

Does ‘Dominating’ Mean ‘Mainstream’? —Official Taiwan Literature in 1945–47

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When discussing mainstream literature, one has to think about questions such as the following: What is mainstream literature? What is the canon? What is the relationship between the two? Who has the authority to define such literature? Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) created the concept of the ‘literary field’ in order to scrutinize the structures in which agents compete over the right to define what literature is.¹ In a case study of 19th century French literary circles, Bourdieu outlines the social dynamics that are at work when different literary schools or groups, but also ideologies or business interests enter into a competition over the dominant position granted by what he terms ‘symbolic capital’. This is constituted by literary or academic prestige acknowledged by other agents of the same field. Bourdieu concludes that agents who occupy the dominant positions in the literary field also define the character of literature and the canon.

In Bourdieu’s analysis, the literary field can to some extent be distorted by commercial or political interests yet retains a semi-independent status. But what if it is not free of external influences but rather subject to political control? In that case we have to consider the wider picture and pay more attention to non-

1 Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, tr. and ed. by Randal Johnson (Cambridge: Polity Press; New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); id., *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, tr. by Susan Emanuel (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996).

literary agents. This applies to the study of early post-war literary circles in Taiwan (1945–49) which experienced strong interference from what Bourdieu calls the ‘field of power’. Consequently, Bourdieu’s principles cannot be applied *en bloc* to the Taiwanese situation.

The question of how to define Taiwanese culture and literature and their relationship with Chinese culture became a contested ideological issue.² The first few years after the war proved to be a crucial period because it was at this time that the official cultural policy frameworks for the nation building process were established. Beside the dominant agent(s) represented by institutions and individuals affiliated with the Taiwan Provincial Administrative Executive Office (*Taiwan sheng xingzheng zhangguan gongshu* 臺灣省行政長官公署), designated in this article as the ‘official line’, there were other agents who challenged these frameworks and strove to enforce their own definition of Taiwan literature. These competing definitions are beyond the scope of the present article.

When analyzing the early post-war literary field in Taiwan, it is important to realize that even though it only existed for a short while, it was not homogenous. Transformations in the structure of agents within the field and their relationship with the field of power in particular suggest that the period should be divided into two separate parts: from October 1945 till May 1947 and from May 1947 till April or May 1949.³ The first part was solely dominated by the official line. May 1947 was a crucial turning point when positions in the literary field underwent substantial changes. While the February 28th Incident (*Er-erba shijian* 二二八事件) in February 1947 was an important event with a huge influence on Taiwanese

- 2 The terms ‘Taiwan culture’ and/or ‘Taiwan literature’ are understood here as culture and literature to be produced in Taiwan and not as Taiwanese indigenous culture and literature. The reason for such understanding lays in the early post-war literary discourse, which, especially in the first years after retrocession, perceived literature produced in Taiwan as a part of Chinese literature, or even bigger structures as word literature, or literature defined by class. As an example may serve Yang Kui’s 楊逵 (1906–1985) concept of a ‘unit’ (*yi huan* 一環) consisting of Chinese and Taiwanese literatures; for further discussion see Huang Huizhen 黃惠禎, *Zuoyi pipan jingshen de duanjie: Siling niandai Yang Kui wenxue yu sixiang de lishi yanjiu* 左翼批判精神的鍛接：四〇年代楊逵文學與思想的歷史研究 [A Link of Leftist Critical Spirit: Historical Survey of Yang Kui’s Literature and Thought in the 1940s] (Taipei: Xiuewei zixun keji, 2009), 391.
- 3 The Incident of April 6 (*si liu shijian* 四六事件) is taken as one of the possible dates when white terror (*baise kongbu* 白色恐怖) period started in Taiwan. The Incident can be perceived as a climax of students mass protests that took place on the campuses of today’s National Taiwan University and National Taiwan Normal University. On May 19 1949 the government declared martial law, so it naturally can be understood as a start of authoritarian rule of Taiwan.

society, its aftermath had an even greater impact on the literary field. The institutions of the official line, which had occupied dominant positions, were dissolved or underwent substantial restructuring so that space was created for new agents to enter the scene. New definitions of Taiwan literature which deviated from the official line also emerged in the second half of the early post-war period. The discussion about the character of Taiwan literature in the *Qiao* 橋 (Bridge) supplement of the official newspaper *Taiwan xinsheng bao* 臺灣新生報 in late 1947 and 1948 can be taken as the most striking example of this development.⁴

This article will first introduce the agent(s) occupying dominant positions in Taiwan's literary field in 1945–47. Secondly, it will look closely at the definition of literature they propagated. The authority they used to reinforce their definition of Taiwan literature and culture was granted by their political affiliation and the definition itself was strongly influenced by contemporary ideological tenets. The third part of this article will analyse a volume of short stories called *Dragon Gate: A Collection of Fairy Tales*⁵ published in the series Library of Restoration (Guangfu wenku 光復文庫) which followed the dominant definition of literature to the letter but never became part of the mainstream of Taiwan literature.

