuhan in March proposed to remove some of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's power. Chiang acted swiftly. With the help of various secret societies and encouraged by wealthy Shanghai businessmen, Chiang took control of Shanghai on

60. Shih Ching, Wen I-to ti Tao-lu, p. 32.
March 26. On April 12, he staged a coup in Shanghai and purged Communists from the Kuomintang and the union organizations. On April 18, he set up a rival government in Nanking in defiance of the Left-wing Wuhan government. The Left-wing were completely quashed, the Communist ranks decimated, and Chiang Kai-shek became undisputed ruler of South and Central China.

At the end of April, the Kuomintang closed down the Academy of Political Science at Wusung, and thereafter the nationalist (kuo-chia chu-i) group lost its power. Once again, Wen was without employment.

A few months later, Wen joined the Department of Agriculture in the Nanking government. In view of Wen's reported enthusiasm for "the revolution" and Wen's experience in the Wuhan government a few months previously, one wonders how it came about that Wen should take a position in the service of the Nanking government. Had Wen changed his attitude to the Left-wing of the Kuomintang, or was he simply in financial difficulties? This problem remains unresolved by the sources. However, it is difficult to believe that Wen had reached an accommodation with the Right-wing of the Kuomintang, for, throughout his life he had not a single good word to say in favour of the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek.

Wen was apparently not happy in his position in the Department


63. Shih Ching, Wen I-to ti Tao-lu, p. 32.
of Agriculture and shortly afterwards, in the Autumn of 1927, he took up the post as head of the Foreign Languages Department of the Fourth Sun Yat-sen University (Ti-ssu Chung-shen Ta-hsteh) in Nanking, later known as the National Central University (Kuo-li Chung-yang Ta-hsteh). Here in Nanking, his father, his wife and his infant son, scarcely one month old, joined him.

In the eighteen months after Wen I-to left the Art Academy at Peking in June 1926, he had held six jobs and been idle for several brief periods. This unsettlement was undoubtedly due to the fluctuating political situation. It is hard to know how Wen I-to personally viewed the Chinese revolution, but the political turbulence certainly had a very disturbing effect on him. The publication of his second and last collection of poems, Dead Water (Ssu Shui) at the close of this period (January 1928) virtually marked the end of the poetic and artistic career of Wen I-to. 64 At the same time, like many Chinese intellectuals, he became disillusioned with politics and political action and retired to his scholarship and writing.

4. Dead Water

Ssu Shui is a very small collection of poems, only twenty-

64. After publication of Dead Water in January 1928, Wen published only three more poems and a few translations of poems. His poems were: "Ta-pien" ("Reply"), April 1928; "Hui-lai" ("Return"), May 1928; and "Ch'i-chi" ("Miracle"), January 1931.
eight pieces in all. Hung Chu was almost twice as long. Yet it is on these twenty-eight poems that Wen's reputation as a poet, and as a patriotic poet at that, rests. Its cover, jet black except for the title, reflected the bitterness of so much of its content. Harnessed within Wen's architectonic poetic forms, the poems resound with the power of unleashed energy. Beauty, love and patriotism were constant themes in these poems, but so, too, were death, desolation and disillusionment. In such poems as "Ssu Shui", "Desolate Village" ("Huang Ta'un") and "Quiet Night" ("Ching Yeh") one sees the height of Wen I-to's poetic achievement. It is to be regretted that his poetic talent developed no further.

The poem "Quiet Night" sets out the problem of that most disturbing period in Wen I-to's life, the years from 1925 to 1927. It is a reflection of Wen's personal dilemma - the choice between the turbulent world of political action and the world of pure art and scholarship. He wrote:

"This light, and the light-bleached four walls, 
This kind table and chair, intimate as friends, 
The scent of old books, reaching me in whiffs, 
My favourite teacup as serene as a meditating nun, 
The baby suckling contentedly at his mother's breast, 
A snore reporting the healthy slumber of my big son... 
This mysterious quiet night, this calm peace. 
In my throat quiver songs of gratitude, 
But the songs soon become ugly curses. 
Quiet night, I cannot accept your bribe. 
Who treasures this walled-in square foot of peace? 
My world has a much wider horizon. 
As the four walls cannot silence the clamor of war, 
How can you stop the violent beat of my heart?"[65]

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Despite this declaration in "Quiet Night", Wen I-to did take the bribe of peace and quiet and retreat from involvement in the political skirmishes of contemporary China; and too, from involvement in the cause of new poetry which had become associated with political issues.

Wen's eight years of creative writing from 1920 to 1927 culminated in the publication of his small volume of verse, Dead Water, a fine tribute to his creative energies. Thereafter, Wen wrote little poetry, and turned his attention to criticism and then to scholarship.

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1. His "Criticisms of Night's Light" ("Chiao-yeh Ping-yeh"), a review of Wen I-to's volume of poetry, Night's Light ("Chiao-yeh").

2. His two essays, "The Finer Spirit of Nucleus" ("Hsu-ch'ien Chi I-chih Ti-kung Sheng-t'ieh") and "New Colors in Nucleus" ("Hsueh-ch'ien Chi I-chih Ti-kung Hsia-t'ieh"), a criticism of the poet's volume, Nucleus ("Hsu-ch'ien").
CHAPTER V

WEN I-TO AS A LITERARY CRITIC

1. The Sources

Wen I-to's theory of poetry can be deduced from four main sources:

(1) His "Criticism of Wintry Night" ("Tung-ye P'ing-lun"), a review of Yü P'ing-po's volume of poetry, Wintry Night (Tung-ye).

(2) His two essays, "The Time-spirit of Goddesses" ("Nu-shen Chih Shih-tai Ching-shen") and "Local Colour in Goddesses" ("Nu-shen Chih Ti-fang Se-ts'ai"), a criticism of Kuo Mo-jo's volume, Goddesses (Nu-shen).

1. Yü P'ing-po's Tung-ye was published in 1921 by the Ya-tung Press in Shanghai. Wen's criticism of this book, along with a review by Liang Shih-ch'iu of K'ang Po-ch'ing's volume of poetry, Ts'ao-erh, was published under the title of "Tung-ye Ts'ao-erh P'ing-lun" by the Tsing Hua Literary Society (Tsing Hua Wen-hsueh She) in November 1922.

2. "Nu-shen Chih Shih-tai Ching-shen" was published in the Creation Quarterly (Ch'uang-tao Chi-k'an) in June 1923; "Nu-shen Chih Ti-fang Se-ts'ai" was published in the same magazine in October of that year.
(3) His "Criticism of Tagore" ("T'ai-kuo-erh P'i-p'ing").

(4) His extremely influential essay, "On Form in Poetry" ("Shih ti Ko-1û").

In view of the fame Wen achieved through his poetic theories, these four sources present meagre information; supplementary and correlative information can be deduced from analysis of his actual poetry in which he made a conscious attempt to implement his literary theories.

2. Poetry is an Art

Hu Shih, though he was the high priest of the new poetry movement, did not have a coherent theory of poetry. He nowhere explained what poetry is and what its purpose should be. Only once did he attempt to define the difference between poetry and prose, and this argument was scarcely convincing. He maintained that the chief difference between prose and poetry is that poetry is written in "concrete" (i.e. not abstract) style.

3. "T'ai-kuo-erh P'i-p'ing" was published in the "Literary Supplement" ("Wen-hsin Shih Fu-k'an") of the newspaper Shih-shih Hsin-pao in December 1923.

4. This essay was published in Shih-k'an, the supplement to the Pei-shing Ch'en-pao in May 1926.

5. This will be the subject of the following chapter.

Wen I-to, in contrast, began with the assertion that poetry is first of all an art, and as an art, it has common properties with the other arts. Wen then defined "art" as an elaboration on, not a copy of, nature.

"The forms of the natural world", Wen wrote, "are often imperfect, so we should perfect them with art. That is why absolute realism is the bankruptcy of art. Oscar Wilde was quite right when he said: 'The end of nature is the beginning of art'. Nature is not wholly beautiful. The occasions when it is beautiful are always when nature comes to resemble art. This point can best be illustrated by reference to the graphic arts. We often praise a beautiful landscape and say it could be a painting. For Chinese consider that the beauty of a landscape is judged in terms of its likeness to Chinese landscape painting." [7]

It will be recalled that Hu Shih had stressed that "the rhythm of poetry depends on two factors - the natural rhythm of speech, and the natural harmony of the words used in each sentence." [8] Wen I-to, however, firmly denied that "naturalness" of itself was sufficient for poetic rhythm. As we have seen from the quoted passage above, he believed that nature was imperfect and that art was essentially an elaboration of nature. He wrote:

"Hu Shih in his preface to the second edition of Ch'ang-shih Chi professed himself very satisfied because the tz'u and ch'ü type rhythm of his [earlier] poems had changed into perfect 'free verse' rhythm. This is really quite ridiculous. The rhythm of the old tz'u and ch'ü does not derive from the nature of the tz'u and ch'ü [poetic] forms. Rhythmic potential lies in the language. Every language has an inherent rhythm. Tone and sound are the inherent properties of the language. The art of bringing out these properties in poem and song is the

phenomenon of metre, tonal harmony, rhyme, alliteration, assonance, etcetera. Ordinary speech usually cannot bring out the hidden potential -- only highly emotional speech has this power. Since poetry is the distillation of passionate emotion, it is able to bring out this hidden beauty to the full. The so-called 'natural rhythm' is only the rhythm of prose. The rhythm of prose is obviously not as beautiful as the rhythm of poetry."[9]

Wen felt that the failure of Hu Shih and his imitators to understand the true nature of art was responsible for much inferior poetry, for in espousing complete naturalism, they were denying that the writing of poetry is a serious creative endeavour. Yu P'ing-po, for instance, had stated in his preface to Tung-yeh: "I just casually and happily use the medium of the colloquial language to portray myself - myself in the world of men, myself as a lover of life. As to whether what I write ... is poetry or not, this simply does not concern me."10 Wen I-to commented on this: "When Mr. Yu thinks the writing of poetry can be so casual and so simple, is it any wonder that he cannot write good poetry?"11

Perhaps because of his training in painting, Wen I-to, more than any of his contemporaries, was able to form a comprehensive aesthetic theory in which he related poetry to the other arts. He believed that poetry could appeal to two senses - the visual and the aural.

As regards the visual appeal of Chinese poetry, he did not mean

11. Ibid., p. 168.
to imply that the Chinese characters were themselves a series of meaningful images, as had been suggested by various Western commentators such as Pound, Fenollosa and Florence Ayscough. His idea was simply that Chinese poetry could take advantage of the additional aesthetic potential afforded by the nature of the Chinese ideographic script.

"Our script," he wrote, "has the ability to produce a [concrete] image; it would be a great pity if we did not put it to good use. The fact that new poetry chose to use the divided lines of Western poetry is a very significant thing. Whether the person who thought of it did so intentionally or unintentionally, we should all be very grateful to him. We have only just come to realise that the strength of poetry lies not only in its having the beauty of music (rhythm) and the beauty of painting (elegance) but also in its having the beauty of architecture (regular rhythmic feet and even lines).... So, if someone were to ask me what is the special characteristic of new poetry, I would certainly reply: the special characteristic of new poetry is the additional potential for architectural beauty."[13]

It should be noted that Chinese poetry had traditionally been associated with other arts - with music, with painting and with calligraphy. In the flurry of excitement in the literary revolution, Chinese writers seemed to have forgotten the excellent potential of the Chinese language for appeal to both the visual and the aural senses.

Wen I-to had always aimed to combine the best of Eastern and Western traditions, and it is to his credit that in an age of immense pro-Western enthusiasm, he was able to clear-headedly turn his

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attention to the formulation of an aesthetic theory - not for poetry in general, nor yet for Western poetry, but for Chinese poetry written in pai-hua.

3. Poetry is a Reflection of Time and Place

Wen believed that new poetry should be "new" not only when compared in the "time-dimension" with traditional Chinese poetry, but also "new" in the "space-dimension" - that is, new, by the fact of its being Chinese, in contrast to contemporary Western poetry.

"I believe", he said, "that poetry, like all the other arts is like a length of cloth with a warp of time and a woof of place; for art, whether it is a criticism of life or a representation of life, is nonetheless a product of life, and life in turn is an imprint in time and space... If we poets do not forget our 'time' and 'place', we will naturally be original. Our works will naturally differ from the old art of the past and will also differ from foreign art. Then we shall have the new art for which we hope and pray!" [14]

Thus, according to Wen, the fault with the old poetry lay in the fact that it had failed to change with the times - it had become fossilised in the T'ang and Sung dynasties. The fault with new poetry was that it was not distinctively Chinese.

"Contemporary new poetry is [filled with] such Western terms as 'democracy', Tagore, Apollo, 'heart-strings' (hsin-hsien) and 'baptism' (hsi-li). But where is our China? Where are our inheritors of four thousand years [of history]? Where is our Yangtze, our Yellow River, our Kunlun mountains, our T'ai-shan, our Tungting Lake, our Western Lake? Where are our Shih Ching, our Ch'u Tz'u, our Li Po, our Tu Fu, our Su Shih and our Lu Yu?" [15]

15. Ibid., p. 196.
Wen praised Kuo Mo-jo's Goddesses for its time-consciousness. All of Kuo's poetry showed the spirit of twentieth century China - a century of rebellion, of science, of cosmopolitanism and of youth. On the other hand, he severely criticised Kuo's poetry for its lack of local colour, that is, its excessive use of Western terms and allusions. He could only conclude that this was due to the fact that Kuo Mo-jo did not appreciate China's cultural tradition. For his own part, Wen preferred to use imagery which was distinctively Chinese.

4. Poetry is Based on Life

As we have seen above, Wen believed that poetry is, essentially, based on life. Criticising the other-worldliness of the Indian poet Tagore, Wen wrote:

"The great fault in Tagore's art is that he has no grasp of reality. Literature is a presentation of life and even metaphysical poetry cannot be an exception. Universality is the stuff of literature; experience of life is the most universal of things. Therefore the palace of literature should be built on the foundations of life." [18]

From these remarks it can be seen that Wen I-to felt that the

16. See Wen I-to, "Nü-shen Chih Shih-tai Ching-shen".
universality of human experience must be the basis of all literature, an opinion restated later by his friend Liang Shih-ch'iu in his famous essay "Literature and Revolution" ("Wen-hsueh Yu Ke-ming").

On the other hand, Wen had no sympathy for those romantic writers (of which there were many at the time) who wrote simply for glorifying in self-revelation at the expense of art.

"Their aim is simply to lay bare their own souls. Those egotistic, self-pitying youths all regard their personal qualities as incomparably perfect; just making them public would be a great artistic achievement. Haven't you heard them day after day shouting 'self-expression'? They have really only discovered the fundamentals of art but have not discovered how to change these fundamentals into art."[19]

5. The Elements of Poetry

Wen named the three requirements of poetry as imagination, feeling and rhythm, of which he obviously considered the latter the most important. 20

a. Imagination

Wen felt that most of the contemporary poets (with a few exceptions such as Kuo Mo-jo and Liang Shih-ch'iu) lacked

imaginative power, hence their poetry was "tasteless and insipid and occasionally unbearably crude". One of the reasons for this was that new poets, despite their best intentions, used much of the vocabulary and technique of old poetry which contained a limited number of conventional descriptive terms and which often relied on simple repetition for descriptive emphasis. As an illustration of this tendency among the new poets, Wen quoted a few lines from a poem in Yu P'ing-po's Tung-yeh:

"Shu-shu ti hsing,  
Shu-shu ti shu-lin,  
Shu-shu wai, shu-shu ti teng." [22]

("Distant stars,  
Distant trees,  
Beyond the distance, a distant lamp.")

In contrast, Wen's own poems were characterised by a new, imaginative use of language which marked a clear departure from the prosaic poems of many of his predecessors. The very first line of his most famous poem, "Dead Water" ("Ssu Shui") is typical: "Cheh shih i-kou ch'eh-wang ti ssu shui" ("This is a ditch of dead and hopeless water"). Wen's description of "water" as "dead" and "hopeless" (these terms not normally used in Chinese to qualify "water") adds great colour to the poem. [23]

23. Wen's vivid use of language will be discussed further in the following chapter.
b. Feeling

If the imagination of many new poets was reminiscent of that found in traditional verse, so too, Wen felt, was their feeling. Analysing the emotions expressed in Tung-yeh, he found that they could be reduced to the following categories: satirical, didactic, philosophising, mystical, lovelorn, nostalgic, homesick, and sometimes simply melancholic. Wen believed that these emotional themes - and the theme of the parting of friends (a traditional theme in Chinese poetry) were no longer appropriate for new poets in the new age. For he believed that poetry should reflect the spirit of the times; and the twentieth century was, to Wen, an age of rebellion, youth, cosmopolitanism, etc. As Wen put it, the feeling expressed in poetry by many contemporary poets such as Yu P'ing-po was just "second-class emotion".

25. Ibid., pp. 176-177.
26. Ibid., p. 178.

c. Rhythm

Hu Shih's enthusiasm for "natural rhythm" and poetry "unrestricted in form was shared by the majority of poets in the early iconoclastic phase of the new poetry movement. As time went on and as criticism of the aridity of the new poetry mounted, however, a number of writers began to experiment with poetic form.
Lu Chih-wei, in his preface to *Tu-ho* (published in 1923), advocated what he called "rhythmic free verse". He considered that long and short lines were most effective for portraying emotion, and suggested the use of rising and falling cadences instead of the traditional arrangement of level and deflecting tones. Little attention was paid to Lu's experiments.

Kuo Mo-jo never stooped to discussion of poetic technique, for he vehemently proclaimed that poetry is "created" not "written". Nonetheless, when one analyses his poetry (the method of scansion will be discussed in the next chapter) one finds that he achieved his poetic rhythm by a number of devices including repetition, parallelism and cursus. For instance, in the poem "Panorama from Fudetate Yama" ("Pi-li-shan t'ou Chan-wang") which we have already quoted in another context, he concludes the first stanza with the lines:

"Yung-che-tsai, yung-che-tsai, yung-che-tsai, yung-che-tsai ya!"

This line parallels the third and fourth lines:

"Ta-che tsai, ch'ui-che tsai, chiao-che-tsai,..."
"P'en-che-tsai, fei-che-tsai, t'iao-che-tsai,..."

The fifth and seventh lines balance internally and at the same time virtually parallel each other. Furthermore, he uses one of the features of prose rhythm, cursus, a technique whereby the intervals

28. See Chapter III above.
between major pauses either increase or decrease in successive lines. Thus, analysed in terms of the number of rhythmic feet per line, the first stanza of the poem forms the following pattern: 2:2:3:3:4:5:5:4. This corresponds to the rising height of emotion in the sixth and seventh lines and the falling-off of emotion in the final refrain-type line.

But Kuo never wrote of his poetic technique, and his poetry was famous not for its metre, but for its underlying iconoclastic, pantheistic philosophy. Even Wen I-to, who had such a great interest in poetic technique, when criticising Kuo Mo-jo's poetry, dealt only with his thought and attitudes and did not mention his use of rhythm; in contrast, when he criticised Yu P'ing-po's poetry, he dwelt at length on its rhythm, although the rhythm of Yu's poetry was hardly as significant as that of Kuo's.

It was not until the founding of Shih-k' en that the experiments of those interested in poetic form achieved recognition, and attracted general interest.

When Wen I-to in his essay "On Form in Poetry" (May, 1926) recommended that poetry should have "the beauty of architecture (regular rhythmic feet and even lines)", he was rebelling against the accepted cardinal principles of new poetry. For in "T'en Hsin Shih", Hu Shih had written:

"The length of the line in new poetry is not set down and the rhythm within the lines is determined by the natural sense groupings and by natural grammatical divisions. There are
many more polysyllabic words in p'ai-hua than in w'en-yen and, moreover, they are not only in two character groups but often in three, four, or five character groups."[30]

Wen advocated poems of even lines to augment the visual and aural effect of the poems. The way in which regular lines could appeal to the eye is quite obvious; the relation between even lines and aural effect is not as clear.

The word chih means "sentence", but in reference to poetry, it can also mean a poetic line, for in classical poetry there was no distinction between the two. Wen I-to's lines were almost invariably end-stopped; that is, that although each line was not necessarily a full syntactical sentence, a major pause occurred at the end of each line. In advocating "even lines" Wen was guaranteeing the regular spacing of pauses throughout the poem. However, both Wen I-to and Hsü Chih-mo (as spokesman for the poets of Shih-k'an) continually emphasised that regular line length, while it assists the poet in achieving good rhythm, does not of itself produce poetry. 31  Hsü summed up the question as follows:

"We have come to realise that the life of poetry lies in its internal rhythm; only through this can we achieve the true flavour of poetry. No matter how deep the thought or how passionate the feeling, only if it is thoroughly rhythmic (that is, poetic) can it be recognised as poetry. Otherwise the thought is just thought, the feeling only feeling—it cannot be called poetry. But this does not mean that one should decide on the basis of superficial characteristics that a certain form is not poetry or that a certain form is poetry. I would consider that anyone who tries to achieve even lines in terms of the number of words per line is wrong.

Decision as to the regularity of lines and length of lines depends on your own feeling of rhythm. One must understand clearly from the beginning what comes first and what comes second, otherwise it is easy to succumb to the now prevalent fault of considering that regular line length (which is a superficial thing) is rhythm (which is an internal thing)." [32]

In actual fact, as a number of writers on the subject have pointed out, an even number of characters per line does not mean that the number of stresses per line will be identical. A number of words, the so-called "light" (ch'ing) words are actually elusive, while pause marked by punctuation (full stops, commas, etc.) can sometimes substitute one or more beats.

Wen believed that within the regular pause pattern established by having even lines, the sense-group feet should also be regular. This is what he meant by "internal rhythm". As an example, Wen quoted his own poem, "Dead Water". In this poem, each nine-character line is divided into three two-character feet and one three-character foot. To achieve variation within this basic rhythm, the position of the three-character foot could be varied. [34]

i.e. "Cheh shih / i-kou / chüeh-wang-ti / ssu shui,

Ch'ing feng / ch'ui-pu-ch'i / pan-tien / i-lun."

The rhythmic pattern suggested by Wen was very different to that advocated by Hu Shih. The "natural" arrangement of words in the


33. Wang Li, Han-yü Shih-lü-hste, p. 862; Chu Tzu-ch'ing, Hsin Shih Tsa-hua, p. 100.

sentence produced a haphazard collection of rhythmic feet varying in length from one to five characters as the few lines from Hu Shih's "Ying-kai" quoted below will show.

"Cheh i-t'ien / t'a / yen-lei wang-wang-ti / wang-che wo,
Shuo tao / ni ju-ho / hai hsiang-che wo?"35

The ideas of the poets of Shih-k' an and Hsin-yüeh Yüeh-k' an on poetic form, while they had great contemporary influence, naturally aroused strong opposition amongst those who had felt that the essence of the new poetry lay in its emancipation from fixed forms. The even-line poetry produced under the influence of Shih-k' an was derisively called "dried bean-curd" (tou-fu kan-k' uai) poetry or "square poetry" (fang-k' uai shih).36

Both Hu Chih-mo and Wen I-to were obviously sensitive to the charge that they were reverting to a sort of regulated verse (lî-shih). Wen hastened to explain the difference between regulated verse and the style of the new poetry he advocated:

"Recently a number of people have expressed doubts about [the theory of] regular rhythmic feet and even lines and have said that this represents a return to the old style.... [Nowadays] you can write poetry in imitation of the sonnet form, but you must be careful not to let it look like [Chinese] regulated verse. I really do not know why regulated verse should be [regarded as] so hateful and despicable. Would it be possible [anyhow] to write poems exactly the same as regulated verse in the colloquial language? And even if you make the feet regular and the lines even, can this be called regulated verse?"

35. Quoted by Hu Shih in "T'an Hsin Shih", p. 178, from "Ying-kai" (text in Chao Chia-pi (ed.), Ta-hsi, Vol. 8, pp. 33-34). A translation is given in Chapter III above.
Naturally, regulated verse also had a form of architectural beauty; but it is different when compared with the potential of new poetry for architectural beauty. Regulated verse had only one form, but the forms of new poetry are inexhaustible. This is the first point of difference between the two. No matter what your subject or ideas are, when you write regulated verse you must squeeze them into a fixed form; it would be as though men, women, old people and children all had to wear identical clothes....

The form of regulated verse had no relation to the content, but the form of new poetry is based on the content. This is their second point of dissimilarity. The form of regulated verse is decided upon by others; but the form of new poetry can be made according to one's own creative ideas. This is the third point of difference. From these points of difference we can see whether the forms of new poetry are archaistic or creative, progressive or retrogressive."

Wen equated poetic form (shih ti ko-lâ) with rhythm (chieh-ts'ou), for he believed that rhythm was that which distinguished poetry from prose, the sine qua non of poetry. He explained the necessity for rhythm (or form) in poetry, by likening the composition of poetry to playing chess:

"The game of chess cannot do away with rules; likewise poetry cannot be without form...(i.e. rhythm)... Now supposing that you moved the chess pieces at random, and paid no heed to the rules of chess, could there be any interest in it? The interest in a game lies in being able to win within fixed rules. The interest in writing poetry is the same. If poetry could abandon rules, wouldn't writing poetry be simpler than playing tennis or majong? Little wonder that this year [the production of] new poetry has been 'more prolific than spring shoots after rain'. I know that some people will object to these words. But the words of Professor Bliss Perry are even more unequivocal. He said: "Hardly any poets feel that they are hampered by form. They delight to dance in fetters, and moreover, to dance in the fetters worn by other poets." [38]

38. Ibid., p. 245.
Earlier we have seen that Wen was severely critical of those romantic poets whose main aim was self-revelation and who felt that all form was a hindrance to their romantic self-expression.

As Wen saw it, poetry should seek to rouse emotion. It should not simply be a vehicle of morbid introspection. The ability of poetry to arouse emotions lay in its rhythm:

"In Shakespeare's poetic dramas, he always used poetry at the height of emotional intensity.... I fear that the more spirited the writer, the more he likes to dance in fetters. Only those who cannot dance see the fetters as a hindrance; only those who cannot write poetry feel that form is a restraint. For those who cannot write poetry, form is an impediment to their expression. But, for a [real] writer, form becomes the vehicle of expression." [39]

1. Rhyme

Rhyme is not completely distinct from rhythm. It is rather a means of emphasising rhythm. It does this in two ways. Firstly, the rhyme scheme in end-stopped lines emphasises the major pauses. Secondly, it relates the material in any given rhyme scheme division.

As Hung Shen put it in his book The Reading of Plays and the Recitation of Verse: "The lines related by rhyme in a certain poem, naturally achieve close constructional unity. This encourages the listener to seek a similar unity in the contents (that is, the emotion and thought) of those lines." [40]

39. Ibid., p. 247.

In his discussion of rhythm in poetry, Wen did not discuss the relationship between rhythm and rhyme. That he did realise that rhyme can emphasise rhythm is clear from his remarks in a letter to his friend Wu Ching-ch'ao:

"Recently I have given much attention to the use of rhyme. Chinese rhymes are extremely numerous. Using rhyme is not so difficult; it cannot destroy the meaning of the poem. Thus, if we can use more rhymes, why should we not do so? Rhyme can aid the rhythm, and perfect the artistry [of the poem]. Not to use them is like hiding one's wealth away and preferring to go cold and hungry. Isn't that foolish?" [41]

Considering Wen's fame as a prosodist, his critical and theoretical writings offer us scarce information. Analysis of his actual poetry throws more light on his theories and their application. This is the subject of the following chapter.

41. Wen I-to, Ch'üan-chi, section keng, p. 18.
CHAPTER VI

FORMAL ASPECTS OF WEN I-TO'S POETRY

1. Classical Prosody

The rhythm of classical Chinese poetry has been traditionally described by Chinese commentators in terms of the arrangement of level (p'ing) and deflecting (tse) tones within the poem. The p'ing category was a high, level tone; the tse category included three deflected tones known as sheng (rising), ch'ü (falling) and ju (entering). These three tse tones are shorter, and lower in pitch than the p'ing tones. Thus the arrangement of p'ing and tse tones was an arrangement of long, high-pitched sounds, contrasted with shorter, lower-pitched sounds. That is, the variation in pitch plays a role similar to that of stress in English verse, while

1. These four tones do not correspond to the four tones isolated in modern Mandarin, the latter being known as: Yin-p'ing (high level), Yang-p'ing (rising), Shang-sheng (falling-rising), and Ch'ü-sheng (low falling). Forrest, in The Chinese Language p. 192, stated that these tones were a feature of northern Mandarin as early as the fifteenth century. The sound changes which occurred before this time which redistributed the tones of Ancient Chinese are roughly as follows: Ancient p'ing tone became modern Yin-p'ing (i.e., 1st tone) and modern Yang-p'ing (2nd tone); Ancient sheng tone became the modern sheng-sheng (3rd tone); and Ancient ch'ü tone became modern Ch'ü-cheng (4th tone). Words of the ju tone were distributed among all four modern tone groups.
variation in syllable length corresponds to the long and short syllables of Latin and Greek quantitative verse.  

While Chinese critics have been very conscious of the relationship between tonal arrangement and poetic rhythm, they have largely ignored the equally important factor in determining rhythm—pausing. This is presumably because the question of pausing has been confused with the question of poetic form (i.e., line length patterns). In lü-shih, for instance, the poetic form requires that each line be a certain number of characters in length. Since in classical poetry lines were end-stopped, a regular rhythm was created in which a major pause occurred at the end of every line. Then, within the pause pattern established by regular line length, the poem was further subdivided according to sense into clusters of one or two characters (a two character cluster being the prosodic unit of classical Chinese poetry, one character being a half-foot).  

2. James Liu, The Art of Chinese Poetry, pp. 21-22. Another similarity is that, as in English verse, rhyme is usually avoided on an unstressed syllable. In chin-t'ı shih, Chinese poets preferred to use rhymes in p'ing-sheng rather than in tse-sheng. See Wang Li, Han-yü Shih-lü-hste, p. 7.  

2. The Rhythmic Potential of Pai-hua

As we have seen in the foregoing chapter, Wen I-to believed that rhythm was essential to poetry. But, unlike many of the earlier critics of Hu Shih's idea of "natural rhythm", he had no wish to revert to the system of arrangement of level and deflecting tone words. It was Wen's conviction that poetry was essentially an exploration of language, that "rhythmic potential lies in the language" and that "every language has an inherent rhythm". 4

What, then, are the characteristics of pai-hua which could be exploited for rhythmic effect?

Firstly, it is important to remember that pai-hua is for all practical purposes a different language to wen-yen, which, like Latin in Medieval Europe, had been preserved long after it had ceased to be a living language. The staple unit was no longer the single character; instead it was the disyllabic compound, associated with a number of free monosyllables and particles. In classical Chinese, as in the modern Fukien and Cantonese dialects, each word was given its full tone, 5 but in colloquial Mandarin, only a limited number of words (i.e., tzu) are given their full tones. The rest are atonal (elided) or have their tones modified by their position and their syntactical function in the sentence.

Stress

Of course it would still be possible to describe a prosodic system for pai-hua on the basis of tones, though this system would not be of the same nature as the traditional division into p'ing and tse tones. One could, for instance, describe pai-hua rhythm in terms of the distribution of fully tonal, partly tonal and atonal units. But these units can better be described as, respectively, stressed, semi-stressed and unstressed units.

The unstressed words (they are virtually elision) fall into three categories:

1. Final particles (or enclitics) (chü-wei): i.e., tzu 子 of tao-tzu 刀子; shang 上 of wen-shang 晚上; the particle erh 兒, etcetera.

2. Auxiliaries and expletives (chu-tz'u): i.e., che 着 of tso-che 坐着; ti 的 of shih-ti 是 的; pa 罷 of hao-pa 好 罷; la 來 of t'a lai-la 他 来 了, etcetera.

3. The second character of a disyllabic compound in which both characters have approximately the same meaning. i.e., fu 伙 of p'u-fu 刷 伙; yu 友 of p'eng-yu 朋友; k'an 看 of k'an-k'an 看 看, etcetera.


Semi-stressed words are not quite so easy to isolate. This category includes words such as kuo-chia 國家, in which kuo 國 is read stressed and chia 家 slightly lighter (i.e., semi-stressed). It also includes those characters which undergo tonal change because of their position. For example, after a word in the third tone, the following character is pronounced in the second tone, and is lighter. e.g., pan 扮 of ta-pan 打扮, etcetera. 8

Stress adds pitch, length and sonority to a syllable. It is through the relationship of stressed, semi-stressed and unstressed syllables in the colloquial Mandarin utterance that the meaning becomes clear, hence the name "sense-stress" sometimes used for stress. 9

b. Emphasis

In addition to stress there is emphasis. This draws attention to a certain part of the utterance and clarifies the speaker's attitude. It does not, however, alter the meaning of the words in the sentence, though it does change their comparative relevance. e.g., in the sentence: T'a shih wo ti fu-ch'in (he is my father) 他是我的父親, emphasis can fall on t' a (he, i.e., not someone else), wo (my, i.e. my father, not yours), fu-ch'in (father, i.e., my father, not my husband). Though the emphasis in this

8. For further information see Ibid, pp. 20-21.
sentence can fall on a semi-stressed word (i.e., ch'in of fu-ch'in), it cannot fall on the unstressed particles shih or ti. Hung Shen explains the important differences between stress and emphasis as follows:

"Firstly, within a sense-group, there must be a relatively stressed unit; thus the stressed [syllables] are not restricted to one place in the sentence, whereas usually only a few units are emphasised. Secondly, stress is given according to the meaning - there must be one in every sense-group in the sentence; emphasis is something which conveys emotions, and whether a sentence has emphasis or not is dependent on the speaker's feelings at that particular time."

That is, stress is determined by the semantics of the utterance; emphasis by the speaker's personal conception of the significance of the utterance.

In practice, in a line of poetry, the stress is the determinant of rhythm, while emphasis determines the point of highest pitch in the line. Emphasis, then, determines whether the pitch of the line rises, falls, or rises and falls.

3. Analysis of Wen I-to's poetry

a. Rhythm

Cyril Birch in his paper "English and Chinese Metres in Hsiü Chih-mo" demonstrated that, except in description of the poetry of a

10. Ibid., p. 19.
minority of poets like Hsü Chih-mo who experimented with a variety of English verse forms, the most effective method of scansion for modern Chinese poetry is the sense-group foot.11 This was the method used by Hu Shih,12 and also the method used by Wen I-to in his discussion of the construction of his poem "Dead Water". The ideas of these two poets on the ideal nature of the sense-group feet in poetry were radically different. Hu Shih believed that one of the great advantages of the freedom offered by the new poetry was that the (sense-group) feet (chien) no longer had to be a basic two syllables in length as in classical poetry. He wrote:

"The length of the line in new poetry is not set down and the rhythm within the lines is determined by the natural sense groupings and by natural grammatical divisions. There are many more polysyllabic words in pai-hua than in wen-yen and, moreover, they are not only in two character groups but often in three, four, or five character groups."[13]

A few lines from Shen Yin-mo's "San-hsien" will illustrate this:


Though Wen might agree that this sort of structure is "the natural rhythm of speech", he would contend that this is not poetry. The rhythm of poetry is based on the perceivable repetition of a

13. Ibid., p. 177.
number of similarly structured rhythmic feet. In addition to the beauty of music and the beauty of painting, Wen wanted to see in pai-hua poetry "the beauty of architecture" (i.e., regular rhythmic feet and even lines). Illustrating these ideas he quoted his own "Dead Water", a poem whose rhythm he felt had proved "a most satisfying experiment". I have scanned this poem below using the letter "a" for stressed sounds, "x" for partly stressed and "o" for unstressed syllables; "/" marks the end of each rhythmic foot, and "//" marks the caesura.

```
axa xaoax
Cheh shih / i-kou / ch'i-hwang-ti / ssu shui,

axoaaxa
Ch'ing feng / ch'ui-pu-ch'i / pan-tien / i-lun.

axaoaxa
Pu-ju / to jen haieh / p'o t'ung / lan t'ieh,

axaaxoaaxaa
Shuang-hsing / p'o ni-ti / sheng ts'ai / ts'an keng.
```


16. A translation of this poem is to be found in Hsu Kai-yu, Twentieth Century Chinese Poetry, p.61. For the text, see Wen I-to, Ssu Shui, pp. 16-17. (The text is included in Appendix A below.) The scansion of this and other poems quoted in this section is based on two sets of tape-recordings of the poems made by two different Mandarin-speaking Chinese. Though there are slight differences in emphasis and accent, the versions of both speakers are surprisingly similar.
Yeh-hsü / t'ung-ti / yao lu ch'eng / fei-ts'ui,

T'ieh kuan-shang / hsiu-ch'u / chi-pan / t'ao-hua;

Tsai jiang / yu-ni / chih i-ts'eng / lo-ch'i,

Mei-chün / kei t'a / cheng-ch'u hsieh / yün-hsia.

Jang ssu shui / hsiao-ch'eng / i-kou / lu-chiu,

P'iao-man-la / chen-chu / ssu-ti / pai-mo;

Hsiao chu-men / hsiao sheng / pien-ch'eng / ta chu,

Yu pei / t'ou chiu-ti / hua-wen / yao-p'o.

Na-mo / i-kou / chih-wang-ti / ssu-shui,

Yeh chiu / k'ua-te-shang / chi-fen / hsien-ming.

Ju-kuo / ch'ing-wa / nai-pu-chu / chi-mo,

Yu suan / ssu shui / chiao-ch'u-la / ko-sheng.
It will be noticed first of all that the lines are all nine
syllables long, each line being end-stopped. All lines are
divided into four feet, three feet of two syllables and one foot
of three syllables. The rhythm is basically trochaic, a very
natural form in view of the nature of the basic unit of modern
pai-hua, the disyllabic compound, discussed above. Exceptions to
the basic trochaic rhythm are as follows:

(1) The three syllable feet: Certain of these, though they
contain three syllables, are for all purposes trochaic, for
if the first syllable is stressed, the second half-stressed
and the third unstressed, this final syllable is in fact
elisive and can be discounted in description of the rhythm of
the foot e.g., p'o-ni-ti is basically trochaic. In a large
number of cases in "Dead Water" the stress occurs in the medial
position. e.g., ch'leh-wang-ti. Occasionally the unstressed
syllable is in the medial position. e.g., ch'ui-p'u-ch'\i.
There is no instance in "Dead Water" of the stressed syllable
in a three syllable foot occurring in the final position. In
certain other poems, however, this does occur, though rarely.

(2) Certain pairs of words of literary usage often constitute spondees, equal accent and full tone being accorded both words (as is the case with classical Chinese). e.g., ch'ing-feng. There are numerous instances of this phenomenon throughout Wen's poetry.

(3) When a monosyllabic adjective is coupled with a mono-syllabic noun without the possessive particle ti, the rhythm is usually a a a a a a a spondaic. e.g., sheng-ts'ai, pai mo, ts'an keng.

(4) In the case of a numeral (or numerator) and a classifier, the location of the stress seems to vary according to the descriptive strength of the classifier. e.g., i-ko (one, a), x a a x a but i-kou (a ditch); chi-fen (a little) but chi-pan (pan, lit. "petal", being the classifier for flowers).

(5) Disyllabic technical terms tend to be spondees. e.g., mei-chün (bacteria), ch'ing-wa(frog).

These exceptions to the trochaic rhythm, together with the fluctuating position of the three-character foot in successive line, provide necessary rhythmic variation and prevent the poem becoming monotonously "sing-song".

Cyril Birch believed that Wen I-to advocated the "Dead Water" line as "a possible lexical staple for the New Verse" and concluded:

"Unfortunately modern Chinese, whether we extol its rich resources or deplore its untidy and inconsiderate lack of
grammatical system, has too many loose monosyllables to lie happily on this particular Procrustean bed. Wen I-to filled his pattern with romantic words, nouns above all and ended with a mixture so rich that it rapidly cloys." [17]

But, in my opinion at least, when Wen I-to quoted his poem "Dead Water" in his essay "On Form in Poetry", he was demonstrating his method of achieving rhythm in poetry, not recommending a "staple" for the new verse. He had always firmly maintained that the forms of new poetry should be determined by the content; for the sombre themes of "Dead Water", the heavy tread of the trochee is quite appropriate. In fact, examination of all his poetry shows that he, like Hsu, experimented with a great variety of metres.

Though Wen quite often used a line of nine syllables, he also frequently used lines of ten or eleven syllables. The shortest line in a poem of regular line length was seven syllables (in the ballad "Ni Mo Yulan Wo"); the longest was thirteen syllables. It would seem that Wen strove to use lines of equal length in his poems (partly for visual beauty), but he by no means regarded this as an absolute rule. Of the twenty-eight poems of Dead Water,

18. My illustrations of Wen's poetic technique come exclusively from Dead Water, since the poems in this volume represent Wen's mature writing.
19. Chu Tzu-ch'ing felt that a ten-syllable line is the most appropriate line length for pai-hua poetry. See Chu Tzu-ch'ing, Hsin Shih Tsa-hua, p. 100.
eighteen have regular form (all lines equal or regular patterns much as 10:7:7:10); the remaining ten poems are only slightly irregular.

Miss Ling Shu-hua, analysing the rhythm of both new and old Chinese poetry, found that Chinese poets, both ancient and modern, favoured a three-time beat; four-time ranked second. Wen I-to rarely used a three beat line. (It is interesting to note that Miss Ling quoted one of only two poems in Dead Water which uses a regular three beat line in proof of her thesis that Chinese poets prefer a three-time beat.) Wen obviously preferred four or five beats to the line; occasionally he used a six-beat line. This six-beat line was not, as Miss Ling would suggest, two groups of three beats, for in these lines the caesura rarely occurred after the third foot. Wen's use of a rather long line resulted from his conviction that a short line limited the imagination — and imagination was, in Wen's estimation, one of the three important elements in poetry.

Very few of Wen's poems are as easily analysed as "Dead Water". In fact, investigation shows that in most poems he achieved poetic rhythm, not by mathematical arrangement of a fixed number of syllables into a certain number of rhythmic feet, but, like Kuo

22. Ling Shu-hua, Hsin Shih ti Wei-lai, p. 12.
23. Wen I-to, "Tung Yeh P'ing-lun", p. 150.
Mo-jo, by skilful balance and parallelism of sound, sense and rhythm.

To illustrate this, let us analyse the first section of the poem "Ching Yeh" ("Quiet Night")

x a x x a a a x o o x a
1 Cheh teng kuing // cheh teng kuing / p'iao-pai-la-ti / ssu-pi;

x a x o a x x a a x o x a
2 Cheh hsiang-liang-ti / cho i // p'eng-yu ssu-ti / ch'in mi;

x a o x a x o x a
3 Cheh ku shu-ti / chih hsiang // i-chien-chien-ti / hsi-lai;

x a o x a x o a x
4 Yao-hao-ti / ch'a-pei // chen-nu / i-pan-ti / chieh-pai;

x a x o a x x o a x a x
5 Shou-fu-ti / hsiao-erh // chieh-hsia-tsai / mu-ch'in / huai-li,

x a x x a x a x o a x
6 Han-sheng / pao-tao / wo ta-erh / k'ang-chien-ti / hsiao-hsia...;

x a x o a x x a x o a x
7 Cheh shen-mi-ti / ching yeh // cheh hun-y'an-ti / ho-p'ing,

x a x o a x o a x o a x

x a x a x x a x o x a
9 Tan-shih / ko-sheng / ma-shang yu / pien-ch'eng-la / tsu-chou,

x o a o a axo a a
10 Ching yeh // wo pu neng / pu neng / shou ni-ti / hui-lu.

All lines in this poem are divided into rhyming couplets. All are twelve syllables in length, these syllables being grouped into

four or five rhythmic feet. These feet, unlike those of "Dead Water", are not mainly trochaic, with occasional dactylic and spondaic feet. If this result is not to make a mockery of the system of sense-group analysis used here, or to reveal no analysable rhythm whatsoever in this poem, one must look for the rhythm of the poem beyond a formal description of the characteristics of each rhythmic foot. The solution lies in Wen's delicate use of parallelism, antithesis, balance and repetition.

In the first line of "Ching Yeh" we find the very effective x a x repetition of the phrase cheh tong kuang; the second part of the a x o o x a line, p'iao-pai-la-ti / ssu-pi, corresponds to the second half of the a x x o x a next line, p'eng-yu ssu-ti / ch'in-mi. The first two feet in the x a x o a x second line, cheh hsien-liang-ti / cho-i followed by a caesura find their echo in similar groups in the third, fourth, fifth and seventh lines; the first two feet of the eighth line are also of similar pattern, but in this case, no caesura follows the second foot. The fourth and fifth lines balance each other almost perfectly, this balance cutting across the rhyme unity which couples the third line with the fourth line (lai/pai rhyme) and the fifth line with the sixth line (li/hsi rhyme). The sixth and ninth lines, whose rhythm contrasts with the rhythm of the rest of the poem, parallel each other. The tenth line, with its startling caesura after the initial

25. Though Wen advocated a regular number of rhythmic feet per line, he rarely, except in exceptional poems such as "Ssu Shui", managed to achieve this. His use of regular line length did, however, help towards approximating this end.
sombre, spondaic foot, is echoed by two lines later in the poem:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{the twenty-fifth line (Hsin-fu} / \text{wo ju-chih} / \text{pu-neng} / \text{shou ni-ti} / \\
&\text{a xa xo}
\end{align*}
\]

and the twenty-eighth line (Ching yeh // ni ju-ho neng //
\[
\begin{align*}
&a x a o a a \\
&\text{chin-chih} / \text{wo-ti} / \text{hsin t'iao}).
\end{align*}
\]

This example will serve to illustrate the subtlety and complexity of the rhythm achieved by Wen in most of the poems of Dead Water, with the exception of those poems in ballad form in which the rhythm is, naturally, simpler and more definite.

b. Rhyme

It will be recalled that Wen recommended the use of rhyme to enhance the aural effect of the poem. As we have seen in the foregoing analysis of "Ching Yeh", rhyme can heighten or act in contrast to the rhythm of the poem. The limited number of finals in colloquial Mandarin (thirty-seven in all) provide ample scope for rhyming. Though Wen favoured alternate rhyming (ababcdcd), or rhyming couplets (aabccc), he used a number of other combinations including: aabaa; aacaa ("Ni Mo Y\u0101n Wo"); abba; acca ("Wang-tiao T'a"); abbbba; abbbba; accca; accca ("Wo Yao Hui-lai"); and even aaaa ("Ni K'an").

Illustrative of the relationship between rhythm and rhyme which Wen managed to achieve in many of his poems, is the ballad "Wang-tiao T'a". This has lines of 10:7:7:7:10 syllables in length. The first and last lines are identical - a refrain in fact. The identity of the refrain lines and the rhythmic unity of the middle
three lines are underlined by the use of rhyme in the scheme abbba.

Wen spent many years of his life in Peking and, according to his friends, spoke the Peking dialect almost perfectly. His rhymes were usually perfect rhymes in Peking Mandarin. Of the half-rhymes he used, some may have been full rhymes in his own Hupei dialect. In other cases, some of the half-rhymes were full rhymes according to the rhyme-scheme for classical Chinese poetry. e.g., to 多 rhymes with ko歌 (both ko歌 category for classical poetry); jen 人 rhymes with ch‘un春 (both chen貞 category for classical poetry). Wen's frequent use of rhymes in the classical rhyme categories reflected the strong influence of the poet's early orthodox education.