The Official Line and its Cultural Policy

The official line is understood here as a structure consisting of official institutions and individuals affiliated with the Taiwan Provincial Administrative Executive Office which propagated cultural policies and participated in their implementation. According to Huang Yingzhe 黃英哲 (b1956),⁶ the institutions

4 See for example Xu Xiuhui 徐秀慧, *Zhan hou chuqi* (1945–1949)—*Taiwan de wenhua changyu yu wenxue sixiang chao* 戰後初期 (1945–1949)——臺灣的文化場域與文學思潮 [The Early Post-War Period (1945–49)—The Literary Field in Taiwan and Trends of Literary Thought] (Banqiao, Taipei: Daoxiang, 2007).

5 Yuan Shengshi 袁聖時, *Longmen tonghua ji* 龍門童話集 [Dragon Gate: Collection of Fairy Tales] (Taipei: Taiwan shudian, 1947. Guangfu wenku di ba zhong 光復文庫第八種 [The 8th Publication of the Restoration Library]).

6 Huang Yingzhe 黃英哲, »Zhan hou Lu Xun sixiang zai Taiwan de chuanbo (1945–49)« 戰後魯迅思想在台灣的傳播 [Promulgation of Lu Xun's Thought in Post-War Taiwan (1945–49)], in *Taiwan xin wenxue yu Lu Xun* 台灣新文學與魯迅 [New Literature in Taiwan and Lu Xun], ed. by Nakajima Toshirō 中島利郎 (Taipei: Qianwei, 1999), 149–177.

that were most influential in implementing the official cultural policy were the Committee for Propaganda (*Xuanchuan weiyuanhui* 宣傳委員會) and the Taiwan Provincial Editorial and Translation Bureau (*Bianyiguan* 編譯館). The former was responsible not only for the propagation of official regulations and the distribution of news, but also controlled the media and publishing industry. The latter, according to Huang, actively participated in cultural policies, formulated definitions of literature and (as will be discussed later) proposed a suitable literary canon for Taiwanese needs. The organizational chart of the official line's cultural institutions is shown in the end of this article. The three subordinate institutions had a rather independent leadership and answered to the Taiwan Provincial Administrative Executive Office.

One of the reasons why this article does not consider the representatives of the official line as independent agents and why they are not referred to as, e.g., the 'KMT line' is that all of them, though belonging to different political cliques and even parties, had close relationships with the Governor-General, Chen Yi 陳儀 (1883–1950), and thus can be understood as one single clique on Taiwan.⁷ Another argument for regarding them as one group is that during the major rearrangements of the literary field after the February 28th Incident in 1947, all of Chen Yi's collaborators were transferred to new posts and thus treated as members of one clique. Furthermore, the official line did not consist solely of

7 Zhengxuexi 政學系 originally was an independent political body that was founded in 1912 in Beijing by few members of the parliament. In 1927, when the Northern Expedition reached its peak and Chiang Kaishek (Jiang Jieshi 蔣介石, 1887–1975) consolidated his political position, he needed experienced politicians and he thus approached some of the Zhengxuexi members, who even became KMT members. Since then there can be traced a close relation between these two bodies. KMT members also affiliated with the Zhengxuexi are also called the Zhengxue clique. The group of Chen Yi's collaborators from Fujian was created when Chen Yi served as governor of Fujian province, where he wanted to implement some of his innovation in administration. After Taiwan's retrocession Chen Yi entrusted those people with governance of important institution in Taiwan as well. Chen Yi was a native from Zhejiang so that, unsurprisingly, a relatively high number of officials in his staff also hailed from Zhejiang. The last point, which is important when looking at the positions in Chen Yi's government, is that many of Chen Yi's collaborators, as Chen Yi himself, were educated in Japan. This brief introduction is based on Chen Cuilian 陳翠蓮, *Paixi douzeng yu quanmou zhengzhi: 228 beiju de ling yi mian* 派系鬥爭與權謀政治：二二八悲劇的另一面 [Clashes of Political Cliques and Political Tactics: The Other Side of the February 28th Tragedy] (Taipei: Shibao chubanshe, 1995), 216.

KMT members and was not the only KMT agent operating in Taiwan's cultural field.⁸ The term 'KMT', therefore, is not precise in this context.

Table 1 presents protagonists of the official line who held important offices in government institutions responsible for the implementation of cultural policies and lists their political affiliation. It demonstrates how the cultural field came under increasingly strong political influence between 1945 and 1947.