I do not propose here to go into Wen's use of assonance, alliteration and onomatopoeia, for I feel that description of these (except for rhyme, a feature of assonance, which is easily mensurable) would be purely conjectural. Suffice it to say that Wen did not use alliteration and assonance to the same extent as did those poets who concentrated less on poetic rhythm. For example, in Shen Yin-mo's "San-hsien" (previously quoted for its prose rhythm) we have the lines:

"P'ang-pien yu i-tuan ti-ti t'u-ch'iang, tang-chu-la-ko t' an san-hsien ti jen, ch'ieh pu-neng ko-tuan na san-hsien ku-tang ti sheng-lang." 26

Here we find use of alliteration to a remarkable degree with the repetition of the palatals "t" and "d". In none of Wen's poems did he use alliteration to this extent.

c. Imagery

Imagery is as much a function of language as it is of imagination. Every word or expression has a number of associations, associations usually derived from human experience. (Where the writer uses words with purely personal associations, as in the case of "personal symbols", these are likely to obscure the meaning for the reader who is not familiar with the symbols used by that particular writer.) However, the common experience of one age is not necessarily the same as that of another. In China during Imperial times, a writer could make extensive use of classical allusion, quotation and imitation because he could be certain that he shared the common experience of orthodox Confucianist education with his audience. Chinese to-day find these poems more difficult, and often obscure. The examination system, based on a classical education ensured for Chinese poetry a contemporaneity which no other language has managed to retain; yet even in China, where tradition was so prized, what was common knowledge in one age could often be unknown in another. 27

27. James Liu, in The Art of Chinese Poetry, p. 135, gives an example of this.
Likewise, expressions have different associations in different cultures, i.e., for the Chinese the colour white is associated with death; for Westerners, black and purple are colours associated with death. When Wen wrote in his poem "Colours" ("Se-ts'ai") - "Black reminds me of death", his associations were those of a Western-educated Chinese, and may not have been very meaningful to the majority of his countrymen.

It is through associations that expressions have emotive power. Such words as "mother", "Communism", "race", etc., have strong emotional associations. The poet conveys feeling in his poems, not so much by the ideas he expresses as by selecting those words which, through their associations, have appropriate evocative power. Some words or expressions, particularly those with a precise definition, have few associations. The word "radiator" for instance, may make one think of "warmth", but for this purpose, "stove" or "hearth" would be much more evocative terms.

It is through associations, too, that the feeling arises that some words are more appropriate to poetry than others. This encourages archaisms, such as the use of "thou" instead of "you" in English verse. In Chinese, the classical and poetic associations of certain expressions were so strong that poets eschewed the use of words not found in classical literature. Dissatisfaction with this archaistic tendency in Chinese poetry was the cause of the "poetry revolution" (shih chieh ke-ming) of the late nineteenth century when
certain poets such as Huang Ts' un-hsien advocated the use of language more appropriate to the times.

Familiar associations (provoked by classicism, allusion, symbolism, etc.) can enable the poet to sum up a situation succinctly. On the other hand, expressions can become hackneyed through over-use and quickly lose their original force. The good writer is constantly examining the resources of his language for expressions which, when used in conjunction, will have the appropriate impact on the reader.

The actual structure of the language can considerably influence poetic imagery, though it is true that in most languages poetic licence allows a certain amount of tampering with the rules of syntax and grammar. The language of traditional Chinese poetry was succinct but not precise. Being succinct it could sum up a scene or emotion using a minimum of words. e.g., Ma Chih-y'En's ch'ü to the tune of "T'ien Ching Sha":

"Ku t'eng lao shu hun ya.
Hsiao ch'iao liu shui jen chia."...
(Withered vines, old trees, twilight crows,
Little bridge, flowing water, peoples' houses.)

Wen-yen is an uninflected language and hence lacks those signs of case, tense, gender, mood, etc., which are found in most languages. Subject, object or verb can be omitted at will for poetic effect. This achieves a certain flavour of simplicity, timelessness and universality which is one of the joys of Chinese classical poetry. 28

28. Ibid., pp. 40-42.
Moreover, *wen-yen* syntax was such that the same words could function as different parts of speech (noun, verb, adjective or adverb) according to the context. This fluidity added to the dramatic potential of the poetic language.

With the change to the spoken language as the medium of poetry, this fluidity of parts of speech was greatly limited. *Pai-hua* is diffuse, not concise; precise, not generalised. Thus when the early *pai-hua* writers such as Hu Shih, Liu Fu, Shen Yin-mo, Yu P'ing-po, K'ang Po-ch'ing, etc., tried to present "concrete images" recalling those of classical poetry, the result was insipid and uninspiring. Likewise words and expressions in *pai-hua* did not have the same evocative power of association as did those in *wen-yen* for these associations were a result of their use over many centuries by generations of skilful poets.

Of course, in any spoken language there are associations which the poet can draw on to create dramatic imagery. The Chinese colloquial language is as vivid as any other language and had already been used successfully in novels and plays. The task lying before the first generation of *pai-hua* poets was to explore the *pai-hua* language critically, exploit its current associations and create new verbal concepts.

A serious attitude to this task was not in tune with the ideas of the founders of the literary revolution who were concerned merely

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29. Hu Shih based his ideas of the importance of "concrete imagery" largely on the success with which it was used in classical poetry. See Hu Shih, "T'an Hsin Shih", p. 182.
to break down the barriers to free and natural self-expression.
Nor was it in tune with those writers whose interest was in writing for "the masses", choosing the lowest common denominator in literacy and education for their audience.

Wen I-to and his fellow writers of Shih-k' ān and Hsin-yūeh Yūeh-k' ān, in contrast, were serious and highly conscious artists dedicated to the exploration of the medium in which they had chosen to write for maximum poetic effect.

Wen's imagery was, in summary, of five main types.

(1) Classical allusions and familiar metaphors: Wen was not afraid to admit that he was heir to China's literary past, a brave attitude in those days when all tradition was treated with contempt and suspicion. As in classical poetry, the use of a familiar expression helps sum up a situation. In the second line of "Dead Water", for instance, he wrote: "Ch'ing feng ch'ui-pu-ch'i pan-tien i-lun". Ch'ing feng (cool breeze) and i-lun (ripples) (the combination lun-i appears in the ode "Fat' an" of the Shih Ching), are both literary, not colloquial expressions. They evoke an atmosphere of quietude and peace which is meant to act in ironic contrast to the bitter passion of the whole poem.

(2) Non-conventional images which are startlingly apposite: In the first verse of the ballad "Wang-tiao T'a", written after the death of his young daughter, Wen said:
"Forget her, as a forgotten flower,
    That ray of morning sun on a petal,
    That whiff of fragrance from a blossom -
Forget her, as a forgotten flower."[30]

By likening the little girl to a flower, a ray of morning light and fragrance, the poet stresses both her beauty and the tragic brevity of her life.

Again in the poem "Huang-hun" ("Twilight") Wen used sustained imagery to underline the lethargy of sunset:

"Twilight is a slow black ox,
Step by step he goes down the Western hills;
Don't shut the city gates too early -
You must wait until the ox comes in.

Twilight is a strange black ox,
A spirit from some other world -
Every night the moonlight sends him into the city,
And early next morning the sun leads him up the Western hills." [31]

(3) Imagery to emphasise contrast: Just as in classical poetry, imagery can be used to point out a contrast, a contrast between the past and the present, the real and the apparent, etc.

"Dead Water" is Wen's most effective example of this. The poem as a whole is allegorical, the ditch of stagnant water representing China. It was written at a time when Wen was feeling passionately disappointed in the country he had idealised during his stay abroad. China's beauties were only


apparent, a disguise for filth and wretchedness. In the first four verses the contrast between the real and the apparent is sustained in a series of brilliant images; verdigris becomes emeralds, rust becomes peach blossom, oil weaves gauze and mould brews coloured clouds. The stagnant water brews green wine; its scum is like laughing pearls. By this use of contrast, Wen builds up to his pessimistic conclusion:

"Here is a ditch of hopelessly dead water -
A region where beauty can never reside.
Might as well let the devil cultivate it -
See what sort of world it can provide." [32]

(4) The use of expressions out of their normal context: Such a device is a real exploration of language and involves transfer of an attribute from one object to another to which it does not normally belong, or the substitution of one kind of sensation for another.33 For instance, Wen's use of "forgotten" to modify "flower" in "Wang-tiao T'a" is an example of the description of a physical object in terms of a mental experience. This is particularly apt when it is recalled that the "forgotten flower" referred to Wen's deceased daughter whose memory the saddened poet was trying to blot out. Wen's description in "Dead Water" of a ditch of water as "dead" and "hopeless" is another example of his imaginative and striking breakthrough in language and imagery.

32. Ibid., pp. 16-17. This translation from Hsu Kai-yu, Twentieth Century Chinese Poetry, p. 61.

(5) The use of expressions not normally considered poetic: In classical Chinese poetry, the expressions considered suitable for poetic usage were strictly limited by convention. When nineteenth century poets suggested the use of modern terms in poetry, this was considered to be a "revolution" in the world of poetry. Even some of the literary revolutionaries could not agree with Hu Shih that one should "write as one speaks". Some at least\(^\text{34}\) drew the line at obscenity. But a talented poet can often use to great effect expressions which are normally considered unpoetic, and the expressions correspondingly have greater impact. Wen I-to, for instance, wrote in the last lines of "K'ou Hung":

"There is yet another me - aren't you afraid? - With the thoughts of a gnat crawling in a garbage can."\(^\text{35}\)

"Garbage can" is not generally considered an expression whose associations would render it suitable for poetry, but here, as Wen uses it, it is strongly evocative - a most successful image.

These examples will, I trust, suffice to illustrate Wen I-to's highly successful exploitation of the imagistic potential of the Chinese colloquial language. At the same time, he was experimenting with rhythm and rhyme to employ the full aural powers of the pai-hua

\(^{34}\text{Ch'eng Fang-wu, "Shih ti Fang-yü-chan", p. 334.}\)

\(^{35}\text{Text in Wen I-to, Ssu Shui, p. 5.}\)
medium. The result was poetry of rich texture, a perfect association of sense and sound.
CHAPTER VII

WEN I-TO, THE SCHOLAR

PART A: WEN'S RETREAT INTO SCHOLARSHIP

1. The Crescent Monthly

a. The Debate on Revolutionary Literature

From March 1928 to April 1929, Wen I-to was one of the editors of a new, liberal, literary journal, the Crescent Monthly (Hsin-yüeh Yüeh-k' an), whose contributors included Hu Shih, Hsiü Chih-mo, Liang Shih-ch'iü, Lo Lung-chi, Jao Meng-k'an, Ch'en Meng-chia, P' an Kuang-tan, Yü Keng-yü, Yü Shang-yüan, Ch'en Yüan, Chu Hsiang and Shen Ts'ung-wen. A number of these writers (e.g., Hu Shih, Hsiü Chih-mo and Ch'en Yüan) had previously been associated with a magazine called Contemporary Review (Hsien-tai P'ing-lun). In fact, the Crescent Monthly was generally regarded as a continuation of the Contemporary Review. At the same time, although the Crescent Monthly was said to have no official connection with the former

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1. C.T. Hsia, A History of Modern Chinese Fiction, p. 121, and Huang Sung-k'ang, Lu Hsün and the New Culture Movement of Modern China (hereinafter referred to as Lu Hsün), p. 111.
Crescent Society (Hsin-yüeh She) literary club in Peking\(^2\), or with the Crescent Publishing Company (Hsin-yüeh Shu-tien),\(^3\) their connection is demonstrated not only by their identical names, but also by the fact that Wen I-to was intimately associated with all three enterprises.

No sooner had Crescent Monthly begun publication than it was immediately involved in the stormy dispute on "revolutionary" or "proletarian" literature. In this controversy, Wen I-to, as one of the editors of the magazine, was reluctantly but inevitably implicated. Contemporary Chinese Communist critics, anxious to present Wen I-to as an enlightened and "revolutionary" poet, find it very hard indeed to excuse Wen's intimate association in the Crescent Monthly enterprise with such bourgeois reactionaries as Hu Shih and Hsü Chih-mo. These critics are forced to conclude that though Wen

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2. In a letter to Liang Shih-ch'iu in January 1926, Wen mentioned that the "Crescent Society" met for a meal once a fortnight. Wen I-to, Ch'üan-ch'i, section k'ang, p. 39. The Crescent Society may have taken its name from the title of a volume of poetry, Crescent Moon, by the Indian poet Tagore. Tagore's poetry was very popular in China at the time, and Hsü Chih-mo (a member of the Crescent Society and a writer for Crescent Monthly) greatly admired it. Two Chinese translations of Crescent Moon were made, one by the poet Wang Tu-ch'ing and the other by the literary critic Cheng Chen-to. Both volumes had the translated title of Hsin-yüeh Chi.

associated with these people (on all the evidence, he was one of the leading figures of this bourgeois group) he was somehow "different" to the others. Tsang K'e-chia, for instance, in a carefully-worded apology for Wen I-to wrote:

"Though the author of Dead Water was a member of the Crescent group, his attitudes were not the same as those of such people as Hsü Chih-mo and Chu Hsiang. After the great revolution of 1927, he showed himself dissatisfied with the concept of literature and the way of life of Hu Shih and Hsü Chih-mo." [4]

Advocates of "revolutionary" or "proletarian" literature had long been arguing that literature should be an instrument of the revolutionary class struggle and should reflect the interests of the proletariat. Among the most prominent of these critics was Chiang Kuang-ts'u (Chiang Kuang-ch'ih) who in 1924 in New Youth published an essay entitled "Culture and the Proletarian Revolution" ("Wuch'an Chieh-chi Ke-ming yu Wen-hua") and in 1925 in Awakening (ChHueh-wu) published "Present-day Chinese Society and Revolutionary Literature" ("Hsien-tai Chung-kuo She-hui yu Ke-ming Wen-hueh"). A number of other writers publishing in Communist magazines such as Chinese Youth (Chung-kuo Ch'ing-nien) also devoted themselves to furthering the cause of revolutionary literature. [5] But at this time all the major Chinese writers subscribed to the literary programmes of the Literary Research Society or the Creation Society

5. For details of the early writings on revolutionary literature, see Ting I, Chung-kuo Hsien-tai Wen-hueh Shih-1Hueh, pp. 49-50.
(i.e., "art in the service of humanity" and "art for art's sake").

The clamour for proletarian literature went almost unheard.

Two events determined the quickening of progress towards revolutionary literature. The first, regarded by Communist commentators as the pivotal point in the new literature movement, was the May Thirtieth Movement in Shanghai in 1925, which dramatically demonstrated the political power of the proletariat when aroused to patriotic indignation. The second was the conversion to Marxism of Kuo Mo-jo, influential leader of the Creation Society and hero of Chinese youth. In a letter to his friend Ch'eng Fang-wu in 1924, Kuo announced his conversion to Marxism and his new idea of the role of literature in revolution:

"Fang-wu! We are men on the road to revolution; our literature must be revolutionary literature. The literature of to-day can only justify its existence by its ability to hasten the realization of social revolution.... To-day is the age of propaganda, and literature is the trenchant weapon of propaganda. My tendency towards indecision has now stopped." [7]

In May 1926, just before the start of the Northern Expedition, Kuo Mo-jo published an article in Creation Monthly (Ch'uang-tsao Yeh-k' an) entitled "Revolution and Literature" ("Ke-ming yü Wen-

6. For details of the May Thirtieth Movement see Chapter VI above.

This crucial article launched a series of articles in the Creation Society publications (Ch'uang-teh Yeh-k' an, Hung Shui and later Wen-hua P'i-p' an) which demonstrated the acceptance by the Creation Society of the idea of "revolutionary literature". These articles culminated in January 1928 in Ch'eng Fang-wu's famous essay, "From Literary Revolution to Revolutionary Literature" ("Ts'ung Wen-hsêh Ke-ming tao Ke-ming Wen-hsêh") which provoked a storm of response in literary circles. In the course of one year (Spring 1928-1929) over one hundred polemical essays on the subject of revolutionary literature were published; in the end, the Creation Society emerged victorious. This controversy came, significantly, in a period when many Chinese intellectuals who had been filled with hopes for a new and democratic China after the success of the Northern Expedition were bitterly disillusioned by Chiang Kai-shek's coup d'état of April 1927. The vicious purging of leftist intellectuals over the next few years only drove the leftist writers closer together and persuaded many of them that a radical, dynamic approach was needed in literature, as in politics. It was to these intellectuals that Ch'eng Fang-wu appealed in his essay "From Literary Revolution

8. Typical of these articles on revolutionary literature are: Ho Wei, "Ko jen Chu-i I-shu ti Mish-wang" ("The Failure of Individualist Art"); Mou Mu-t'ien, "Hsieh-shih Wen-hsêh Lun" ("Discussion of Realistic Literature"); Chiang Kuang-tzu, "Shih Yeh Ke-ming Yü T's-ti Yung-hsia" ("The October Revolution and Russian Literature"); Ch'eng Fang-wu, "Ke-ming Wen-hsêh Yü T's-ti Yung-yuan-hsing" ("The Immortality of Revolutionary Literature").

to Revolutionary Literature". Tracing the progress of *pai-hua* literature from the literary revolution in 1917 up to the present, he conceded that a certain amount had been achieved, but felt that the literary revolution was still incomplete; the ideology reflected in it was petty bourgeois and the language in which it was written was too far from actual speech. He urged writers to go one step further and proceed to the writing of truly revolutionary literature. 10

Members of the Literary Research Society, notably Lu Hsün, at once took issue with the Creationists, defending bourgeois and individualist writing on the grounds that as yet the proletariat had no literature and that even the honest reflection of bourgeois life and attitudes can be of some value. 11

The *Crescent Monthly* was born in the midst of this controversy, and it was not long before the Creation Society and the Literary Research Society had both turned their attention to denunciation of the writers of the Crescent Society.

i. The Artistic Policy of the *Crescent Monthly*.

The first issue of *Crescent Monthly* contained a manifesto entitled "The Attitude of the *Crescent Monthly*" ("Hsin-yüeh ti

T'ai-tu"), purportedly written by Hsi Chih-mo. In this the writer lamented the "perverse tendencies" of the literature of the day, and proclaimed the intention of the writers of *Crescent Monthly* to assert the importance in literature of the two principles of "health" and "dignity". The champions of revolutionary literature apparently felt (with some justification) that some of the "perverse tendencies" listed (the partisan school, the slogan-shouting school, the "ism" school, the bellicose school, the fanatic school, etc.) referred to them, and they immediately launched a counter-attack. The Marxist writer P'eng K'ang in his essay "Criticism of 'The Attitude of the Crescent Monthly'" ("*Hsin-yüeh ti T'ai-tu' ti P'i-p'ing*") suggested that the Crescent writers were complaining of the "year of dearth" in literature and of "perverse tendencies" purely because they unconsciously feared that their superior position in the field of literature, as in society, was being threatened by the emergence of a new social force, the proletariat. About the two principles of "health" and "dignity", P'eng was very scathing:

"'Health' and 'dignity'. Good! A great policy! But 'health' is whose 'health', and 'dignity' whose 'dignity'?"

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12. Li Ho-lin et al. (ed.), *Chung-kuo Hsin-wen-hsüeh Shih Yen-chiu*, p. 60.

13. This essay is probably identical with one which appeared in the 12th issue of *Ch'uang-tsao Yüeh-k'ao* under the title of "Shemma Shih 'K'ang-chien' Yü 'Tsun-yen'?" ("What is 'Health' and 'Dignity'?")

The petty bourgeois Crescent writers were pictured cringing before the prospect of social change and, like orthodox Confucianists in the face of earlier revolutions, sighing that "the world has gone wrong" (shih-tao fan-ch'ang) and "men's hearts have been led astray" (jen-hsin pu ku).

But the article which really provoked the Creation Society writers to anger was Liang Shih-ch'iu's "Literature and Revolution" ("Wen-hsüeh Yü Ke-ming"). Liang's article is by no means as reactionary and conservative as his impassioned critics would have us believe; in fact, in some ways his views were more radical than those of his critics. Like Lu Hsün, Liang believed that literature is propaganda in that it effectively reflects the attitudes of a highly talented person who is especially sensitive to his environment; but Liang maintained that it should not be conscious propaganda. 15

He wrote:

"In a revolutionary period, literature very easily absorbs a special flavour. But we really cannot say that in a period of revolution, all writers must create "revolutionary literature". Why not? Poets, all literary men are in the vanguard of their age.... Especially in times of suffering, the distress of the writers is especially intense, and therefore their cries of anguish are especially moving." [16]

Liang believed that it is precisely because writers are in the vanguard of thought and are unusually sensitive to their environment


that "literature which is rich in revolutionary thought very often appears before the actual revolutionary movement". 17 Liang Shih-ch'iü thus denied that literature should reflect and further the revolutionary struggles, but suggested, on the contrary, that it actually paves the way for revolution. "It is not", he wrote, "that literature portrays the revolutionary age but that the age actually reflects the spirit of the writers." 18

Liang went one step further and equated genuine revolutionary literature with romantic literature:

"Both the romantic and the revolutionary movements are in complete opposition to unrightful persecution. Both are destructive, both respect talent and both result from the clamours of a minority of people who arouse the enthusiasm of the masses. This is why most people recognise that romantic literature is revolutionary literature." [19]

Liang believed that romantic literature (or revolutionary literature) is strongly individualistic, and therefore it could not be, as the Creationists claimed, the "literature of the masses." "Literature", he wrote, "is individualistic; it is the literature of the few, not the literature of the many. Actually 'literature of the masses' is a contradiction in terms; the masses have no literature, and literature is not the preserve of the masses." 20

17. Ibid., p. 421.
18. Ibid., p. 421.
20. Ibid., p. 425.
Furthermore, Liang asserted that the yardstick in judging literature could not be whether it reflected revolutionary or monarchical struggles. "Great literature is firmly based on universal humanity [21]; only when feelings and thoughts come from the depths of men's hearts do you have good literature... Humanity is the only standard for evaluating literature." Since "humanity" knows no class distinction, the proletariat and the middle-class alike can produce talent. Literature belongs to no class, and, in fact, transcends class.

These ideas were so flatly contradictory to the claims of the champions of revolutionary literature that it is no wonder that the latter, impatient with revolutionary zeal, campaigned vigorously to discredit the Crescent writers.

ii. The Political Standpoint of the Crescent Monthly.

Although the advocates of revolutionary literature disagreed with the artistic views of the Crescent Society as exemplified in the writings of Hsü Chih-mo and Liang Shih-ch'iu, their quarrel with the Crescent Society was not based solely on this. The Creation Society members supported the concept of revolutionary literature not because they felt that this would benefit the cause of literature, but because they felt that literature should advance

21. This is a similar view to that expressed by members of the Literary Research Society. See Chapter III above.
23. Ibid., p. 429.
the cause of social revolution. Thus their quarrel with the Crescent Society was not only with those members such as Hsi and Liang who believed in "art for art's sake" and "art for humanity", but also with those members whose concept of the social revolution was not in agreement with that of the members of the Creation Society who were, by this time, predominantly Communists or "fellow-travellers". So it was that the difference of opinion between members of the Crescent Society and the Creationists was not only a question of literary theory but, more importantly, a question of politics. And the bitterness of the literary polemics of 1928-29 only reflected the bitterness of the political scene where the "white terror" of the right-wing Kuomintang had driven Communist activity underground.

Lu Hsun, leader of the Yu Ssu literary group and prominent member of the Literary Research Society, had earlier disagreed with the proposals of the Creationists for revolutionary literature. His attitude to this was quite similar to that expressed by Liang Shih-ch'iu in "Literature and Revolution". It was, then, because of political views as much as artistic views that a number of members of the Yu Ssu group led by Lu Hsun attacked the Crescent Monthly, and eventually joined forces with their former protagonists the Creationists to form the famous League of Left-wing Writers (Chung-kuo Tso-i Tso-chia Lien-meng) in February 1930.

These political attitudes which had aroused the antagonism of both the Yu Ssu and the Creation groups were symbolised by two
leading writers for the Crescent Monthly, Ch'en Yuan (Ch'en Hsi-yung) and Hu Shih, both formerly associated with the magazine Contemporary Review. Lu Hsün had already clashed with Ch'en Yuan over the latter's unsympathetic attitude towards the student revolt at the National Peking Women's Normal College (Kuo-li Pei-ching Nü-tzu Shih-fan Te-hsüeh) and towards the March Eighteenth Incident in 1926.24 Ch'en Yuan and his associates were pictured by Lu Hsün as "Europeanized gentlemen" who opposed righteous student demonstrations and secretly approved of the actions of the imperialists and the Peking warlord government. Lu Hsün felt that the Westernized liberal intellectuals such as Ch'en Yuan and his group were more dangerous than the reactionary force itself, for "the swords of the former were obvious enough for all to see whereas the swords of the latter were hidden from view and could 'kill, without shedding blood'". 25

At the close of the May Fourth Movement, the intellectuals who had been united in their opposition to government corruption and Japanese imperialism, and in their support for the new thought and new literature, gradually split up into two groups, the liberals, typified by Hu Shih, and the Leftists typified by Ch'en Tu-hsiu. 26

The Leftists began to participate actively in politics — many

24. Huang Sung-k'iang, Lu Hsün, pp. 87-90.
25. Ibid., p. 88.
26. For a detailed description of this split, see Chow Tse-taung, The May Fourth Movement, Chapter IX, "The Ideological and Political Split"
joined the Communist party or the Kuomintang. The liberals, however, were not organized, and when their pleas for democratic reforms proved ineffectual, they reverted to the idea (the original idea of the reformist writers of New Youth) that China first needed cultural regeneration before effective democratic government could be realised. Thus began the movement known as "Reinterpretation of the National Heritage" (Cheng-li Kuo-ku)\(^\text{27}\) which aimed at reinterpretation of Chinese history, historiography, philosophy and literature in the light of Western scholarship and the scientific method. Unfortunately, this movement, blessed by the prestige of many of China's leading intellectuals, damaged the new thought movement more than it aided it; for it provided the perfect excuse for conservative scholars to return to the values and ideas which they had almost been forced to abandon with the high tide of the new thought after 1919. It was natural that the left-wing intellectuals should greatly resent the fact that Hu Shih and others, albeit unwittingly, had thrown education and scholarship back into the laps of conservative, traditionalist Confucianists.

Ironically, while the Crescent Monthly had come under fire from left-wing writers, it was no more popular with the government. In 1929, the National government at Nanking ordered the arrest of Hu Shih after a number of his articles had appeared in the Crescent Monthly attacking the curtailment by the government of civil

\(^{27}\) See Ibid., pp. 317-320.
liberties and demanding a satisfactory constitution.\(^{28}\) Eventually, in 1933, the *Crescent Monthly* was suspended for criticism of the Kuomintang.\(^{29}\)

### 2. Wen Turns to Scholarship

#### a. Failure in Politics

One can only guess how Wen I-to felt about the controversies going on around him. No doubt he agreed with Liang Shih-ch'iu that literature should surpass class barriers, and with Hu Shih that writers should eschew politics and concentrate on their task of cultural regeneration of China. Besides, Wen's only participation in political activities to date - his association with the Kuo-chia Chu-i party had proved disheartening and disillusioning. It was his last brush with politics for over fifteen years. At the same time, Wen I-to as a fervent patriot could not but sympathise with those students who dared defy the power of the corrupt warlord government. As an erstwhile admirer of Kuo Mo-jo and other writers of the Literary Research and Creation Societies, he no doubt deeply regretted the nastiness of the polemics on revolutionary literature which placed them on opposing sides.

The literary polemics of 1928–29 marked a turning point in Wen I-to's life. Disillusioned by this struggle, and determined not to

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get involved in politics, Wen gradually alienated himself from the contemporary scene and buried himself in classical studies. After the publication of *Dead Water* in January 1928, Wen published only three more poems. One of these, a long poem entitled "Miracle" ("Ch'i-ch'i") which was written for the launching of a literary magazine *Poetry* (Shih-k'an) by his Crescent Society friends, was described by Hsu Chih-mo as "the miracle of a startling cry after three years silence". This "miracle" was Wen's last pai-hua poem. Even his interest in the fate of new poetry seemed to have waned; it was not reawakened for many years to come.

At the same time, the "Reinterpret the National Heritage" movement under the leadership of Hu Shih and Ku Chieh-kang had again made classical studies respectable, at least in some circles. The influence of this movement and his appointment as head of the Department of Chinese at the National Wuhan University (Kuo-li Wu-han Ta-hsueh) perhaps further encouraged Wen to devote himself to classical research, in particular to the study of the history of Chinese poetry. From this time till just before his death some eighteen years later, Wen I-to was engrossed in this work. Starting with the T'ang poets for whom he had long had an affection, he went on to study the Shih Ching, the I Ching and the Ch'u Tz'u.

30. For the text of "Ch'i-ch'i" seen Wen I-to, Ch'Man-ch'i, section Hsin, pp. 650-651. Translation in Hsu Kai-yu, Twentieth Century Chinese Poetry, pp. 62-64.
Wen's association at Wuhan University and later at Tsingtao University with the scholar and expert on the Ch'u Tz'u, Yu Kuoen (Yu Tse-ch'eng) did much to stimulate Wen's interest in this challenging work. Studies of the Ch'u Tz'u were to prove Wen's greatest contribution to Chinese scholarship.

b. Feeling of Personal Failure

That Wen's surrender to literary scholarship was a retreat from the emotional conflicts generated by his ambivalent attitude towards the society of the day can be seen from a melancholy letter written to his friend, the poet Jao Meng-k'an in 1933:

"Recently I have hesitated to write letters, especially to my old friends. When a person is distressed it is better to let him brood on it alone. As soon as he sees a well-loved friend, he cannot help his bitterness welling up and tears flowing. That I have been unwilling to write to you is firstly because I was afraid to stir up the bitter memories of these last few years, and secondly because I felt that I should not blubber stupidly and sentimentally in front of a friend. It would only make that friend unhappy. In other words, the reason why I have been so unhappy of late is that I have discovered my own failing - a most fundamental failing - I cannot adjust to my environment. Because of this, I cannot take the path of the extrovert; I must take the introverted path. On this introverted path I can find great peace, and I have proved that on the introverted path I can discover hope." [32]

In this passage Wen was announcing his decision to retire from the world of political action (the extroverted path) and devote himself to scholarship (the introverted path). Wen went on to give his plans for literary scholarship - the introverted solution:

32. Wen I-to, Ch'Uan-chi, section keng, p. 51.
(1) A Dictionary for the Shih Ching: I will analyse the Shih Ching and compile a dictionary giving the ancient form, meaning and sound of each character, explaining its construction, its function in a certain sentence and which part of speech it is....

(2) Emendation of the Ch'u Tz'u: I hope to make an extremely accurate commentary on the Ch'u Tz'u; I have already completed two-thirds, and will be finished in two years time.

(3) Textual Criticism of the Complete T'ang Poetry: A correction of the mistaken characters in the original.

(4) Revised edition of the Complete T'ang Poetry: I will add T'ang dynasty poems which are not already in the Complete T'ang Poetry. I have already collected over one hundred....

(5) Revised Biographies of Poets of the Complete T'ang Poetry....

(6) An appendix of Evidence for the Chronology of Poets of the Complete T'ang Poetry

(7) A New Commentary on Tu Fu

(8) Tu Fu (a biography)." [33]

3. Wen, the Teacher

That Wen I-to was an inspiring teacher, combining the grace and erudition of the traditional scholar, the informality of the Western-educated student and the brilliance of a poet has been attested by his students. Feng I, a former student of Wen's at Tsing Hua wrote of his teacher:

33. Ibid., pp. 51-52.
"I remember at the beginning of summer... about seven o'clock, when the lights were already on, Wen I-to, his lustrous black hair combed high, wearing silver-rimmed spectacles and a long black gown would come into the classroom with the dignity of a Taoist monk, carrying those piles and piles of handwritten notes which represented so many years of research... He did not immediately begin speaking, but casually pulled out his cigarette box, opened it, and smiling broadly asked his students: "Anyone smoke?"... Then Wen himself lit a cigarette, and the cloud of smoke in the lamplight made him look even more like a Taoist mystic. Then, as though at a poetry reading meeting, he would slowly chant: 'Drink deeply, and learn by heart the Li Sao - that is the true scholar!' Then he would begin to speak..." [34]

Nonetheless, Wen I-to was twice under attack in student riots (hsMe-ch'ae). After one such riot at Wuhan University in 1930, Wen handed in his resignation. He remained unemployed for some months after this (surely a financially embarrassing position) before taking up his appointment as head of the Department of Chinese at Tsingtao University (Tsingtao Ta-hsMe). Here again, student demonstrations interrupted his peace. [35] The poet Tsang K'e-chia was one of the few students who supported Wen's stand during this crisis. [36]

In Autumn of that year (1932) Wen I-to took up an appointment as Professor of Chinese at his alma mater, Tsing Hua University, a

34. "Nien-p'u", p. 58.
35. Ibid, p. 56.
36. Ibid., p. 56. Tsang K'e-chia was a student and later an intimate friend of Wen's. Wen wrote a preface to Tsang's first volume of poetry, The Brand (Lo-yin), published in 1934. For biographical details on Tsang, see Lu Chien, "Tsang Ko-chia and His Poetry".
position which he held till his death. Here he quietly devoted himself to his classical studies and his teaching until the Lukow Bridge Incident (Lukow Ch'iao Shih-pien) of July 7, 1927, precipitated China into war with Japan.

PART B: WAR WITH JAPAN

1. The Clamour for Resistance to Japan

Whenever during the course of his life Wen I-to had joined in political activities, he had done so, not because he was interested in political power, but because he was a patriot. He had sympathised with the May Fourth movement of 1919 and the March Eighteenth Incident of 1926. Yet when the real test of patriotism came — when Japan openly attacked and annexed Manchuria after September 18, 1931, Wen I-to, buried in his classical research, remained strangely silent.

The Tangku Truce of March 1933 left Japan in control of the whole of the area north of the Great Wall. In 1934, P'ū-yi, last emperor of the Manchu dynasty, was formally enthroned as Emperor of the "independent" state of Manchoukuo. Despite the upsurge of popular indignation and protest, the Nationalist government was determined to play for time by appeasing Japan until China could achieve effective internal unity. The government attitude was
summed up in the slogan "Pacify the enemy within before resisting the enemy without" (Hsien an nei, hou jang wai). "The enemy within" referred especially to the Communists, but also to dissident generals and warlords. From 1930 to 1934 the government carried out five anti-Communist campaigns against the Chinese Soviet government centred at Jui Chin in Kiangsi province. After enormous expenditure of both manpower and money, the Central Government troops eventually dislodged the Communists from their Kiangsi stronghold. But the Communists, far from being completely wiped out as had been claimed, broke through the Central Government cordon and marched many hundreds of miles to the northwest where they established a Chinese Soviet Government with headquarters at Yenan in Shensi province.

In 1935, Japanese influence in the provinces of Hopei and Chahar rapidly increased, while the strength of the Central Government in these areas correspondingly decreased. On December 9 and December 16, 1935, Peking students demonstrated against Japanese aggression in North China demanding an end to civil war and a united front against Japan. 37

The December Ninth demonstration had an electrifying effect. Despite government orders to suppress all anti-Japanese activities

37. See T.A. Bisson, Japan in China, pp. 113-119. According to Bisson, 6,500 students demonstrated; 46 were arrested or missing, and there were 275 casualties, 75 of them serious. After the incident there were nation-wide demonstrations in support of the Peking students.
and publications the call for national unity and resistance to Japan continued to rise. The Communist party, which had long called for cessation of the civil war and a united front of all patriots against Japan (it had issued a declaration of war against Japan in 1932) gained much popular support on account of this stand, while the Kuomintang with its policy of appeasement at any cost, conversely lost prestige. In May 1936, an All-China Federation of National Salvation Unions (Ch'uan-kuo Ko-chiah Chiu-kuc Lien-ho Hui) was set up in Shanghai; seven of its active members, the so-called "Seven Gentlemen" (Ch'i Chün-tzu), were shortly afterwards arrested by the Government.

Events of the political scene were reflected in the literary arena, as indeed was inevitable with a Communist hegemony over literature. In the Spring of 1936, the League of Left-wing writers was dissolved. In the hope of creating a broader base of anti-Japanese intellectuals, the two slogans of "literature for national defence" (kuo-fang wen-hsüeh) and "people's literature for the national revolutionary struggle" (min-tsu ke-ming chan-cheng ti ta-chung wen-hsüeh) were proposed. 39

On December 12, 1936, occurred the famous Sian Incident

38. Ibid., p. 123.

39. For details of the undignified quarrel between the supporters of the two slogans, see C.T. Hsia, A History of Modern Chinese Fiction, pp. 291-295.
(Heian Shih-pien) in which Chiang Kai-shek, while inspecting the progress of anti-Communist operations in the Northwest, was captured by the "Young Marshal" of Manchuria, Chang Hsueh-liang, and General Yang Hu-ch'eng and forced to agree to end the anti-campaign and make preparations for war with Japan. 40

a. Wen's attitude to the Call for Resistance

Wen I-to, like many others, had been concerned by the government's failure to make preparations for defence in the face of Japanese threat. He was therefore greatly cheered on a trip to Honan province in the Summer of 1936 to find that the Nationalists were taking some precautionary measures against the Japanese. On his return he told his students:

"Of course, Chinese resistance to Japan is the only solution, and the students' movement should not be criticised. But this time when I went to Loyang I felt that, unlike the situation here in Peiping, the government was making a little preparation there. We should not completely lose hope in the government." [41]

All the same, Wen took little part in the patriotic activities going on around him. This was quite surprising in view of the fact that many of the Tsing Hua students were actively engaged in patriotic agitation. In fact, the Japanese regarded Tsing Hua as one of the principal centres of anti-Japanism and closed the University down immediately after their occupation of Peking. 42

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40. See James Bertram, Crisis in China, the Story of the Sian Mutiny.
42. Ministry of Information of the Republic of China, China After Five Years of War, p. 182.
this time of crisis, Wen's attitude to the responsibilities of the individual citizen was both naive and conservative. He naively maintained the arrogant traditionalist Chinese prejudice against the military and criticised those patriotic students who had left the University to join the army on the grounds that "a student is of much greater value than a soldier". At that time he had no appreciation of the need for the participation of all sections of the community in the work of resistance.

It was only when war finally broke out that Wen's patriotism was fully aroused. Leaving Peiping for his home in Hupeh after the Lukow Bridge Incident with only a handful of the most important books from his large library, he declared pessimistically to his friend Tsang K'e-chia: "When one's country is being taken away in great slices, what do a few old books matter?" With most Chinese at that time, Wen I-to believed that the key to China's salvation lay in the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek. The person of Chiang Kai-shek became the symbol of Chinese unity, resistance and reconstruction in the face of Japanese aggression. But it was not long before this first flush of hope and confidence in China's wartime leadership faded into general bitterness and disillusionment.

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43. "Nien-p'u", p. 60.
44. Ibid., pp. 60-61.
2. The Early Years of the War

a. The Changsha Emergency University

In November 1937, Wen I-to joined the staff of the National Changsha Emergency University (Kuo-li Changsha Lin-shih Ta-hsUeh), an amalgamation of three universities, the National Peking University, Tsing Hua University, and the Tientsin Nankai University, set up in Changsha. About 1250 students from these three institutions enrolled, together with 200 students from other universities that had been moved inland.45 In a speech some years later, Wen described the atmosphere of the Changsha Emergency University:

"In the beginning, when students and teachers began to flee from Peiping and gather in Changsha, we lived in the Bible College. Everyone was in a great state of excitement. Every night when the professors gathered to eat, as we drank our tea and smoked we would read the papers, study the maps and discuss the war and all sorts of questions. Sometimes when a fellow teacher had just come from Peiping we would eagerly listen to the story of his escape and the news of the journey. Generally speaking, the professors like everyone else felt only excitement and anger at the outbreak of war; no-one wondered whether the war would be won or not. Since we were under attack [we felt that] we should fight first and then talk about it. On such questions as the delay in taking defensive measures, there was a certain amount of discussion, but even the most pessimistic of us did not think about the outcome of the war. From that time up to the present, we could not know what would happen on the morrow. Although we prepared our

45. Chiang Monlin, Tides from the West, p. 222.
lessons every day, many of us secretly nourished another illusion. Since our heads were filled with the ideas of modern nations such as those in Europe and America, we expected that on the outbreak of a war like this, the whole country would be mobilised, ourselves not excluded. So we waited for the government's orders. We could work at the front, or devote ourselves to wartime production in the rear, or at least we could devote ourselves to the education of soldiers or the people. Events proved to us that this idea was indeed an illusion. Thus our minds gradually turned back to our familiar work. We kept on preparing our lessons and taught as we had always taught in the past.

Because [space] at the Changsha Bible School was limited, the College of Arts held its classes at Nan-yü. The buildings we lived in there also belonged to the Bible College. These buildings were half-way up the mountain. Down below was Nan-yü village, and behind in the mountains was beautiful, unexplored, scenic country.

When I come to think of it, our life at Nan-yü really seemed isolated from the world. At that stage, prices had only risen slightly - they hadn't yet started to go up by leaps and bounds. I remember when cigarettes went up to twenty cents a packet, everyone began to think of ways to give up smoking. Nan-yü is an out-of-the-way place, and newspapers reached us two or three days late. The world took no notice of us, and gradually we took no notice of the world. Thus in a life of attending the usual classes and walking round the mountains, everyone slowly settled down. The habits of half a lifetime are not easy to change. Temporary troubles can only make a superficial change. Given the change, everything returns to normal...." [46]

After the fall of Nanking in December 1937, Changsha began to suffer heavy bombing, and it was decided to move the University a second time - this time to Kunming in Yunnan province in South-west China.

b. The Long March to Kunming

Some students and staff members went to Canton by the Canton-Hankow railway, thence to Hong Kong, by boat to Haiphong and by the Indo-China railway to Kunming. But Wen I-to with a few other staff members and over two hundred students decided to hike the 3,500 li (about 1,160 miles) overland to Kunming. The walk took about seventy days. On this walk, despite all the hardships, Wen I-to entered a new lease of life. The songs, dance, costume and language of the colourful Miao people he encountered on the way stimulated his interest. The dramatic scenery — purportedly among the most beautiful in China — awoke his long quiescent artistic talent. Wen painted quite a number of pictures on the way, two of which are reproduced in the first volume of his Complete Works. Even more important, the march brought Wen into more intimate contact with his own students.

The effects of this long march on Wen I-to’s life and thought were not immediately apparent, but this trek indeed marked a turning point in his life. Though on arrival at Kunming Wen I-to settled

47. Staff members included, apart from Wen himself, Huang Tzu-chien, Yuen Li-fu, Li Chi-t'ung, Ts'eng Chao-lun, et al. Ibid., p. 19.

48. One of the members of the hiking party, Liu Chao-chi, later compiled a book of the folksongs and folklore he had collected on the way. For this book, Hsi-nan Ts'ai-feng Lu, Wen wrote a preface.
down as before to his literary studies, his contact with the
primitive Miao culture added a new dimension to his studies of
ancient Chinese texts such as the Shih Ching, the I Ching and the
Ch'u Tzu. Up till this time his scholarship had been generally
in the tradition of Ch'ing paleography and textual criticism. Now,
judging by his "Introduction" to his Emendation of the 'Ch'u Tzu'
('Ch'u Tzu Chiao-pu) published in 1941, he had come to feel that
true understanding of ancient texts required something more than
just textual criticism and commentary. He wrote:

"There are three general reasons why comparatively ancient
texts are difficult to understand:

1. Because of the remoteness in time and the paucity of
material it is difficult to understand the background
of the period and the nature of the author's personal
ideas.

2. The language and characters used - especially the
homoynms (what the commentators call 'borrowed
characters') - very easily confuse the reader.

3. Errors in the later production and transmission of the
work frequently lead to errors.

The Ch'u Tzu, as it happens, is an ancient text which
has all three difficulties. Therefore in studying it I have
kept in mind the above points and decided on three courses of
study: (1) explanation of the background; (2) explanation of
the meaning; and (3) emendation of the text." [49]

It was with this first point, "explanation of the background",
that Wen broke away from the classical tradition of scholarship.

Later he was to write in Tsang K'e-chia:

"My historical interests have led me into the realm of pre-
history, so I have made a study of myths; my cultural interests
have gone beyond the realm of culture, so I have studied the

49. Wen I-to, Ch'un-chi, section I, p. 341.
cultural anthropology of primitive society." [50]

Chu Tzu-ch'ing commented on this statement:

"He not only did research on cultural anthropology, but also studied Freudian psychoanalysis in order to shed light on the subject of the life of primitive society.... So he ended up doing research from the viewpoint of historical materialism, and on this foundation, constructed Chinese literary history." [51]

The new theory on the connection between history and poetry which arose from this research we shall discuss later. Suffice it to say that Wen's participation in the hike from Changsha to Kunming was to a large degree the stimulation for his most original theory of literary history.

c. The Formation of the United South-West University

In May 1938, the Changsha Lin-shih Ta-hsteh reformed in Kunming under the name of United South-West University (Kuo-li Hsi-nan Lien-ho Ta-hsteh) or, as it is commonly known, Hsi-nan Lien-te. There were about 1300 students enrolled in the four colleges of Law, Arts, Science and Engineering. Because of shortage of accommodation in the city of Kunming itself, the Arts and Law Colleges moved to the town of Mengtz (Meng-tzu), the second largest city in Yunnan province. Here Wen I-to again buried himself in classical scholarship, so much so that he earned the nickname among his fellows of "the man who refuses to come downstairs". [53] For a while at this

51. Ibid., p. 18.
52. Chiang Monlin, Tides from the West, p. 222.
53. "Nien-p'u", p. 64.
time he was seriously worried about the safety of his family whom he had left behind at Wuchang when he had joined the Emergency University at Changsha. His family had, however, made their way safely to Kweiyang where Wen eventually met them and took them back to Kunming, whence the Arts and Law Colleges had already returned.

3. Stalemate in the War

By the end of 1939 the war seemed to have reached a stalemate. The Japanese, realizing that the war in China would now be a protracted affair, consolidated their gains by political and economic organization, and at the same time kept the cities of Free China constantly alert with incessant bombing raids. On the very first bombing attack on Kunming in September 1938, Wen I-to himself was slightly injured.⁵⁴ Thereafter, frequent bombings of the almost defenceless city began to sap the confidence of the refugees. The Lien-ta University was regularly bombed by enemy planes - apparently deliberately, for there was no military objective nearby,⁵⁵ and precious equipment brought overland at great expense was destroyed.

⁵⁴. Ibid, p. 65.
⁵⁵. Chiang Monlin, Tides from the West, p. 223.
Economic Crisis in Free China

The great shift in population from the occupied coastal areas in the south-west put a great strain on the economy of the area which was undeveloped and rural. Accommodation was expensive and difficult to find. From July 1937 to late 1939 (the beginning of the stalemate), prices rose at the rate of an estimated 40-50% per year. The consolidation of the Japanese control over the Chinese transport networks, the taking of Indo-China in June 1940 and the closing of the Burma Road in July 1940 gave a disastrous impetus to the inflationary tendencies already too apparent. In this period - from late 1939 to 1941 - prices increased at the rate of 160% per year. After the Pearl Harbour Incident in December 1941, prices rose annually by 300%.

By this time Free China was virtually cut off from the rest of the world. The two routes to the outside world - the overland "Red" route from Russia, and the dangerous route "over the hump" from Assam, provided China with a mere trickle of her requirements. Free China, more or less isolated, was forced to build up her own industries for the war effort in an economically backward and underdeveloped area. Hoarders, speculators, private banks and commercial enterprises

57. Ibid., p. 12.
profited enormously from the inflation. But they profited at the expense of those on fixed incomes, especially teachers and civil servants. One table given by Chiang Kia-ngau in The Inflationary Spiral, the Experience in China 1939-1950 shows that in Chungking in 1943, civil servants and teachers received estimated effective salaries of 10% and 17% respectively of their 1937 salaries. 58

Correspondingly, as corruption and graft seeped into all levels of society, civil and military, the confidence in the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek so evident at the start of the war began to sag. A number of people became increasingly despondent about China's ability to win or even survive the Resistance war. There was increasing indignation at the continual skirmishes between Kuomintang and Communist forces in this time of national crisis.

By 1943 even Wen I-to, who had up till then managed to bury himself in his studies, could ignore the course of events no longer. It was not long before he spoke out against the Nationalist government with such venom and passion that it eventually cost him his life.

58. Ibid., p. 63.
CHAPTER VIII

THE FINALE

PART A: WEN RE-EXAMINES HIS IDEAS

When Wen I-to returned to Kunming in July 1940 after a year of study leave spent in the little village of Chin-ning forty li from the capital, he found that conditions in Kunming had deteriorated considerably. The continuing deterioration in the political situation over the next three years induced in Wen a severe intellectual and emotional crisis which forced him to seriously re-examine his fundamental ideas and attitudes.

1. Wen's Financial Embarrassment

At first Wen had cheerfully suffered his financial difficulties arising from the rapid wartime inflation. But as time went by, as the three meals a day were reduced to two and then to one, Wen began to wonder whether all these troubles could be blamed solely on the exigencies of war. For it was increasingly obvious that some people, chiefly businessmen, speculators and bankers, were making

1. Mien Chih, Wen I-to, p. 57.
enormous profits out of the inflation while those on fixed incomes, civil servants, teachers and the like, were reduced to penury.

2. Political Uncertainties

In the early years of the war there had been a genuine spirit of national unity throughout China, symbolised by the setting up of two multi-party councils, the National Defence Advisory Council (Kuo-fang Ta'an-i Hui) and the People's Political Council (Kuo-min Ts'an-cheng Hui); but as the war dragged on, this spirit of unity began to crumble. The failure of the government to prosecute the war effort with determination (especially after the Pearl Harbour Incident brought the Americans into the war), and the failure to curb inflation, profiteering and corruption provoked widespread popular criticism. The Nationalist Government, however, saw all criticism as an attempt to undermine the absolute authority of the Kuomintang in its "period of political tutelage" and replied with stern repressive measures. Relations with the Communists rapidly worsened, and at the beginning of 1941 a serious armed clash took place between government forces and the forces of the Communist New Fourth Army. After this incident, the so-called New Fourth Army Incident (Hsin Ssu-chün Shih-chien), mutual trust between the two parties became almost impossible.

2. For details of the New Fourth Army Incident and its background see Harrison Forman, Report from Red China, pp. 160-167.
Wen I-to, though he had been a fervent admirer of Sun Yat-sen, had never had much sympathy for the Kuomintang. However, on the outbreak of war, Wen, like most other people in China, saw in the person of Chiang Kai-shek the only hope for united resistance to Japan. Years later, reviewing his attitude to Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Government during the early years of the war, he said:

"At that time [i.e., at the beginning of the war], the effects of the war on Chinese society were not apparent. Our faith in and admiration for Chiang Kai-shek were unlimited. Before we read Edgar Snow's Red Star Over China, no-one realised how the resistance war should be fought.... One day I discussed with a friend the question of [relations between] the Nationalists and the Communists. We both agreed that though the Sian Incident was over and done with, the resistance war could not resolve the basic contradictions between the two parties; it could only temporarily suppress them. These contradictions would perhaps show up in the future. How could this question be permanently solved? My friend felt that a wise and enlightened leader who represented the greatest wisdom of the Chinese people would, when the time arrived, lean a little to the left. All the people would then move with him. Thus the question of right and left would cease to exist. Now it would seem that the concept of the "heaven-mandated ruler" (chen-ming t'ien-tzu) has become firmly rooted! Unfortunately at the time [of our discussion] I never thought to ask my friend: 'What if the leader does not take the way of peace, but plunges into the deep abyss of darkness? Should all the people still move with him?"[3]

It had become increasingly obvious to Wen that, in this time of national crisis, the task of government should not be left to those "others" who were prepared to soil their hands in political manipulation. Government was the moral and patriotic responsibility of the individual citizen. The very survival of China was at stake.

3. Wen's Changed Ideas

At this time Wen was ill-equipped to understand the revolutionary forces at work in Chinese society, and his study of the Chinese classics provided no adequate solution to the problems which were posed by the nature of the contemporary political and social situation. Wen began to read widely in fields which he had never before touched upon, economics, politics, philosophy, cultural anthropology and Marxism. Gradually this reading brought about a fundamental change of attitude which soon caused him to repudiate his previous ideas and way of life.

a. Wen's Changed Attitude to Literature

This change in Wen's ideas was first manifested in his attitude to literature, particularly poetry.

In December 1944, he published in the magazine Contemporary Critic (Tang-tai P'ing-lun) an article entitled "The Historical Tendencies of Literature" ("Wen-hsüeh ti Li-shih Tung-hsiang"). In his earlier literary criticism, it will be recalled, he viewed poetry in terms of his total artistic and aesthetic theory, but in this article he looked at poetry in terms of its social role in determining Chinese cultural history. Wen maintained that in the two great periods of Chinese culture, from Western Chou (Hsi Chou) to the Spring and Autumn (Ch'un Ch'iu) period, and from the Chien-an reign period (196-219 A.D.) to the height of the T'ang dynasty,
lyrical poetry reached the peak of its perfection. It began to grow effete from the time of the Northern Sung dynasty (960-1126 A.D.) until eventually its place as the most sophisticated expression of Chinese culture was taken over by two newly-developed literary forms, the novel and the play. "In truth", he wrote, "the path of Chinese literary history began to change after the Southern Sung dynasty, and then came the age of fiction and drama." What then was to be the outlook for new poetry in "the age of fiction and drama"? Wen replied:

"You say that the life of the old-style poetry ended long ago... But what of the future of new poetry, which is [after all] something completely new? Right! If it is fully able to cast off traditional ideas and change completely it will exist. But that is almost saying that you must write poetry which does not seem like poetry. Right again! To put it more correctly, it should be like fiction and drama and not like poetry; at least it should be less like poetry and more like fiction and drama. Poetry which is too 'poetry-ish' and the so-called pure poetry will, I fear, exist in the future ridiculously and apologetically for only a small minority of people. In the age of fiction and drama, poetry must completely assume the outlook of fiction and drama, and [the writer] must make use of these techniques. Only then can [poetry] attract a large reading public. This method is not at all impracticable. In history a great many men have done it, though not thoroughly. The language of new poetry has [already] taken a big step in the direction of fiction and drama. This is the first and most important way in which new poetry can be considered 'new'. Various progressive experiments in attitude and technique are right now under way. Relax! In history there have often been people such as Juan Chi, Ch'en Tzu-ang, Meng Chiao, Wordsworth and Whitman, who have written poetry which did not seem like poetry, but in the twinkling of an eye it becomes real poetry. The advantage

5. Ibid., p. 203.
with poetry is that it has unlimited elasticity, it can undergo endless variations and can make use of every kind of subject matter. Only rigidity and narrowness do violence to poetry. If it fails to compromise with the times, it will have trouble surviving."

Such an attitude as this reflected a fundamental change in Wen's idea of poetry. In asserting that in this age poetry should follow the example of fiction and drama Wen was rejecting those concepts which had made him famous as a critic of poetry in the 1920's, namely his aesthetic theory (that poetry should have the beauty of music, painting and architecture), and his theory of the necessity of rhythm in poetry.

Wen's new attitude was marked by his "discovery" of the poet, T'ien Chien, whom Wen admired as "the drummer of the age" (shih-tai ti ku-shou). Poetry and music, Wen said, had had a parallel development. Just as the development from percussion instruments to woodwinds and strings is a development from rhythmic music to melodic music, so the change from the primitive poetry of the Shih Ching to the five and seven word lu shih is a development from rhythmic poetry to melodic poetry. In Wen's opinion, this sophistication of poetry had been accomplished, unfortunately, at the expense of emasculation of feeling. T'ien Chien's poetry, in contrast, was like a return to the fierce, primitive masculinity of the drumbeat. It had, Wen felt, "cast off all the traditional

6. Ibid., p. 205.
7. See Chapter V above.
techniques of the art of poetry. It did not elaborate, it did not
embroider, it did not soothe, it did not drug; it is not that
infatuating music which makes your imagination soar upwards. It
is only a heavy drumbeat, summoning your love, exciting your hate,
urging you to live at the very height of passion on this great
earth."\(^\text{10}\) In illustration he quoted a portion of T'ien Chien's
poem, "The Dance of the People" ("Jen-min ti Wu"):

"Look!
Their
vengeful
strength,
their
vengeful
blood,
their
vengeful
songs
grasped in
their hands...." \(^\text{[11]}\)

Ni K'an
T'a-men-ti
ch'ou-hen-ti
li,
t'a-men-ti
ch'ou-hen-ti
hsleh,
t'a-men-ti
ch'ou-hen-ti
ko,
wo tsai
shou li.

Wen concluded his review of T'ien's poetry, saying: "This is an
age when we need drummers. Let us look forward to the appearance of
even more 'drummers of the age'\(^\text{12}\).

"This is an age when we need drummers"! How different is
T'ien's drumbeat poetry from the sophisticated example of Wen I-to's
own poetry. In espousing T'ien's style of poetry, Wen was by
implication repudiating his own poetry, not as bad poetry, but as

10. Ibid., p. 238.
11. The full text of this poem is to be found in Wen I-to, Ch'\(\text{ts'an-chi, section hsin, pp. 574-585.}\)
poetry which was unsuited to the "blood and sweat" conditions of contemporary China.

Wen's new outlook on poetry as revealed in essays and speeches in the last months of 1943 was still full of contradictions for which he still had to find a solution. In his essay "Poetry and Criticism" (Shih Yü P'i-p'ing"), for instance, this contradiction was clearly brought out. In this essay Wen maintained that poetry, because of its ability to move the reader, is, potentially, propaganda. Moreover, it is "irresponsible propaganda", for the poet, when composing poetry does not usually take responsibility for the influence his poetry might have on the reader. In Wen's elaboration of this idea, one can see the influence of Marxism. At the same time, it is obvious that Wen felt that the Soviet system did not answer the question of how the poets were to be made responsible. He wrote:

"Russia and some other countries have a way of making the poet responsible. This method is very simple. They lead the poet by the nose as one leads an ox. The government delegates the poet to write responsible poetry. On a festival they ask the poet to write poetry. When a building is completed, they ask the poet to write. In this way, a great many poems are written but the result is that the work produced by this method is propaganda, not poetry. Since it is not poetry, its propaganda value is lessened or even rendered negligible. These things are neither poetry nor propaganda - they are nothing at all. We know that Mayakovsky once wrote poetry, and then wrote propaganda. Afterwards, he committed suicide - I wonder why? This is why I feel that leading the poet by the nose is not a good way [to make him responsible]." [13]

How then, did Wen propose that the poet should be made responsible? Wen replied:

"To make the poet responsible is not a task that the poet himself can undertake. As I have said above, we need some outside pressure. This outside pressure should not come from the government, but should come from society. I feel that the responsibility of deciding whether the poet is or is not responsible is not something censors can do. This should be up to the critics." [14]

But who were to act as responsible critics who "understood life, who understood poetry, who understood the effects [of poetry] and who understood values"? Wen had no answer to the question which he posed himself, and could only lamely reply: "I do not know".15

Thus it is clear that Wen I-to's espousal of a radically different view of the nature and purpose of literature to that which he had previously held involved him in many logical contradictions.

b. Wen's Changed View of Chinese Society

Similarly, about this time, Wen set about seeking a new interpretation of Chinese society and Chinese cultural history. This new interpretation is embodied in four essays published in March 1944; "Discussion of Chinese and Western Cultures from the Viewpoint of Religion" ("Ts'ung Tsung-chiao Lun Chung Hsi Feng-ko"); "The Traditionalist Atmosphere" ("Fu-ku ti K'ung-ch'i"); "Familism and Nationalism" ("Chia-tsu Chu-i Yü Min-tsu Chu-i"); and "On

15. Ibid., p. 49.
Confucianism, Taoism and Banditry" ("Kuan-yü Ju, Tao, T'u-fei"). These essays reveal a radical change in Wen's outlook.

In "The Traditionalist Atmosphere" Wen cynically analysed and then summarily dismissed the views of those who urged "return to the old style" (fu-ku) in Chinese culture as a solution to the problem of the breakdown of traditional society under the Western impact. Wen maintained that the traditionalist philosophy was untenable, for it failed to take into account the fact that Chinese culture was not a single, unchanging entity.

"There is, of course, a reason why our national culture has managed to survive up to to-day, but this reason is not, as you might think, because it has been able to preserve the old, but quite the reverse - because it has been able to absorb the new. History has taught us that Chinese culture is not a single, unchanging culture. (If it were, it would have died away long ago.)" [16]

......

"Nationalism should not be equivalent to cultural isolationism. I even believe that if we want nationalism, we should not look back to the old." [17]

In "Familism and Nationalism" Wen argued that the growth of the spirit of nationalism from the time of the Sung dynasty to the anti-Japanese war had rendered inevitable the decline of Confucianism, and hence of the traditional society based on Confucianist principles. For Confucianism, having its origins in the period of Chou feudalism, was based on familism - hence the importance in Confucianist philosophy of the concept of filial

17. Ibid, p. 11.
piety (hsiao). Since nationalism and familism are incompatible phenomena, it was inevitable that the philosophy of familism (i.e., Confucianism) should be eclipsed. 18

By January 1945 when Wen wrote an essay called "What is Confucianism?" ("Shemmo Shih Ju-chia?") he had again modified his assessment of the fundamentals of Chinese culture, and had begun to take an orthodox Marxist line. He wrote:

"From the Pan-keng period of the Shang dynasty [China] entered the era of the slave system. [19] This system gradually


19. There is considerable disagreement among Chinese Marxists as to exactly when the slave society existed, though all assert that it did exist. The research done by E.G. Pulleyblank on slavery in China would seem to invalidate Wen’s thesis. Pulleyblank concluded: "Even if my conclusions should be accepted and it should be admitted that the institution of slavery as it was known in Imperial China only originated in the state of Ch’in in the fourth and third centuries B.C., it is clear that this would not necessarily affect the view of when, if ever, China was a "slave society". If this term means anything (which I am inclined to doubt), it must have to do with the fundamental economic structure of society rather than with any particular legal institution... That slavery was of considerable economic significance from Han to T’ang and at later periods as well is quite undeniable.... At the same time, there is little evidence that slaves formed a large part of the whole population at any time or outweighed in economic importance the attached retainers, hired labourers, share-cropping tenants and unattached peasants." (E.G. Pulleyblank, "The Origins and Nature of Chattel Slavery in China", pp. 219-220.) In an essay written a few months after "What is Confucianism?", Wen ascribed to the theory of Engels that women were the first oppressed class and to the theory of L.H. Morgan that marriage by capture in an exogamous society was the origin of the slave system. (See "Fu-nü Chieh-fang Wen-t’i".)
developed and reached its height in the Western Chou period. By the Spring and Autumn period (Ch'un Ch'iu) it had all but finished. So one can say, in short, that the period in history from the Fan-keng period to the time of Confucius is the era of the slave society. But even before the time of Confucius, society was undergoing violent changes and entering a new era. Confucius and his like cried out to halt these changes, but without effect. History marched on, until, with unification in the Ch'in and Han dynasties, the changes were completed. Then there was a temporary pause. At this time, Confucius' successors, represented by Tung Chung-shu re organised Confucius' ideas and then put them into practice. This was the ideal sleeping draught for the weariness following a long period of change; under the influence of this sleeping draught, Chinese society slept for two thousand years until Sun Yat-sen awakened it. Confucius' ideal was to restore the slave society. Over the long period from Tung Chung-shu to Confucius - ever since Tung Chung-shu reorganized the Confucian ideas and put them into practice - Chinese society can be regarded as a metamorphised slave society." [20]

While in America in his youth, Wen had often spoken with great pride of what he called "China's four thousand years of history and culture". In the poem "I Chü" ("On Chrysanthemums"), for instance, he had written ecstatically:

"You are a flower with both history and customs. Ah! Famous flower over China's four thousand years! You have a superior history, exquisite customs!" [21]

That was all forgotten! In the essays Wen wrote after 1943, he firmly rejected the psychology of the cultural nationalist. In depicting Confucianist, Taoists and Mohists as thieves (t'ou-tzu), cheats (p'ien-tzu) and bandits (t'u-fei) respectively, [22 in

describing Confucianism as a product of a feudal (or slave) society and as an anti-nationalist force, he was attacking the very foundations of Chinese culture in which he himself had previously taken such pride.

Armed with these new ideas on the nature of Chinese literature and the bases of Chinese society, Wen began to plan a book on the history of Chinese poetry (the history of poetry to Wen being equivalent to the history of literature). In this he hoped to explore history through literary records, and at the same time, to re-analyse literature by reference to the society which produced it. This history would be, as Wen phrased it, both "a history of poetry" and "history as seen through poetry". Unfortunately, though he had drawn up plans for this work, he was never able to complete it.

c. Wen's Justification for His Years of Scholarship

In view of his changed ideas on the nature of Chinese culture, Wen apparently felt it necessary to justify to himself and his friends his long years spent in studying the classics. In a letter to the poet Tsang K'e-chia in November 1943, Wen wrote:

"Don't you know that I hate those "piles of old papers" as much as any man? But it is just because I hate them that I feel that I must attempt to understand them. You have done me wrong when you called me a bookworm. You do not understand"

that I am the incense that kills bookworms. Though both are hidden among books, their purposes are different." [24]

Again, in a speech to students of Lien-ta he said:

"The more I studied the Chinese classics, the more I felt them to be worthless. I read these books because I wanted to excise their sores and demonstrate their evils, not because I wanted to worship them.... At that time [i.e., the May Fourth period] we wanted to overthrow Confucianism. Now we need to do so even more. But at that time no-one could give any reason [for wanting to do so], but to-day you can come and seek my advice. I have been studying the classics for many years; the more I read the more I feel that Confucianism is worthless...." [25]

This apology by Wen for his long years of classicist study can only be regarded as facile rationalization. For until this time published products of his classical research were fully within the orthodox tradition of Ch'ing dynasty scholarship. Though it was true that Wen's devotion to classical studies had been a retreat from the chaos and uncertainties of Chinese politics, it would seem that he had been at the time genuinely contented with his scholarly career. "Drink deeply, and learn by heart the Li Sao; that is the true scholar!" he had told his students. External circumstances

24. Wen I-to, Ch'nan-chi, section keng, p. 54. This statement has a remarkable resemblance to Hu Shih's apology for his interest in "reinterpretation of the national heritage". Hu Shih said: "I am completely convinced that in the 'worn-out paper stacks' there are numerous old evil spirits, more poisonous than the germs discovered by Pasteur, which will eat and possess human beings. I study it because I have the self-confidence that, though I am not able to destroy the germs, I am quite able to 'exorcise evil spirits' and 'beat ghosts'." Text in Hu Shih, Wen-ts'un, Collection III, vol. II, p. 125. Translation from Chow Tse-tsung, The May Fourth Movement, p. 320.

forced him to seek a new interpretation of Chinese culture, and this solution, as revealed in writings and speeches between 1943 and 1946 was still naive and unpolished. Nonetheless, with his orthodox training in paleography, philology, literature and the classics, and with his new interest in sociology, anthropology, history, politics and Marxism, he was indeed well equipped to shed new light on the nature of Chinese culture. It is a great misfortune that he never lived to do so.

**1. Wen Enters Politics**

After April 1944, encouraged by many friends who had been distressed to see his poverty, Wen began to augment his income by carving seals. His reputation as an artist and as a scholar of ancient scripts attracted a great many customers. With this and his three teaching jobs (at Lien-ta, at the K'un-hua Middle School and at an English Language School), Wen was able to earn enough money to keep his family from starvation. In fact, according to one informant, Wen was considerably better off than the majority of his colleagues in the last years of the war.

But by this time the seeds of dissatisfaction had already been sown. Though Wen had not criticised the government directly, his
changed view of Chinese society and of Chinese literature implied serious criticism of "the Establishment".

a. Military Reverses

In May 1944, the Japanese began a big offensive in central and southern China - "Operation Ichigo" - with the largest armies ever amassed for a single campaign in the war. The Japanese forces completely vanquished the Chinese troops, though the latter were numerically superior in the ratio of three or four to one. Changsha, Heng-yang, Kweilin, Liuchow and Kweiyang all fell, and Kunming itself, key to Free China, appeared threatened.

Wen I-to had already been greatly disturbed by conditions in the army, as well he might have been. The conscription system for the Chinese army was totally inadequate. The rich, students and skilled workers were easily able to circumvent conscription laws, and the burden of military service was borne by the underprivileged. Many conscripts were actually kidnapped by press-gangs. They were often forced to walk many hundreds of miles to their units, suffering lack of food, clothing and medical treatment. Many died or deserted before they ever reached their units. In fact, General Stilwell reported that in 1943 only 56% of conscripts reached their units.27

The army was notoriously corrupt at all levels. The common

27. Ibid., p. 137.
soldier, seriously undernourished, fell prey to all manner of
diseases. Medical supplies and treatment were totally inadequate.
Few of the Chinese soldiers were fit to fight at all.

Criticism of the conduct of the war was regarded as tantamount
to criticism of the Kuomintang, which party became more repressive
and sensitive to criticism as the war proceeded. As the Japanese
advanced in the 1944 drive almost unopposed, Wen I-to, always the
patriot, began to speak out fervently against the government's
mishandling of the war effort. In "The More We Fight the Stronger
We Become" ("Yu Chan Yu Ch'iang") (July 1944), he scathingly condemned
newspaper reports of successes in the war which everyone knew to be
either greatly exaggerated or untrue. In "Art Exhibition" ("Hua-
chan") (July 1944), he passionately criticised China's failure to
prosecute the war with real determination after the United States'
entry into the war. He attacked the apathy of youth to the miseries
of the war ("This Terrible Complacency", "K'o-p'a ti Leng-ching") and
finally, in a speech entitled "Organize the People and Protect the
South-West" ("Tsu-chih Min-chung Yu Pao-wei Ta Hsi-nan") he attacked
the government on its most sensitive point - the blockade of the
Communists at the expense of the resistance to Japan.

b. Kuomintang–Communist Relations

The New Fourth Army Incident climaxed a series of minor clashes
between Nationalist and Communist forces in the guerrilla areas and
the Border Region, starting in 1938. Thereafter, government forces
of 150,000 to 200,000 men blocked the Communist-held areas. In the Summer of 1943, there were numerous rumours that Central Government forces were planning to attack the Border Region. In a passionate speech made in Kunming on October 10, 1944, Wen criticised the blockade:

"We have fought the resistance war for more than seven years, but where has it got us to-day? We can see that the Allies are all counter-attacking, but we are retreating. Everyone else is recovering lost ground, but we are still losing ground. Despite this, we are not alarmed or ashamed, but still unabashed say to our allies: 'If only you had come to our aid earlier, it would never have come to this!'... Can we really not help retreating and losing ground? Isn't it true that there is a great army of hundreds of thousands of men, well fed and in good spirits just keeping watch on another great army, also well fed and well equipped? Why is the potential of those watching and those being watched put out of action up there? Why is it not used to defend our country and resist the enemy? We have fought for seven years to date and sacrificed the lives of many hundreds of thousands of people and the property of many millions all to enable this minority to conduct their quarrel!... In the space of a few months, Chengchow has fallen, Loyang has fallen, Changsha has fallen, Heng-yang has fallen, and now Kweilin is in danger and Liuchow is unprotected. The last base for resistance, the South-West, is in danger. Who is to prevent the enemy sooner or later taking Kweiyang, Kunming and even Chungking? But now where is our army? Is it still keeping watch and being watched?" [30]

In a speech at a meeting arranged in Kunming by the commander of the Nationalist Fifth Army, Ch'iu Ch'ing-ch'an, Wen was even more outspoken in his criticism of the army! "Before, when we were seeking a solution [to our problems]," he said, "we still thought that the army might offer it. But now... I know that the army offers no way

28. Ibid., p. 205.
out at all.... Now there is only one road - revolution!" 31 His biographer reported that at this statement "the whole assembly was struck dumb". 32

As we have noted, criticism of the war effort was regarded as criticism of the Nationalist government. Wen I-to's outspoken criticism could not be ignored. Immediately after the above incident, rumours were circulated that Wen and some other professors were about to be dismissed from their positions at Lien-ta. A student came to warn Wen to take care. 33 Spies and secret agents began to keep an eye on Wen's activities. 34

2. Wen Joins the Democratic League

In October 1944, in a speech to Lien-ta students on the anniversary of Lu Hsün's death, Wen said:

"When we were in Peiping we used to mock and deprecate Lu Hsün and refer to him as [one of] the Shanghai school (hai-pei). Now I want to apologise. We were wrong about him. Lu Hsün was right as we were wrong. What was wrong with the Shanghai school? We wanted to be pure [i.e., above politics]; just look where our purity has led the nation. People have been saying that I have had dealings with persons active in politics. Right! From now on I have every intention of having dealings with them...."

32. Ibid., p. 75.
33. Ibid., p. 75.
34. Ibid., p. 76.
35. Ibid., p. 76.
The writers of Crescent Monthly in the late 1920's had steadfastly refused to take part in politics. But in 1944 Wen rejected the idea that the artist and scholar should be above politics and, driven by his idealistic desire for a strong, united and democratic China, he began to participate actively in politics. It was about September 1944 that he became a member of the Chinese Democratic League (Chung-kuo Min-chu T'ung-meng). In December 1944, he became a member of the editorial board of the League's organ in Kunming, the Democratic Weekly (Min-chu Chou-k'an) and also a member of the Yunnan provincial committee of the Democratic League. Some nine months later (September 1945), he became a member of the Central Executive Committee of the League, publicity office for the Yunnan branch, and head of the committee publishing the Democratic Weekly.

The Chinese Democratic League was the successor of the Grand League of Democratic Political Groups of China (Chung-kuo Min-chu Cheng-t'uan Ta-t'ung-meng), a coalition of minority parties in the People's Political Council, organized in March 1941 and publicly announced in October 1941. It was composed of three parties and three groups; the Chinese Youth Party (Chung-kuo Ch'ing-nien Tang); the Chinese National Socialist Party (Chung-kuo Kuo-chia She-hui Tang), later called, for obvious reasons, the Chinese Democratic Socialist Party (Chung-kuo Min-chu She-hui Tang); the Third Party (Ti

36. Ibid., p. 77.
37. Ibid., p. 79.
San Tang); the National Salvation Association of the Chinese People (Chung-kuo Jen-min Chiu-kuo Hui); The Chinese Rural Reconstruction Association (Chung-kuo Hsiang-ts'un Chien-she Hsieh-hui); and the Chinese Vocational Education Association (Chung-kuo Chih-yeh Chiao-yü She). In October 1944, a time when, as we have seen, there was an upsurge of criticism of the Nationalist government on account of its conduct of the war, the Grand League was reorganized and changed its name to the Chinese Democratic League.

Its constituent parties were not very compatible. The platform of the Youth Party was not very different to that of the Kuomintang, being a little more nationalistic, and more conservative in economic matters. It was strongly anti-Communist. Wen I-to had joined a constituent organization in this party while in America and for a few years after his return to China.

The National Socialist Party was founded by Carsun Chang (Chang Chia-sen, or Chang Chüin-mai) in 1931, and was largely a reflection of its leader's personal aspirations. It found its membership mainly among university staff and students.

The Third Party was formed at the time of the Kuomintang-Communist split of 1927 by Teng Yen-ta who proposed union with the Communists provided that the latter secede from the Third


39. Ibid., p. 359.
International. 40 The party maintained the Kuomintang platform as it was elaborated before the split, that is, it appropriated "the Three Principles of Sun Yat-sen as its principles and the Kuomintang's early policies of catering to the interest of farmers and laborers as its policies". 41 Wen I-to had in 1927 been associated briefly with Teng Yen-te when the latter invited him to take up a position in the art section of the Wuhan government's propaganda department. 42

The National Salvation Association was a group organized in Shanghai in 1936 43 to agitate for immediate resistance to Japan. The number of their adherents and sympathisers increased dramatically when seven leaders of the association, the so-called "seven gentlemen" (ch'i ch'üan-tzu), were arrested and imprisoned in November 1936 by the Nationalist government. The leaders were released only at the outbreak of war. One of the leaders arrested, Li Kung-p'u, was later a prominent member of the Democratic League in Kunming and an intimate friend of Wen I-to's. The National Salvation Association was more left-wing than any of the recognised parties except the Communists, and was singled out for persecution by the Kuomintang both before and after the war.

40. Ibid., p. 355.
41. Ibid., p. 356.
42. "Nien-p'u", pp. 51-52.
43. See also Chapter VII above.
The Rural Reconstruction Association was a non-political organization and was based on the theory of its founder, the scholar Liang Shu-ming, that the reconstruction of China should start at the roots of Chinese society, at the level of the rural village.

The Vocational Education Association, founded by Huang Yen-p'ei, was non-political in form and purpose, but it inevitably became involved in politics in the course of the war.

Not all of the members of these six groups automatically became members of the Democratic League, and at the same time, a large number of people joined the League (Wen I-to was one of these) who had no party affiliations. In a speech on the nature and work of the Democratic League ("Min-meng ti Hsing-chih Yu Tso-feng") in June 1946, Wen mentioned that 80% of the League members had no other party affiliations. He clearly considered this one of the important aspects of the League. He said:

"Just now Li Kung-p'u has announced that to-day 80% of the League members are non-partisan, but he forgot the equally important fact that our supreme leader, Chang Piao-fang (Chang Lan) is also a non-partisan member. The supreme leader and the mass of members are all non-partisan. This clearly shows that the important strength of the Democratic League is in its non-partisan membership. With the future development of our organization, the number of non-partisan members will certainly increase greatly....

This is an interesting thing. Within [the League] we are non-partisan, but to outsiders, we belong to a party. We are non-partisan because we formerly had no interest in politics, and partisan because to-day we are interested in politics." [44]

As Wen saw it, the second important characteristic of the

44. Wen I-to, "Min-meng ti Hsing-chih Yu Tso-feng", p. 27.
Democratic League lay in its being a party of the centre, lying mid-way between the extreme alternatives offered by the Communist and the Nationalist Parties. He said:

"Nowadays we are not middle-men in the negative sense of being apathetic or non-committal. Now we want to stand up and act as a positive type of middle-man between the two extremes. But I do not mean by middle-man, a peace-maker without any policy. We want to see what is right or wrong and determine what is true or false; we want to use the yardstick of democracy to judge between the two extremes. We have no other prejudice but an unalterable faith in democracy...." [45]

Wen felt that it was through being a party of the centre - the Third Force (Ti San Fang-mien) as it came to be called, that the League would derive its strength.

"Everyone knows," he said, "that the League has no armed forces and does not want armed forces. So when we come to discuss politics our position is more firm than is that of other people [i.e., the Communists and the Nationalists]. Since our position is firm, our voice will be heard far and wide. At the same time, we can freely show our hands, for we use words, not force." [46]

A number of foreign observers in China had great faith in the League as a potential mediating force in Chinese politics, as China's only hope for democratic government. However, as Melville T. Kennedy in his paper "The Chinese Democratic League" summarised the position:

"'The Democratic League', it seems clear, was not a political power actually or potentially. The Kuomintang and the Communists both took notice of it but apparently made no serious bid for its support, nor was either party deflected from its political course by the League." [47]

45. Ibid., p. 24.
46. Ibid., p. 25.
The repressive policies of the Kuomintang, the failure of the League to attain legal recognition as a party, the basic incompatibility of the constituent parties all contributed to the League's failure to have a decisive influence on the course of Chinese wartime and post-war politics. An important factor, too, was that the League's leaders, most of them Western-educated scholars and students "had not lost their deep-set Chinese scholarly habits of mind and temperament or their affinity for the unique methods and customs of the old scholarly government. Traditionally it had been both the prerogative and the obligation of the conscientious man of letters to memorialize the throne.... But these customary counsels of perfection no longer met the practical requirements of Chinese politics." 48

Unfortunately, Wen I-to's attitude, too, was typical of this elitist view of politics.

With the increasing Kuomintang intolerance of other parties, the Democratic League, under threat of persecution, began to agitate for civil rights, the end of the period of Kuomintang tutelage and the recognition of minority parties. In the matter of civil rights, the Democratic League took a stand parallel to that taken by the Communists, and in the post-war years the League moved increasingly toward co-operation with the Communists.

The programme issued by the League at its 1944 Chunking conference showed the League's great interest in questions of civil

48. Ibid., p. 137.
rights. It called for: the establishment of a coalition government, preparation for constitutional government, the guarantee of civil liberties, the granting of legal status to all parties, the release of political prisoners and the abolition of secret police and concentration camps. 49

After December 1944 as the Central Government began to regain ground lost to the Japanese during "Operation Ichigo", Wen I-to's published essays and speeches became less openly hostile to the government. However, the influence of Marxist thought was much more apparent than in his previous work, and the solutions he suggested were, on the whole, more radical.

3. Terror in Kunming: The Assassination of Wen I-to

On 10 August, 1945, Japan surrendered unconditionally. On hearing this news, Wen went immediately to the barber to have the beard which he had vowed to keep till the day of victory shaved off. Some of his friends were not so confident that all their troubles were over with the end of the war, and pessimistically told him: "You have cut it off too soon." 50 Indeed, China was now on the brink of civil war as both Communist and Kuomintang troops prepared

49. Ibid., p. 149.
50. "Nien-p' u", p. 79.
to take over territory previously occupied by the Japanese.

During the war, Yunnan province had had a certain amount of autonomy. Its governor, Lung Yün, who was at odds with Chiang Kai-shek, had given some protection to the intellectuals critical of the Kuomintang as a means of asserting his own independence from the Central Government. Two months after the end of the war, Nationalist troops occupied Kunming in a daring coup and took Lung Yün in disgrace back to Chungking. The provincial government was reorganised with Li Tsung-huang as provincial chairman and Kuan Lin-cheng (later Huo K'uei-chang) as Commander-in-chief of the special police. Kunming was now under the direct control of president Chiang Kai-shek.

Immediately there began a fierce repression of liberal sentiment.

a. The First December Incident

On 25 November, as a meeting to protest against the civil war held in the grounds of Lien-ta by the students' unions of four universities in Kunming, the Lien-ta university was surrounded by troops who trained their machine guns on the student assembly. The

52. Ibid, p. 160.
54. Ibid, p. 80. Mien Chih, Wen I-to, p. 84 says that Wen I-to was one of the speakers at this meeting, but "Nien-p'u" (p. 80) mentions only Ch'ien Tuang-sheng, Fei Hsiao-t'ung, P'an Ta-k'uei and Wu Han as speakers.
next day the students issued a joint proclamation declaring a boycott of classes and demanding that the government stop the civil war, rescind its ban on meetings and marches, guarantee freedom of speech and assembly and punish those responsible for the surrounding of Lien-ta. 55

On November 30, students in the propaganda corps were attacked in the streets and beaten up by the secret police. Then on 1 December, riot gangs raided five Kunming schools and colleges, destroyed property and beat up students; four students were killed and twenty-five were seriously wounded. 56 Intimidation of liberals had begun in earnest.

Wen I-to was extremely sympathetic to the students. 57 At a

56. Wen I-to's eldest son, Li-ho, a student at Lien-ta, was also injured in this incident. (See Li Wen Erh Lieh-shih Chi-nien Wei-yüan Hui, Jen-min Ying-lich, p. 251.) For details of the First December Incident and its aftermath, see Yu Tsai Hsien-sheng Chih-nien Wei-yüan Hui, I-erh-i Min-chu Yün-tung Chi-nien Chi.
57. "Nien-p' u", p. 81 says: "In the Lien-ta staff meetings, Wen consistently argued on the side of the students. [In this], he met with unsympathetic disinterest and disapproval." A former professor of Lien-ta, now in Taiwan, hinted to me that Wen's agitation for civil rights in the last years of the war was merely a means of "currying favour" with the left-wing students in order to augment his power in campus politics. Wen's speeches and essays might indeed be interpreted as an attempt to "curry favour" with youth, but it is my firm belief that Wen, always the romantic, sincerely believed that the task of regenerating China was the task of Youth. His faith in, and romanticization of Youth is similar to that of the writers of New Youth in the May Fourth period.
memorial meeting in honour of the students who died in the First December Incident (I-erh-i Yün-tung), Wen described December 1, 1945, as the "blackest day since the foundation of the Republic". He went on:

"Lu Hsun once said that the Eighteenth March tragedy in 1926 was the blackest day in the history of the Republic. He did not know that there was to be an even blacker, even more cruel day - that is December 1, 1945. Tuan Ch'i-jui's soldiers fired on unarmed students in front of the government offices, but on December 1, a great mob of soldiers with knives and hand-grenades attacked the schools! It was one step further in the scale of inhumanity. Is this the white terror? No, it is black terror!" [58]

By this time, there was rumoured to be a price of 400,000 dollars on Wen's head. 59

b. The Failure of Attempts at Mediation of Kuomintang-Communist Differences

Wen continued his work for the Democratic League. In January 1946, the political scene began to look a little brighter. With the mediation of the American George C. Marshall, a multi-party Political Consultative Conference (Cheng-chih Haieh-shang Hui-i) was convened in Chungking to discuss a peaceful settlement of the Nationalist-Communist conflict. Before the Conference, the Kuomintang attempted to split the Democratic League in order to reduce its power in the Conference. It offered the Youth Party - the most right-wing of the

59. Ibid., p. 81.
League's constituent groups, a number of seats in the Political Consultative Conference out of proportion to its strength provided that it dissociate itself from the League. This the Youth Party did, incurring the deep resentment of the remaining parties of the League. During the Conference, the League's insistence on peace, democracy, civil rights and a coalition government brought it into conflict with the Kuomintang. Gradually the League began to side with the Communists.

A compromise solution was eventually reached by the Conference on five points of discussion. News of this was greeted with jubilation throughout the country. In Kunming a meeting was held in the grounds of Lien-ta to celebrate the success of the Conference.

By March, however, the situation had again deteriorated over the question of the occupation of Manchuria, which territory had been taken over from the Japanese by the Russians. The Nationalists had hoped to assume control of Manchuria after the withdrawal of the Russian troops, but before they could do so, the Communist troops had moved in. Attempts at mediation failed. By the Summer of 1946 civil war had begun again in earnest.

c. The Assassination of Li Kung-p'u

Meanwhile, right-wing extremists of the Kuomintang were launching a campaign of terror against the minor parties who were

60. Ibid., p. 82.
still working for a peaceful solution. And these parties, unlike the Communists, had no armed forces with which to defend themselves. The Democratic League, particularly, was under attack. In May, anonymous posters in Kunming branded as Communists a number of members of the Democratic League, among them Wen I-to, Wu Han, Lo Lung-chi, Ch'u T'u-nan and Li Kung-p'u.\footnote{Ibid., p. 83.} In June, a guest book containing the names of visitors to a League meeting was stolen. The proprietor of the restaurant where they usually held meetings was threatened with death if he allowed League members to meet at his restaurant.\footnote{"Nien-p'u", p. 84.} Lien-te had by this time closed down, and students were returning in batches to Peiping. Wen had been offered a teaching post in the University of California, but he turned this down despite the urging of his friends, because he felt that the Peiping students still needed him.\footnote{Ibid., p. 83.} Two of Wen's children (his two younger sons) had set off with their uncle for Peiping, and Wen was preparing to follow them as soon as possible.

\footnote{Ibid., p. 83.} Although in the late years of the war Wen I-to's thought was influenced by Marxism, there is no evidence whatsoever to support the allegation that Wen was a Communist Party member. His politics could best be described as "liberal"; he wanted to see the establishment of democracy as it is known in the West, i.e., a freely elected assembly representing all parties, guaranteed civil rights, etc. In practical terms in China this programme required the recognition by the Kuomintang of the Communist Party and the minor parties, and the establishment of a Kuomintang-Communist coalition government. Hence it seemed to the Kuomintang that Wen I-to (and the Democratic League) were working in league with the Communists. One informant suggested to me that Wen's eldest son, Wen Li-ho, may have been a Communist Party member; certainly he was avidly left-wing.
as he was able to wind up the business of the Democratic League in Kunming.

The Lien-ta students were the most vociferous and active supporters in Kunming of the Democratic League's stand on civil liberties. After the December First Incident had revealed the political strength of popular indignation, the Central Government authorities hesitated to act openly against students or members of the Democratic League; they confined themselves to threats, intimidation and blackmail. But when the Lien-ta students left Kunming, the remaining members of the Democratic League were in a very vulnerable position.

On July 11, very significantly the day when the last batch of Lien-ta students left Kunming for Peiping, Li Kung-p'u, a member of the Democratic League and former leader of the National Salvation Association, was beaten and stabbed by secret agents. He died the next day. Anonymous posters declared that Li had been killed by Communists. It was rumoured that Wen I-to would be the next to die. Friends warned Wen to take care, and urged him to leave Kunming as quickly as possible.

d. The Assassination of Wen I-to

Wen had intended to leave Kunming on July 13, but after Li's death, Wen insisted on staying on in Kunming to superintend the

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64. Li Wen Erh Lieh-shih Chi-nien Wei-yidan Hui, Jen-min Ying-lieh, p.256.
arrangements for Li Kung-p'u's funeral. On 15 July, he addressed a memorial meeting for Li Kung-p'u and spoke out with great passion against the campaign of terror against liberals:

"In these last days in Kunming have occurred some of the most disgusting and shameless events in history. What had Li Kung-p'u done that he should be murdered like this? He only wrote and spoke out the words which are hidden in the hearts of thousands of people. . . .

Are there any secret police here to-day? Stand up and tell us why you wanted to kill Li Kung-p'u. You not only kill people, but also slander them and say that they ran after women, or that this is a case of Communists killing Communists. Shameless! Shameless! That Li Kung-p'u was killed in Kunming is to the glory of Li Kung-p'u, and also to the glory of the people of Kunming!

Last year in the First December Incident, some Kunming students were killed because they opposed the civil war. Now Li Kung-p'u has been murdered by the reactionaries because he fought for democracy and peace. This is to the endless glory of Kunming!

Li Kung-p'u gave his life, and we must demand a price. The four martyrs of the First December Incident paid their young blood for the opening of the Political Consultative Conference. For Li Kung-p'u's death let us demand a second Consultative Conference. . . .

Did the reactionaries do this low and shameful thing because they thought that, with the Lien-ta students on vacation, we would have no supporters left? Just let the secret police look around at the hundreds of young people here hand in hand. . . .

We must prepare ourselves to be like Li Kung-p'u. The moment we step out of the door, we must be prepared not to step back inside again." [65]

The secret police answered Wen's challenge.66 Late that

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66. Immediately after Wen I-to's death, and intermittently ever since, various people have suggested that it was the Communist secret police, not Kuomintang agents who were responsible for Wen's assassination. The Communists were said to have killed Li and Wen with the aim of rousing nation-wide resentment against the Kuomintang (which was certainly the effect that the assassinations had). On the basis of information from an (Contd. p. 220.)
afternoon as he returned to the Lien-ta compound from work at the office of the Democratic Weekly, he was shot down in a hail of bullets. His son, Wen Li-ho, who had tried to shield his father, was seriously wounded, but subsequently recovered in hospital.

When Wen's wife, Hsiao-chen, had pleaded with him not to risk his life by organizing and attending the memorial meeting for Li Kung-p'u, Wen had replied sadly: "When things have come to such a pass, if I do not go out, how can I make amends to the one who is dead?" It was ironical indeed that when Wen himself was assassinated, there was no one to look after the funeral arrangements. Wen's eldest son, Li-ho was gravely ill in hospital; his other two sons were in Chungking on their way to Peiping. His wife, on hearing of her husband's death, had had a mild heart attack, and had also been taken to hospital. The other office-bearers of the Democratic League, in fear of their lives after this second political assassination, had sought asylum in the American Consulate in Kunming. A rumour was circulated in Kunming that anyone who arranged a memorial

66. (Contd.) informant who was living in the Lien-ta compound at the time of Wen's assassination, and also from the tenor of contemporary documents (such as those collected in Jen-min Ying-chieh) I would say that there was no doubt in the minds of either Democratic League members or Lien-ta staff members as to the fact that it was Nationalist secret police who were responsible for the killings.

meeting for Wen I-to would be dealt with by the secret police. 68

Wen's body lay in the hospital for three days before three members of the Lien-ta staff, Mei T'ai-ch'i, Lei Hai-tsung, and Cha Liang-chao, none of them particular friends of Wen, eventually volunteered to arrange for the cremation. The cremation was announced for 12 noon on July 18, but crowds arriving at the appointed time found that the cremation was already over. Presumably because of fear of demonstrations, the authorities had hastily carried out the cremation three hours previously. 69 Sadly, none of Wen's close friends or admirers were in attendance.

Wen's wife had requested that her husband's ashes be buried in the grounds of Lien-ta near the place where the four young martyrs of the First December Incident had been buried. The University authorities, fearful of political repercussions, refused their permission. For some time it seemed that Wen's widow would not be permitted to bury her husband's ashes anywhere within the precincts of the city of Kunming. 70

This was the sad and humiliating end of a man who was among the most admired and beloved of his generation.

Thus ended the life of Wen I-to, poet, painter, scholar, revolutionary and romantic. Forthright, honest and courageous, he

69. Ibid., p. 25.
70. Ibid., p. 26.
commanded the love and respect of his students and his colleagues. His tragic death was a great shock to the nation, and helped to harden opposition to the Kuomintang on the part of many who were, until then, uncommitted. His tragedy was that he gave his life at the age of forty-seven for the ideals of the Democratic League, a cause which proved to be, indeed, was destined to be futile.

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PART A: THE POST

Yen L. I-to was undoubtedly one of the greatest poets of modern China. When he started writing his poetry in 1917, the Free Poetry Movement was already well under way. In fact, by that time, it seemed almost to have exhausted its creative potential. The structures of Fu Shih on the writing of poetry no simplified in such

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1. Chia Tung-ying, in his "Preface" to the Collected Works of Yang Ling, dates the three phases as follows: Zen, the poet, 1917 (the year of the founding of "New Youth") to 1927 (the year when Yen joined the staff of Peking Ju University); Zen, the scholar, from 1929 to 1944; Yen, the political figure, from 1944 until his death. (Chia Tung-ying, "The Net", p. 13.) There may be divergence of opinion on the exact chronology of these phases (in human interest it is difficult to be precise), but the existence of three distinct phases in Yen L. I-to's life is quite clear.
CONCLUSIONS

The organization of the material in this thesis has implied periodization of Wen's career into three distinct phases; that of Wen I-to as a poet (1921-1927), that of Wen as a scholar (1928-1943) and that of Wen as a political figure (1944-1946). In attempting to gauge the contribution of Wen I-to to Chinese life, I will consider separately his achievements in these three distinct roles - as a poet, as a scholar, and as a political figure.

PART A: WEN, THE POET

Wen I-to was undoubtedly, one of the greatest poets of modern China. When he started writing pai-hua poetry in 1921 the New Poetry movement was already well under way. In fact, by that time, it seemed almost to have exhausted its creative potential. The strictures of Hu Shih on the writing of poetry as exemplified in such

1. Chu Tzu-ch'ing, in his "Preface" to The Complete Works of Wen I-to dates the three phases as follows: Wen, the poet, 1925 (the year of the founding of Shih-k'An) to 1929 (the year when Wen joined the staff of Tsing Tao University); Wen, the scholar, from 1929 to 1944; Wen, the political figure, from 1944 until his death. (Chu Tzu-ch'ing, "Chu Hsiü", p. 13.) There may be difference of opinion on the exact chronology of these phases (in human interest it is difficult to be precise), but the existence of three distinct phases in Wen I-to's life is quite clear.
essays as T’ an Hsin Shih were still the theoretical basis for poetic composition. Hu Shih’s theory that new poetry should be "free" and "unrestricted" in form was of great importance socially and politically, but it failed to stimulate the production of good poetry.

Wen I-to did not derive his inspiration from the example of his contemporaries. Instead, he found his inspiration in Chinese classical poetry, especially T’ang dynasty poetry, and in English poetry, particularly the nineteenth century Romantics. Intensive study of these two sources convinced him of the importance of rhythm in poetry. Wen began to experiment in creating forms suited to the pai-hua medium and in adapting Western forms and rhythms to the peculiarities of the Chinese language.

1. Wen’s Contribution to Pai-hua Poetry

Wen I-to's contribution to the search for new poetics (and, indeed, his contribution to modern Chinese poetry as a whole) lay in two things; his criticism of poetry, and his actual poetry.

a. Wen as a Critic of Poetry

Wen was the chief spokesman for the so-called "formalists" (kòu-lù p'ai) of the modern poetry movement. Though there were many other poets at the time equally dissatisfied with the trend of pai-
hua poetry and interested in experiments in form and rhythm, Wen I-to was the only one who committed his ideas extensively to paper. His articles, "Tung-yeh P'ing-lun", "Nü-shen Chih Shih-tai Ching-shen", "Nü-shen Chih Ti-fang Se-ts'ai", "T'ai-kuo-erh P'i-p'ing" and especially "Shih ti Ko-lu", have a unique place in the history of poetic criticism in modern China. On his return to China from America in 1925, Wen became the focus of a small group of poets who experimented with new forms and rhythms. This group, through their publications, Shih-k'an and Hsin-yeh Yüeh-k'an, made their mark on the history of pai-hua poetry. Chu Tzu-ch'ing, summing up the history of pai-hua poetry from 1917 to 1936, named the "formalists" as one of the three major groups on the poetic scene at this time.

b. Wen as a Poet

But Wen was not only a theorist and critic. From the very beginning of his creative career he attempted to put his theories into practice. His poems were a praiseworthy experiment in language and rhythm. He did not aim simply to import and apply Western rhythms, nor yet to return to the metres of classical poetry. He aimed to explore the rhythmic potential of the exciting new medium, pai-hua, and to derive from his research systems of poetics that could be the mainstay of pai-hua poetry in the future. Not all of Wen's experiments were equally successful; not all have stood the test of time. Nonetheless, his experiments demonstrated what Hu Shih and earlier poets had failed to prove — that good, effective
and rhythmic poetry could be written in pai-hua.

2. Wen in the Eyes of the Critics

In view of Wen's undoubted contribution to modern poetry, it would seem at first strange that contemporary Chinese literary historians award only qualified praise to Wen. As a typical example of contemporary criticism, I shall quote in full Tsang K'e-chia's estimation of Wen I-to in his "Introduction" to Selections of Chinese New Poetry. Tsang wrote:

"Although Wen I-to, the author of Dead Water was once a member of the Crescent Group, he cannot be put in the same class as such people as Hsü Chih-mo and Chu Hsiang. After the great revolution of 1927, he began to show dissatisfaction with the attitude to literature and the way of life of Hu Shih and Hsü Chih-mo. His poetry was imbued with the spirit of patriotism. This spirit arose from his experience of racial prejudice while studying in America and from his deep disappointment in the dreadful state of affairs he observed on his return home. Under the stimulus of this strong patriotic feeling, he wrote such excellent poems as "T'ai-yang Yin", "Hsi I Ko", "Fa-hsien", "I Ch'ü Hua" etc. But unfortunately, this patriotism had little connection with the people's revolutionary struggle in progress at that time; it was rather boasting of the golden periods of Chinese history. Moreover, [his patriotism] was still in the nature of "longing for the past", reflecting the limitations of narrow nationalism. Wen's few poems describing contemporary conditions were only fragmentary; and their viewpoint was, naturally, little more than individualist humanitarian sympathy. At that time Wen's thought was still bourgeois; his attitude to poetry and his creative method still clearly tended towards "aestheticism". He consciously tried to experiment with and create new poetics in opposition to the free verse forms of the May Fourth. This was [his idea of] "regular rhythmic feet", "even lines", and equal and fixed numbers of syllables (every line having a fixed number of syllables, and alternate lines or every line corresponding). Through this he hoped that poetry would have the beauty of architecture and the beauty of music. At that time, new
poetry was in a period of experimentation in different forms and at this time, Wen I-to's advocacy of and experimentation with new forms was of definite value. In his creation of forms he borrowed from the example of contemporary English poetry. This "square bean-curd" poetry had considerable influence on readers at that time, but as often happens, it encouraged an unfortunate tendency towards pure formalism at the expense of realistic content.

As Wen I-to himself said, he was like a volcano. In the early period his righteousness and patriotism were buried in the caverns of the volcano. Later on, when reality broadened his vision and awakened his spirit, angry sparks burst from this volcano. In the end, by the sacrifice of his life, he completed a great poem of rebellion. [3]

It is quite obvious that this essay of Tsang's is in the nature of an apology. All praise of Wen I-to as a poet is very qualified. The author hastens to point out at the start that although Wen was a member of the Crescent Group, he was somehow "different" from other members like HsU Chih-mo and Chu Hsiang. The evidence does not support this. Wen was one of the foundation members and guiding spirits of the Crescent Society. It does seem likely that Wen had changed his political stand during the period of the Chinese Revolution (1926-1928). However, not until late in life did he modify his idea - the underlying concept of the Crescent Monthly writers, that art should be distinct from politics.

Tsang admitted that Wen was a patriotic writer, but criticised this patriotism as "traditionalist" and "narrowly nationalistic". He credited Wen with writing some "realistic" poems - obviously referring here to such pieces as "Dead Water" and "Deserted Village", but qualified this by describing Wen's ideology as individualistic, humanitarian, bourgeois, and aestheticist. Tsang agreed that Wen

3. Tsang K'e-chia (ed.), Chung-kuo Hsin Shih HaiHan, pp. 15-16.
made an important contribution to the search for poetics, but on the other hand stated that his interest in poetic form was to the detriment of "realistic content".

a. The Distortion of Contemporary Criticism by Political Considerations

It is obvious from the above passage that the harsh criticism of Wen's poetry which one would expect of a Communist critic (in view of Wen's association with such "bourgeois" villains as Hu Shih and Hu Chih-mo) has been modified in the light of Wen's subsequent political activities.

In Taiwan, likewise, Wen's later political activities have affected appreciation of his actual poetry. Owing to his anti-Kuomintang stand in the last years of the war, his poetry - all his writings - are now banned by the Nationalist government. This distortion of criticism by political considerations is, in the case of Wen I-to, quite unreasonable. For in fact, Wen I-to's career as a literary figure, and his career as a political figure were completely distinct. Wen wrote his poetry mainly between 1920 and 1928. His last poem was published in 1931. At that time he was clearly a firm believer in the principle of "art for art's sake", and in the idea of the necessary separation of art and politics. It was true that he was not happy with the political situation in China and was, by 1927-28 wavering in his support for the rightist nationalist attitudes he
had previously assumed. However, this wavering contained no hint of
the political ideas he was to espouse in later life. These later
ideas were the result of a great intellectual and emotional upheaval
brought about by the disturbed conditions of China during the war.
It is quite wrong, then, that judgment of Wen's poetry should be at
all affected by considerations of Wen's later political activities.
Nonetheless, criticism of Wen's poetry by literary critics both on
the Chinese Mainland and in Taiwan is seriously distorted by the
respective political ideologies of the critics.

3. The Contemporary Influence of Wen's Poetry

a. Politics as the Determinative of the History of Pai-hua Poetry

Wen I-to was acknowledged in his time as a great and influential
poet. He rescued poetry from the artistic doldrums into which it
had fallen and reinstated it as an art. He proved what the founders
of the new poetry movement failed to prove— that good poetry could
be written in the colloquial language. His experiments in form and
language, his poetic theory and his poetic example stimulated his
contemporaries, his immediate successors and his many students. Such
being the case, one would expect to see in the history of poetry
since Wen's time a development and sophistication of the trends set
in motion by Wen. Yet when one looks at the poetry produced in
contemporary China, one can see little of the influence of Wen's
example.
The reason for this is that it is politics, not literary worth which has determined the course of development of modern poetry in China. Since 1919 the whole history of pai-hua literature has been subordinated to political considerations. And the literature of modern China, like its politics, is an expression of Chinese nationalism.

The Literary Revolution, despite the retrospective assertions of its founder Hu Shih, was a political movement as much as a literary movement. Its aims were, fundamentally, the awakening of the populace to political consciousness through the medium of a written style based on the spoken language. Furthermore, it aimed to destroy the remaining vestiges of the old regime by destroying the foundation of the traditional class system - a literary language which only the privileged could hope to master. As we have seen in Chapter I, the Literary Revolution achieved success in 1919 (much sooner than had been anticipated by its founders) by its popular identification with the cause of the May Fourth Movement.

The second landmark in the history of modern literature - the drift to the extreme Left after the May Thirtieth Movement in 1925 was also primarily connected with political questions. It was an expression of the hopelessness and disappointment felt by a number of writers over the reaction in politics since 1920 and the corresponding desire to see a more radical solution to China's problems. This leftward drift culminated in 1928 in the debate on "revolutionary" or "proletarian" literature. By the time of the
formation of the League of Left-wing writers in 1930 the majority of Chinese writers were committed to the idea of "literature for the masses". This idea, likewise, was a result of political considerations, not of literary considerations.

After the formation of the League, the majority of Chinese writers, with varying degrees of fidelity, followed the official Communist Party line. Paralleling Communist political policy of the years 1935-1937, the earlier radical programme for literature was superseded by a demand for a united front of all writers against Japan. This policy was brought into effect with the Kuomintang-Communist rapprochement after the Sian Incident and the start of the Japanese War. During the early years of the war writers strove to commemorate in their writings the heroism of Chinese resistance. Partly due to the breakdown of communications and partly because of the deliberate Communist policy of liberalization, Chinese writers in this period were subject to controls less rigid than in the pre-war period. However, as time went by, Kuomintang corruption and repression steadily drove writers, even those who had not been League members, to support of the Communists.

In May 1942 at the Yenan Forum on art and literature, the Communist leader Mao Tse-tung made two speeches which were to determine the course of literature in China from that time to the present day. Most of his ideas had been expressed by Chinese

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4. For the text of these speeches, see Mao Tse-tung, Mao Tse-tung Hsüan-ch'i, Vol. 3, pp. 849-878.
Marxists consistently over the years since 1925. The importance of Mao's Yenan Talks lay in the fact that the Communist Party by this time commanded the allegiance of the majority of writers who were prepared to, and organized to, put these principles into practice. With the conquest of China in 1949, the Communist Party had the authority to enforce the ideas outlined by Mao throughout China. In the years from 1917 to 1942, the course of Chinese literature was greatly influenced by the demands of politics; after 1942, literature became largely subservient to politics.

b. Characteristics of the Poetry of Communist China

The Chinese Communists have always subscribed to the view that literature is one of the instruments of revolution and should be harnessed to the cause of the revolution. Hence Communist literary critics have been particularly concerned with the question of the "content" (nei-jung) of literature. They are interested in form only in that certain forms tend to encourage a certain style or content. Mao, in his Yenan Talks, stressed that the writer should remain always conscious of his "audience" (kung-tso tui-hsiang). By this Mao meant that the writer should direct his writing to the soldiers, workers and peasants. Later, on his summing up of the Forum, Mao decreed that writers should strive for "popularization" (p'u-chi) before "elevation" (t'i-kao). Since this time there has been a conscious movement by writers to seek their inspiration from Chinese folk tradition. Professional poets have worked to adapt
regional folk forms. During the multi-million poem movement of 1959, amateur poets produced millions of poems, most of them in folk-song form. The folk-form currently popular among the peasants is the pentasyllabic (2:2:1) or septasyllabic (2:2:2:1) line which, ironically, derives from the classical model. Thus under the guise of learning from folk tradition, Chinese poets, amateur and professional, have given the form of the "decadent" traditional poetry a new lease of life.

Side by side with the rediscovered folk forms, the modern pai-hua form, the child of the May Fourth Movement, continues in existence. In purely formal characteristics — in rhyme, rhythm and metre, it would seem to be a continuation of the type of poetry produced by the poets of Shih-k'an and Hsin-yüeh Yüeh-k'an. But there are two very important differences, the first in language, the second in imagery.

Wen I-to and his companions sought to enrich the language of pai-hua poetry. They rebelled against the prosaic language and transparency of theme which were a feature of the early pai-hua poetic experiments. They tried instead to explore and exploit the potential of the pai-hua medium. They were not afraid to enrich their language with Chinese classical or foreign expressions. They had a very serious attitude to their art. This outlook was contrary to the dominant tendency of the pai-hua poetry movement from its very inception. Especially since 1925, the majority of writers have, for political reasons, sought simplification, not
elaboration.

Despite the best intentions of the founders of the Literary Revolution, the pai-hua style which developed during the 1920's and 1930's had grown gradually more remote from the common speech that it was intended to record. Just as the "foreign-educated officials" had replaced the old-style scholar-officials as the elite of society, so the Europeanised pai-hua language took over as the medium of communication among the social elite. Criticism of the elitist tendency of pai-hua has been voiced as early as 1925, but it was only with the outbreak of the war that the majority of Chinese writers realised that, if they were to make effective propaganda among the Chinese people at large, they would have to develop a language which was nearer to the common spoken language. This simplified version of pai-hua - known as p'u-t'ung-hua (common speech), has been in vogue ever since. The elaborate, Europeanised pai-hua used by the Crescent poets has no place in literature written for peasants, workers and soldiers.

11. Imagery

Imagery is that device whereby a poet shares with his audience his unique and individual vision of the experiential and phenomenal world. In contemporary China, individualism is treated with suspicion; the poet's vision must be that of the "masses" and his discipline, the constant awareness of the principles of Marxism-Leninism. As S.H. Chen says in his paper "Metaphor and the Conscious in Chinese Poetry under Communism", the poet to-day suffers from "the
overstrain of apparent consciousness and the loss of individual vision and creativity". 5 This occurs, Chen says, "when the poet's whole attention is summoned by an over-bearing outward power of which he must be always intensely conscious, to see what he is desired by that power to see, and thus to say what he is desired to say.... As a consequence, this mental state, this constant strain of the consciousness, infuses into his poetry a distinct, pervading quality in all cases, be the verses competent or incompetent. This quality we may easily recognise, and call it the transparency of theme. And the poet, having 'surrendered his heart' entirely to Party and State, chiao hsia, as innumerable slogans have cheered it, and thus lost himself in the gigantic collectivity, cannot but inflate his language into that of the grandiose collective mind and thus speak most often in hyperboles". 6

It is in this question of imagery that one sees the most important difference between the poetry of Wen I-to (and other writers for Shih-k' an and Hsin-yüeh Yüeh-k' an) and the poetry currently produced in China. Wen I-to worked for the creation of subtle imagery to enhance and add depth to his poetic theme. In contrast, the salient characteristics of contemporary poetry are transparency of theme and hyperbolism. These qualities derive not from the natural development of literary fashions, but from the

6. Ibid., pp. 46-47.
desire of the regime to enlist literature for the service of the government and the Party.

4. Conclusion

Wen I-to is acknowledged to be one of the great poets of modern China. Yet thanks to the dictates of politics, his poetry has had very little, if any, lasting influence on the contemporary poetic scene. The best that can be said, sadly, is that his poetry has gone into the corpus of pai-hua poetry; it is still read and criticised. It may yet be rediscovered.

In Taiwan, not even this much can be granted. Wen I-to's poetry, and that of all other major poets since the Literary Revolution (with the prominent exceptions of Hai Chih-mo and Chu Tzu-ch'ing) has been proscribed in Taiwan. Young poets, deprived of their immediate literary heritage, seem to be meeting again the same problems as were faced by Chinese poets in the 1920's - problems

7. However, the poetry available to the Chinese audience now is not fully representative of Wen's writing. Since The Complete Works of Wen I-to became out of print many years ago, the Chinese audience has relied on two selections of Wen's works, The Selected Works of Wen I-to (Peking, 1951) and Selected Poetry and Prose of Wen I-to (Peking, 1955). That these are not unbiased selections of Wen's poetry can be seen by comparing the contents of these two volumes with that of the Hong Kong edition of Wen's selected works. The former contain a preponderance of Wen's later (and more revolutionary) poems and essays. Fortunately, as it happens, Wen's best poems are those of his later years.
such as how much Chinese poetry should draw from the Chinese literary heritage, and how much from the West.\textsuperscript{8}

Wen I-to's idealistic attempt to establish pai-hua poetry as an art uninfluenced by politics failed. It was destined to fail, for Wen had failed to appreciate the political element in the Literary Revolution. He had failed to understand, despite his patriotism, that the Literary Revolution was but one phase of the Chinese nationalist movement, directed not so much to the creation of good literature, but to the liberation and resurgence of China. Perhaps he had already, subconsciously, realised this when he ceased creative writing in 1931. Certainly, with the impact of the war, he came to feel that the Chinese writer could not stay aloof from politics; that it was, indeed, his moral responsibility to devote himself and his art to what he considered to be the welfare of his country.

\textbf{PART B: WEN, THE SCHOLAR}

With his appointment in Autumn 1928 as head of the Department of Chinese at Wuhan University, Wen began for the first time serious study of Chinese classical literature. He had, of course, received his early education in the classics, showing at a very early age a

\textsuperscript{8} YH Kuang-chung, "Some Contemporary Chinese Poetry", p. 423.
marked preference for poetry over prose. As a young student at Tsing Hua College, he developed his interest in Chinese poetry, particularly T'ang dynasty poetry, but as the years went by, this interest was overshadowed by his growing affection for Western literature. In 1928, he began again at the point at which he had left off some years earlier - with the study of T'ang poetry. From this time until his death almost eighteen years later, Wen was engaged in classical studies, or, more particularly, in the study of the history of Chinese poetry. From T'ang poetry he moved to study of the Shih Ching, the Ch'u Tzu and Yueh-fu. It was his eventual aim to write a comprehensive history of Chinese literature, describing the development of poetry from pre-historic to contemporary times. It may seem strange to the Western reader that Wen regarded a history of literature as being equivalent to a history of poetry. This was not simply his poet's pride. Chinese literary historians have traditionally placed greater emphasis on poetry than on prose or drama, and even to-day one finds that histories of Chinese literature are for the most part, histories of Chinese poetry.

It has not been the intention of this thesis to give a detailed critical analysis of Wen's scholarship. However, since the majority of Wen's adult years were spent in scholarship and since Wen's reputation as a classical scholar rivaled his reputation as a poet, it is imperative that one should attempt, however summarily, some estimation of Wen I-to's achievement in this direction.
1. The Orthodox Scholar

Wen I-to's scholarship can be divided into two distinct periods. In the early period, beginning in 1928, Wen's scholarship was completely orthodox in the tradition of Ch'ing dynasty scholarship. His work lay mainly in the fields of philology, paleography, and textual emendation.

Ever since the foundation of New Youth magazine in 1915, orthodox classical scholarship had been viewed by radicals as a reactionary and counter-revolutionary activity made all the more sinister by the strength of its appeal to intellectuals. With the change in Wen's political ideas in the latter part of his life, Wen himself, and well-disposed critics attempted to minimise the orthodoxy of Wen's scholarship. Chu Tzu-ch'ing, for instance, in his "Introduction" to The Complete Works of Wen I-to, quoted a letter from Wen to his friend Jao Meng-k'an in which he announced his intention to travel to Loyang (the city where the poet Tu Fu had lived for some time) because "without seeing for oneself these places, how could one presume to write a biography of Tu Fu?" Chu commented on this: "This is not [the remark of] the usual classical scholar!" 9 True, Wen's desire to see for himself the physical background of Tu Fu's poetry may not have been the behaviour of the most orthodox

scholar, but for one who had spent at least fifteen years studying Western literature and criticism, such an outlook must be considered far from radical.

Kuo Mo-jo has given a number of examples of Wen's textual exegesis which demonstrate clearly that in this field Wen I-to was a distinguished scholar. Significant though Wen's contribution to the tradition of Ch'ing scholarship was, one very serious criticism of Wen's classical scholarship must be made. This is that Wen's scholarship was essentially reactionary, for he completely ignored all the results of post-Revolutionary scholarship, particularly the contribution of Chinese Marxists. He was engaged in a type of scholarship which a political revolution had long rendered obsolete.

2. The Radical Scholar

It was the war which disrupted the scholarly peace of Wen's Peking retreat and produced a profound change in the nature of his scholarship. On his long walk with the students of the Changsha Emergency University from Changsha to Kunming, Wen came for the first time into contact with the primitive Miao people. For Wen, it was like a glimpse backwards through history to the time of the composition of the Shih Ching. As he saw the intimate connection between the Miao folk-songs and Miao physical culture, he began to

realise that the folk-song, and by extension, literature, should be seen in the light of the total culture which produced it.

After his arrival in Kunming, Wen settled down to scholarship as before, temporarily forgetting these reflections. But soon his interest in what must be called the "sociology of literature" was revived. Severe economic distress in the first years of the war gradually forced Wen to wake up to the realities of wartime politics. He began to feel a compelling need to justify to himself and the world his many years spent in classical scholarship. He began to ask himself the question: "What lessons relevant to the present are to be learnt from classical studies?" To answer this question he began to extend the scope of his reading beyond the limits of conventional classical scholarship. He began to read anthropology, psychology, sociology, Marxism and history.

It was in 1941 in his "Introduction" to the Emendation of the Ch'ü Tz'u that he first gave hint of his new concept of the role of the classical scholar. He felt that the scholar should do three things - "explain the background", "elucidate the meaning" and "emend the text". 

This first point, "explain the background", really amounted to the investigation of the social background of literature. This was a new concept for classical scholars, though in many popular writings of the post-Revolutionary era (those of Hu Shih and Ch'en Tu-hsiu et al.) there was a clear trend in the direction of a

sociological view of Chinese literary history.

As it happened, most of Wen's writings on the classics consisted only of "elucidating the meaning" and "emending the text". He was not to find time to "explain the background" in serious academic writing. The new history of Chinese literature which he was planning to write was only in rudimentary draft at the time of his death. From 1943 onwards, frequent articles in semi-academic and popular journals bore witness to the great changes in Wen's thinking over these fateful years. In all these articles, he tried to interpret literature as a social phenomenon, and, from these studies to make deductions about the contemporary and future state of literature in China.

With his severe training in classical studies, in philology and paleography etc., with his knowledge of Western literature and criticism and his new interest in theoretical disciplines, Wen was admirably equipped to make a valuable contribution to Chinese literary history. His untimely death left this task unfinished.

3. Conclusion

But unfinished tasks, while they testify to good intentions, cannot be regarded as abiding contributions to human knowledge. In the final analysis, Wen's contribution to scholarship must be his contribution to classical scholarship in the orthodox tradition of late Ch'ing scholarship. This tradition had already been out-dated
by twentieth century sophistication, and by the introduction of
the techniques of Western criticism. Thus while Wen's
contribution to this tradition was certainly distinguished, it was
fundamentally reactionary.

PART C: WEN, A POLITICAL FIGURE

1. Wen's Political Thought

Wen I-to cannot be regarded as a political philosopher, for
his political thought was naive and unsystematic. Three distinct
trends of thought can be distinguished, all of them mutually
contradictory.

(1) American-influenced liberal idealism - the desire for
"democracy" and for democratic rights (e.g. freedom of speech,
of belief, of congregation and of association). These ideas
were obviously deeply ingrained and unquestioned. Wen seems
never to have doubted that a democratic society should be the
ultimate political goal. These liberal ideals were the basis
of Wen's support for the platform of the Democratic League,
which organization was devoted to campaigning for civil rights.

(2) Left-wing idealism - romantic idealism typical of the
intellectual climate of the May Fourth era in which Wen had
grown up. This thought was characterised by romantic preoccupation with "Rebellion", "Freedom", and "Revolution", and especially by romanticization of "Youth".

(3) Left-wing radicalism - a new and radical Marxist-orientated view of Chinese society arising from his historical and literary studies. These ideas were very naive when compared with the sophistication of Marxist writers such as Ch'en Tu-hsiu, Li Ta-chao, Kuo Mo-jo and Mao Tse-tung.

2. Wen's Political Action

In late 1944, Wen became a member of the newly formed Democratic League. For this organization he worked diligently and devotedly; in the last months of his life, much of his time was taken up by his activities in connection with the League. Wen held a number of offices in the League - member of the editorial board for the League's organ in Kunming, member of the Yunnan provincial branch committee and later a member of the Central Executive Committee. Despite his holding these offices, it would seem that Wen was not a very powerful figure in the League hierarchy, mainly because he was not a member of any of the constituent parties in the League. The constituent parties were, as we have seen in Chapter VIII, not really compatible. For this reason, political power within the League was wielded by the leaders of the various constituent groups to whom fell the task of preserving the delicate balance of power between conflicting interests.
3. Conclusions

As a political thinker Wen I-to was a combination of liberal idealist and naive Marxist; as a political functionary he held comparatively minor posts in a party which had little real power. Yet perusal of the telegrams of condolence, the obituaries and the newspaper editorials on Wen's death contained in Jen-min Ying-lieh indicate that Wen I-to was a political figure of great importance. There are two main reasons why Wen I-to, despite his limitations as a political thinker and as a political functionary, was able to become a significant personality of the Chinese political scene.

The first was Wen's position in the community as a scholar and teacher. For Wen was a scholar of renowned distinction in a country where scholarship was traditionally regarded as a necessary qualification for political leadership. True, Wen's conclusions on the nature of Chinese society were neither original nor thorough. But as Wen himself remarked, through his many years of scholarship he had gained the "authority" with which to criticise Chinese society. Furthermore, the example of a middle-aged, withdrawn scholar forsaking the peace of his study for the harsh world of political action impressed on intellectuals and the community at large the need for responsible political action by people of conscience.

12. Ibid., Vol. III, Section keng, p. 53.
Wen was also a teacher, and as a teacher in the Chinese context, he was in a position to exert a considerable influence on public opinion. His students admired his erudition; they also respected him as one of the most significant figures of the New Poetry movement.

The second reason for Wen's influence as a political figure lay in the nature of Wen's own personality. Romantic, poetic, scholarly and outspoken, all who met him could not fail to be impressed by the strength of his personality. He was an excellent public speaker who could hold any audience in rapt attention. He was above all a man of great personal integrity and honesty, and was universally recognised as such. In those days of massive government and private corruption, Wen's personal integrity won him the affection, trust, respect and adoration of students, colleagues and the community at large. For this reason, both his living example and his martyrdom had wide political repercussions.

PART D: PROBLEM OF INTERPRETATION

In the foregoing sections we have reviewed Wen I-to's contribution to Chinese life in his three roles - as a poet, as a scholar and as a political figure. These three roles were more or less consecutive eras in Wen's life. Any biography of Wen should attempt to explain the reasons for the two major changes in Wen's
life, the change from poet to scholar, and the change from scholar to political figure.

Wen's change from scholar to political figure is not hard to explain. Clearly the peculiar conditions of wartime China forced Wen to rethink his ideological position. The reason for Wen's change from poet to scholar is much more difficult to interpret. The real circumstances for Wen's decision for the scholarly life will probably never be adequately explained, for this period is not well documented. Moreover, Wen's retrospective statements on the matter have tended to confuse the issue. In a letter to the poet Tsang K'e-chia in 1943 Wen wrote: "Don't you know that I hate those "piles of old papers" as much as any man? But it is just because I hate them that I feel I must attempt to understand them. You have done me wrong when you called me a bookworm. You do not understand that I am the incense that kills bookworms. Though the two are both hidden among books, their purposes are different." In a speech to the students of Lien-ta he gave similar reasons for his study of the classics. "I read these books", he said, "because I wanted to excise their sores and point out their evils, not because I wanted to worship them." To my mind, these two statements are rationalizations made necessary by Wen's changed ideology in the late war years.

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13. Ibid., Vol. III, Section keng, p. 54.
For the only contemporary evidence of Wen's decision to devote himself to studying the classics, Wen's letter to Jao Meng-k'an in September 1933, shows a very different motivation from that described above. Wen wrote to Jao:

"That I have been unwilling to write to you is firstly because I was afraid to stir up the bitter memories of these last few years, and secondly because I felt that I should not blubber stupidly and sentimentally in front of a friend - it would only make that friend unhappy. In other words, the reason why I have been so unhappy of late is that I have discovered my own failing, a most fundamental failing. I cannot adjust to my environment. Because of this I cannot take the path of the extrovert; I must take the introverted path. On this introverted path I can find great peace, and thus I have proved that on the introverted path I can discover hope" [15]

By the "introverted path", Wen went on to explain, he meant classical scholarship. This was not the statement of a man whose aim in studying classical texts was to "excise their sores and point out their evils", though this indeed seems to have become his eventual aim. It was the testimony of one who could no longer face the world and was seeking solace, in the traditional Chinese manner, in scholarship.

As far as one can conclude on the slight evidence available, there were three main reasons for Wen's forsaking poetry for scholarship. On the negative side, there was his disillusionment with politics and secondly his disillusionment with literary politics. His venture into political action had led him to the support of groups which in the context of the Chinese Revolution had become reactionary. Wen's involvement in literary politics was also

disturbing, for by his insistence on the separation of literature and politics, he again identified himself with reactionary social forces. On the other hand, the Left wing (particularly the Communists) had come to be identified with democratic idealism and nationalism, but Wen's education and upbringing had been such that he was unable to accept the Communist solution. Hence Wen was faced with a nasty dilemma, from which he chose to escape.

On the positive side, one must see the influence of Wen's nationalistic pride. The humiliations Wen had suffered in America and realization of the humiliations which China as a nation had suffered at the hands of the Westerners, had led Wen, defensively, to seek to glorify China's past and reassert the values of the "national culture". Wen had intended on his return from America to study and promote Chinese native art; that he eventually turned to reinterpretation of classical literature reflected only his shift in interest from art to literature. His desire to reassert the "national heritage" remained the same.

Through the different phases of Wen's life, the underlying force was always the impetus of his nationalist feeling. From patriotic poet, to classical scholar, to revolutionary, each phase was a self-conscious response to what Wen felt to be the call of patriotism. The exact nature of Wen's response, and his appreciation of the call of patriotism, were conditioned by his upbringing, his education, his experience and his individual personality. Insofar as he shared

with other writers of the day similar upbringing (class origin), education and experience, his response to the call of nationalism was typical of that of an important group among Chinese intellectuals, the Western educated liberals. For this reason, it is hoped that examination of the biography of Wen I-to might prove instructive in the understanding of intellectual trends in modern China.
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Glossary

"Ai Lien Shuo" 愛蓮說
An-fu Chii-lo-pu 安福俱樂部
Ahnwei 安徽
Anyang 安陽
Cha Liang-chao 查良釗
Chahar 察哈爾
"Ch'an-hui" 懺悔
Chang Chia-sen (Chang Chii-nai) 張嘉森，張君勵
Chang Hadzeh-liang 張學良
Chang Lan (Chang Piao-fang) 張瀾，張表方
Chang Shih-chao 章士釗
Chang Tso-lin 張作霖
Chang Tzu-p'ing 張資平
"Ch'ang-ch'eng Hsia chih Ai-ko" 長城下之哀歌
Chao Ou-pei (Chao I) 趙區北，趙翼
Chao T'ai-mou 趙太侔
Chao Yfian-jen 趙元任
che-li shih 哲理詩
chen-ming t'ien-tzu 貞命天子
Ch'en Heng-che 陳衡哲
Ch'en Hadzeh-chao 陳學昭
Ch'en Meng-chia 陳夢家
Ch'en-pao 晨報
Ch'en Tu-hsiu 陳爍秀
Ch'en Tzu-ang 陳子昂
Ch'en Yüan (Ch'en Hsi-ying) 陳源，陳西濰
Cheng Chen-to 鄭振鐸
Cheng-chih Hsieh-shang Hui-i 政治協商會議
Cheng-chih Ta-haeh 政治大學
Cheng-li Kuo-ku 整理國故
Cheng Po-ch'i 鄭伯奇
Ch'eng Fang-wu 成仿吾
"Ch'i-chi" 奇蹟
Ch'i Chün-tzu 七君子
chia-tsu 家族
Chia-yin Chou-k'an 甲寅週刊
Chiang Kai-shek (Chiang Chung-cheng) 蔣介石，蔣中正
Chiang Kuang-tz'u (Chiang Kuang-ch'ih) 蔣光慈，蔣光赤
chiao-yü chiu kuo 教育救國
chieh-ts'ou 節奏
Chien-an 建安
"Chien-hsia" 劍匣
Chien-lung 乾隆
Ch'ien Hsüan-t'ung 錢玄同
Ch'ien Tsung-pao 錢宗堡
Ch'ien Tuan-sheng 錢端升
Chin-ning 晉寧
Chin Sheng-t'àn 金聖歎
chin-t'i shih 近體詩
Ch'in 左
ching-mi ti kuan-ch'a 精密的觀察
"Ching-sheng" 芬生
"Ching Yeh" 靜夜
Ching-yeh Hsun-pao 競業旬報
Ch'ing 清
ch'ing 輕
Ch'ing-nien Tsa-chih 青年雜誌
Ch'ing Shih Pieh-tse 清詩別裁
Chou 週
Chou Tso-jen 周作人
ch'ou-hsiang ti t'i-mu yung chü-t'i ti hsieh-fa 抽象的題目
用具體的寫法
Chu Hsiang 朱湘
Chu Ta-nan 朱大楠
Chu Tzu-ch'ing 朱自清
"Ch'u-hai ko" 除夕歌
Ch'u T'u-nan 楚圖南
Ch'u Tz'u 楚辭
"Ch'u Tz'u Chiao-pu" 楚辭校補
Chuang-tzu 莊子
Ch'uang-tao Chi-k'ao 創造季刊
Ch'uang-tao She 創造社
Ch'uang-tao Y'heh-k'ao 創造月刊
Ch'un Ch'iu 春秋
Ch' un Shui

"Ch' un Wang"

Chung-hs'eh wei t'ei, Hsi-hs'eh wei yung 中學為體 西學為用
Chung-hua Ch' ian-kuo Wen-i-chieh K' ang-ti Hsieh-hui 中華全國文藝
界抗敵協會

Chung-hua wen-hua ti kuo-chia chu-i 中華文化的國家主義
Chung-kuo Chih-yeh Chiao-yü She 中國職業教育社
Chung-kuo Ch' ing-nien 中國青年
Chung-kuo Ch' ing-nien Tang 中國青年黨
Chung-kuo Hsiang-ts'un Chien-she Hsieh-hui 中國鄉村建設協會
Chung-kuo Je 中國熱
Chung-kuo Min-chu Cheng-t' uan T'a-t' ung-meng 中國民主政團大同盟

Chung-kuo Min-chu Chiu-kuo Hui 中國民主救國會
Chung-kuo Min-chu She-hui Tang 中國民主社會黨
Chung-kuo Min-chu T' ung-meng 中國民主同盟

chü 句
Chü-k' an 虐刊
chü-wei 句尾
chü 曲
chü-sheng 去聲
Ch'i.an Hsieh P' ien 勸學篇
Ch'i.an-kuo ko-chieh Chiu-kuo Lien-ho Hui 全國各界救國聯合會
Ch'i.an T' ang Shih 全唐詩

Ch'i.hieh-chü 絕句
Ch'i.hieh-wu 覺悟
君子

Erh Ya 竟雅

Erh Yüeh Lu 二月盧

"Erh Yüeh Lu Man-chi" 二月盧漫記

"Fa-hsien" 發現

Fan Ching-sheng (Fan Yuan-lien) 范靜生, 范源濂

Fan Hsing 繁星

fang-k'uai shih 方塊詩

Fang Pao 方苞

Fei Hsiao-t'ung 費孝通

feng-fu ti ts'ai-liao 輔富的材料

Feng Hsiuh-feng 馮雪峯

Feng I 馮夷

Feng Yü-hsiang 馮玉祥

fu-ku 復古

fu-tsa ti kan-ch'ing 複雜的感情

hai-p'ai 海派

Han 漢

Hangchow Pei-hua Pao 杭州白話報

hao 號

Heng-yang 衡陽

Ho-hua Ch'ih-p'an 荷花池畔

Honan 河南

Hopeh 河北

"Hsi-an" 西岸

Hsi Chou 西周
Hsi-ho 義和
"Hai-i Ko" 洗衣歌
hsi-li 洗禮
Hsi-nan Lien-ta 西南聯大
Hsi-nan Ts'ai-feng Lu 西南采風錄
Hsi-shui 湖水
Hsia-pa-ho Chen 下巴河鎮
"Hsiang-ke i-ts'eng Chih" 相隔一層紙
"Hsiang-ssu" 相思
hsiang-ssu tzu 相思子
hsiao 孝
hsiao shih 小詩
hsien 縣
Hsien an-nei, hou jang wai 先安內，後攘外
"Hsien-tai Chung-kuo She-hui yu Ke-ming Wen-hsueh" 現代中國社會與革命文學
Hsien-tai P'ing-lun 現代評論
Hsin Ch'ao 新潮
Hsin Ch'ing-nien 新青年
hsin-hsien 心弦
Hsin Shen Pao 新申報
Hsin Sau-chün Shih-chien 新四軍事件
Hsin-yüeh She 新月社
Hsin-yüeh Shu-tien 新月書店
Hsin-yüeh Yüeh-k'an 新月月刊
Hsing Shih Chou-pao 醒獅週報
Hsing Shih She
hsiu-ts'ai
Hsiung Fo-hsi
Hsü Chih-mo
hsüeh-ch'ao
Hsüeh-heng Tsa-chih
Hu Hsien-su
Hu-p'an
Hu Shih
"Hu-tieh"
"Huang-hun"
Huang K'an
Huang T'ing-chien
Huang Tsun-hsien
"Huang Ts'un"
Huang Tzu-chien
"Hui-ku"
Hung Chu
Hung Shen
Hung Shui
"Hung-tou"
Huo K'uei-chang
Hupeh
Hupeh Nü-tzu Shih-fan Hsüeh-t'eng
I Ching
"I Ch'ing"
"I Chi Hua" 一句話
I-erh-i Yün-tung 一運動
"I Hsiao" 一笑
"I Nien" 一念
I-shu Chuan-k'o Hsueh-hsiao 藝術專科學校
"I-shu ti Chung-ch' en" 藝術底忠臣
I-shu wei i-shu 藝術為藝術
Jao Meng-k' an 饒孟侃
Jen Hung-chün (Jen Shu-yung) 任鴻雋，任叔永
"Jen-li-ch'e-fu" 人力車夫
"Jen-min ti Wu" 人民的舞
ju-sheng 入聲
Jui-chin 瑞金
K' ang Yu-wei 康有為
Kao I-han 高一涵
Kao Hsiao-chen 高孝貞
Kao-shen ti li-hsiaog髙深的理想
Kiangsi 江西
ko-lü p'ai 格律派
"K'ou hung" 口供
Ku Chieh-kang 顧韜剛
"Ku-erh Haing" 孤兒行
"Ku yen" 孤雁
Ku Yu-hsiu (Ku I-ch'iao) 顧毓琇，顧一樵
Kuan Lin-cheng 關麟徵
K'uang-jen Jih-chi 狂人日記
K' un-hua Chung-hsüeh
Kung-an p'ai
kung-tso tui-hsiang
Kung-yen Pao
Kunming
kuo-chia chu-i
Kuo-chia She-hui Tang
Kuo-fang Ts'an-i Hui
Kuo-fang Wen-hsüeh
Kuo-hun She
kuo-ku
Kuo-li
Kuo-li Changsha Lin-shih Ta-hsüeh
Kuo-li Chung-yang Ta-hsüeh
Kuo-li Hsin-nan Lien-ho Ta-hsüeh
Kuo-li Pei-ching Nü-tzu Shih-fan Ta-hsüeh
Kuo-li Wuhan Ta-hsüeh
Kuo-min Chün
Kuo-min Chüan
Kuo-min Ts'an-cheng Hui
Kuo Mo-jo
"Kuo-shou"
kuo-yü
Kweilin
Kweiyang
Lao Nai-hsüan
Lao Ts'an Yu-chi 老總遊記
"Lao Ya" 老鴉
Lei Hai-tsung 雷瀚宗
Liu 李
Li Chi-t'ung 李繼侗
Li Chieh-san 力捷三
Li Hung-chang 李鴻章
Li Kung-p'u 李公樸
Li-lun shih 理論詩
Li Po 李白
"Li Po Chih Sau" 李白之死
Li Sao 郎騏
Li Shang-yin 李商隱
Li Ta-chao 李大釗
Li Tsung-huang 李宗黃
Li Yu (Li Li-weng) 李漁 李笠翁
Liang Ch'i-ch'ao 梁啓超
Liang Shih-ch'iu 梁實秋
Liang Shu-ming 梁漱溟
Liao Chai Chih I 聊齋志異
Lin Hsü 林旭
Lin Shu (Lin Ch'in-nan) 林紳 林琴南
Lin Tse-hsü 林則徐
Ling Shu-hua 凌叔華
Liu Chao-chi 劉兆吉
Liuchow 柳州
Liu Fu (Liu Pen-nung) 劉復, 劉半農
liu-hsueh-sheng 留學生
Liu Kuang-ti 劉光弟
liu-Mei hsueh-sheng 留美學生
Liu Meng-wei 劉夢華
Liu Shih-p'ei 劉師培
Liu Ta-k'uei 劉大樞
Lo Lung-chi 羅隆基
Lo-yin 烙印
Loyang 洛陽
Lu Chih-wei 陸志韜
Lu Hsün (Chou Shu-jen) 魯迅,周樹人
Lu Kan-chang 陸贄章
Lu Yu 陸游
Lukow Ch'iao Shih-pien 盧溝橋事變
Lung Yun 龍雲
Lu-Ou Kung-jen Chiu-kuo T'uan 旅歐工人救國團
lù shíh 律詩
Ma Chih-yüan 馬致遠
"Man Chiang Hung" 滿江紅
Manchoukuo 滿洲國
Mao Tse-tung 毛澤東
Mao Tun 茅盾
Mei I-ch'i 梅贻琦
Mei Kuang-ti (Mei Chin-chuang) 梅光迪, 梅觀莊
Meng Chiao 孟郊
Meng-ch'uang 夢窗
Mengtz 蒙自
Miao 苗
Min-chu Chou-k'ěn 民主週刊
Min-chu T'ung-meng 民主同盟
min-tsu ke-ming chan-cheng ti ta-chung wen-hsüeh 民族革命戰爭
d的文宣文學
Ming 明
"Nan-hai Chih Shen" 南海之神
Nankai Ta-hsüeh 南開大學
Nan-she 南社
nei-jung 內容
"Ni k'ān" 你看
"Ni mo Yüan wo" 你莫怨我
"Nien-p'ü" 年譜
Nü Shen 女神
"O" 餓
pa-ku-wen 八股文
pa-pu-chu-i 八不主義
pai-hua 白話
Pai-hua Pao 白話報
Pan-keng 盤庚
P'an Kuang-tan 潘光旦
P'an Mo-hua 潘漠華
P'an Ta-k'uei 潘大逵
Pei-ching Kuo-chia Chu-i T'uan-t'i Lien-ho-hui

Pei Sung 北宋
"P'ing-yu" 朋友
"Pi-li-shan t'ou Chan wang" 筆立山頭展望
p'ien-tzu...騙子

Ping Hsin (Hsieh Wan-ying) 冰心, 謝婉瑩

P'ing 平
P'ing pen Hsieh-nien Chou-k'an li ti Hsin Shih 評本學年週刊
平的新詩
平聲
普及
普通話
溥儀
"San Hsien" 三絃
"San ko fan-shen-lun che" 三個沉神論者

San Tzu Ching 三字經
san-wen shih 蔻文詩
"Se-ts'ai" 色彩

Sheng 商
shang-sheng 上聲

Shanghai 上海
Shantung 山東

Shao-nien Chung-kuo Hsieh-hui 少年中國學會

Shao-nien Chung-kuo Tzu-ch'iang Hui 少年中國自強會

Shen Hsieh 沈學
Shen Te-ch’ien 沈德潛
Shen Ts’ung-wen 沈從文
Shen Yin-mo 沈尹默
Shensi 陝西
shih 詩
shih chieh ke-ming 詩界革命
Shih Ching 詩經
Shih-k’an 詩刊
Shih-shih Hsin-pao 時事新報
shih-tai ti ku-shou 時代的鼓手
Shih-tao fan-ch’ang; jen-hsin pu ku 世道反常；人心不古
Sian Shih-pien 西安事變
"Ssu" 死
Ssu-shu 四書
Ssu Shui 死水
Sun Yat-sen (Sun Chung-shan) 孫中山
Sung 宋
Ta-chiang Chi-k’an 大江季刊
Ta-chiang Hui 大江會
Ta Shen-chou Hui 大神洲會
"T’a" 他
T’ai-shan 泰山
"T’ai-yang Yin" 太陽吟
T’an Ssu-t’ung 譚嗣同
Tang-tai P’ing-lun 當代評論
T’ang 唐
Teng Yen-ta 鄧演達
Ti San Fang-mien 第三方面
Ti San Tang 第三黨
Ti-ssu Chung-shan Ta-hsueh 第四中山大學
t'i-kao 提高
"T'ien-an Men" 天安門
T'ien Chien 田間
"T'ien Ching-sha" 天津沙
T'ien Han (T'ien Shou-ch'ang) 田漢, 田壽昌
t'ou-tzu 偷子
Ts'ai Hsi-yung 蔡錫勇
Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei 蔡元培
Tseng K' e-chia 藏克家
Ts'ang Hui Shih Cha-chi 藏室始記
Ts'ao-erh 草兒
tse 灰
Tseng Chao-lun 曾昭抡
Tseng Kuo-fan 曾國藩
Tsing Hua Chou-k'an 清華週刊
Tsing Hua Hsueh-hsiao 清華學校
Tsing Hua Hsueh-pao 清華學報
Tsing Hua Ta-hsueh 清華大學
Tsing Hua Wen-hsueh she 清華文學社
Tsingtso Ta-hsueh 青島大學
Tso-ti Tso-chia Lien-meng 左翼作家聯盟
tou-fu kan-k'uai 豆腐乾塊
Tu Fu 杜甫
Tu-ho 渡河
t'u-fei 土匪
Tung Chung-shu 董仲舒
Tung-yeh 冬夜
T'ung-ch'eng 桐城
tzu 字
tzu-ch'iang 自強
tzu-jan ti yin-chieh 自然的音節
tz'u 詞
Wang Chao 王照
Wang Ching-chih 汪靜之
Wang Ching-hsüan 王敬軒
Wang K'ai-yün 王闓運
Wang Mei-fu 王梅甫
Wang Ping-yao 王炳耀
"Wang-tiao T'a"忘掉她
Wang Tu-ch'ing 王獨清
Wang Wei 王維
Wei 魏
Wen Chan-min 聞展民
Wen Chia-su 聞家騏
Wen-hsüeh 文選
Wen-hsüeh Fu-k'an 文學副刊
wen-hsüeh ke-ming 文學革命
Wen-hsüeh Yen-chiu Hui 文學研究會
Wen I-to (Wen I-to, Wen Yu-san, Wen Yu-shan)聞一多,聞亦多,聞友三,聞友山
Wen i tsai tao 文以載道
Wen Li-ho 聞立鶴
Wen Li-p'eng 聞立鵬
Wen Li-tiao 聞立鷹
Wen Li-ying 聞立瑛
Wen Tan-ch'en 聞丹臣
"Wen Tz'u" 文辭
Wen Wen-hui 聞聞翅羽
Wen Wen-ming 聞聞名
wen-yen 文言
"Wo Shih Chung-kuo-jen" 我是中國人
"Wo yao hui-lai" 我要回來
"Wu-ch' an Chieh-chi Ke-ming yu Wen-hua" 無產階級革命與文化
Wu Ching-ch'ao 吳景超
Wu Han 吳晗
Wu-hsü wei-hsin 戊戌維新
Wu Mi 吳宓
Wu P'ei-fu 吳佩孚
Wu-sau Yün-tung 五四運動
Wu Wen-ying (Wu Meng-chuang) 吳文英, 吳夢窗
Wuchang 武昌
Wusih Pai-hua Pao 無錫白話報
Wusung 吳淞
yang-chuang yulan 洋狀元
Yang Hu-ch'eng 楊虎城
Yang-p'ing 陽平
Yang Tzu-hui 楊子惠
Yao-meng 姚夢
Yao Nai 姚彌
Yen Fu 延福
Yenan 延安
Yin-p'ing 陰平
Ying Hsiu-jen 應修人
"Ying-kai" 應該
Yo Fei 岳飛
Yu-hsueh Ch'iung-lin 童學瓊 林
Yu Kuo-en (Yu Tse-ch'eng) 湯國恩, 湯澤承
Yunnan 雲南
Yu Keng-yü 于慶虞
Yu P'ing-po 俞平伯
Yu Shang-yüan 余上沅
Yu Ssu 語絲
Yu Ta-fu 郁達夫
Yuan 元
Yuan Chi 阮籍
Yuan Fu-li 阮復禮
Yuan-nei 園內
Yuan Shih-k'ai 阮世凱
Yueh-fu 樂府
死水

這清不爽
是風如性
一吹多積
許罐讓菌
讓龜小又
那也如又
這這不看

清不養
絕起些的
要出鑽蒸
一似變花
絕上耐叫
絕是醜點

水，漬
幾一出
綠白大敗
碎鮮樹歌
死所開世
水，明，嘔
酒，沫，珠，破。
靜夜

這夜要受罰我但靜

這夜要受罰我但靜

壁窗來白裹息平聲咒賠

四親親潔懷和歌詠賠

白友陣一在康渾感變受

光椅香貞接太夜動上石

燈詠紙杯兒我靜顫馬能

這的的茶小道的裏聲不

光良書的的報祕囁歌我

燈賢古好啣聲神候是夜！