Chen Yi's political prestige and stable position, confirmed by the support of President Chiang Kai-shek, enabled his clique to implement cultural policies deriving from the Proposal for a Plan to Take Over Taiwan («Taiwan jieguan jihua gangyao» 臺灣接管計劃綱要) from 1940,⁹ which was drafted with the support of many of Chen Yi's later collaborators in Taiwan. The »Proposal«, in addition to addressing administrative and economic issues, emphasized the importance of the 'Three People's Principles' (*sanminzhu yi* 三民主義) as state ideology and the implementation of Chinese culture, including the state language (*guoyu* 國語), as core factors in the smooth integration of Taiwan. Both state ideology and Chinese culture were to be spread via education (either school education or adult education).¹⁰ The official line's cultural policy was concentrated around the two processes of 'sinicization' (*Zhongguobua* 中國化) and of 'decolonization' (*qu zhiminbua* 去殖民化), which was also called as 'cultural reconstruction' (*wenbua chongjian* 文化重建). These aimed at the propagation of 'Chinese [i.e. national] culture' (*Zhongguo wenbua* 中國文化) and a 'national spirit' (*minzu jingshen* 民族精神). These should replace the Japanese cultural legacy, which was understood as enslaving and poisonous. The process of 'cultural reconstruction' and the argumentation of the official line have received academic

8 For example the other newspaper *Zhonghua ribao* 中華日報 distributed all over Taiwan was controlled by another KMT clique challenging the authority of the official line.

9 Full text version is included in Zheng Zi 鄭梓, *Zhanhou Taiwan de jieshou yu chongjian: Taiwan xiandai shi yanjiu lunji* 戰後臺灣的接收與重建：臺灣現代史研究論集 [Post-War Taiwan's Takeover and Reconstruction: Essays on Modern Taiwanese History] (Taipei: Xinhua tushu gongsi, 1994), 265–274.

10 The importance of education is well documented in the issue of the official newspapers *Taiwan xinsheng bao* 臺灣新生報 which was used to announce and justify new policies, published five days after official take-over of Taiwan (October 30, 1945), where three articles discussed education in Taiwan on the very first page of the issue.

attention. Chen Cuilian¹¹ and especially Huang Yingzhe in his series of articles¹² and a monograph¹³ illustrate the official rhetoric and historic context of the early post-war period.

The official line had to define new norms for various cultural spheres in Taiwan and at the same needed to relate these spheres closely to Chinese culture. Such definitions reflect a binary opposition between the Mainland and Taiwan, where Taiwan was assigned an inferior position.

Defining Literature

The publication of certain types of literature and their definition according to the framework of the official line was part of the campaign to propagate Chinese culture. Since such a definition was reinforced by the dominant agent(s) in the literary field, it can be understood as a dominant definition of literature in the Taiwanese public sphere. In terms of its function, literature was subordinated to the goals of ‘cultural reconstruction’ and primarily understood as a medium to spread knowledge about China. The editorial of *Taiwan xinsheng bao*, Constructing New Culture in Taiwan (published only 12 days after Taiwan’s retrocession),

- 11 Chen Cuilian 陳翠蓮, «Quzhimin yu zaizhimin de duikang: yi 1946 nian “Taiwan nuhua” lunzhan wei jiaodian» 去殖民與再殖民的對抗：以一九四六年「臺灣奴化」論戰為焦點 [Opposition of De-Colonisation and New Colonization: Focused on the «Taiwan’s Enslavement» Debate in 1946], *Taiwan shi yanjiu* 臺灣史研究 9, 2 (2002), 145–201.
- 12 Huang Yingzhe 黃英哲, «Zhan hou chuqi Taiwan de wenhua chongbian (1945–1947): Taiwan ren “nuhua” le ma? 戰後初期臺灣的文化重編 (1945–1947)：臺灣人「奴化」了嗎? [Early Post-War (1945–1947) Taiwan Culture Restated: Were Taiwanese Being «Enslaved»?], in *Herwei Taiwan? Jindai Taiwan meishu yu wenhua rentong lunwenji* 何謂臺灣？近代臺灣美術與文化認同論文集 [What Is Called Taiwan? Collected Essays on Modern Taiwan’s Art and Cultural Identity], ed. by Xiongshi meishu yuekan she 雄師美術月刊社 (Taipei: Xingzhengyuan wenhua jianshe weiyuanhui, 1997), 330–342; Huang Ying-che [Huang Yingzhe], «Were Taiwanese Being “Enslaved”? The Entanglement of Sinization, Japanization, and Westernization», in *Taiwan Under Japanese Colonial Rule, 1895–1945*, ed. by Liao Ping-hui and David Der-wei Wang (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 312–325.
- 13 Huang Yingzhe, «*Qu Ribenbua*», «*Zai Zhongguobua*»: *Zhan hou Taiwan wenhua chongjian, 1945–1947* 「去日本化」「再中國化」：戰後臺灣文化重建, 1945–1947 [«De-Japanization» and «Repeated Sinicization»: Post-War Taiwan’s Cultural Reconstruction, 1945–1947] (Taipei: Maitian, Chengbang wenhua chuban, 2007).

introduces the topic of cultural reconstruction and proposes concrete means to achieve it:

When constructing the new Taiwanese culture, we hope that: 1) Chinese first-rate literature will be newly compiled and published [in Taiwan], 2) we will support Taiwanese cultural workers to visit China and the best Taiwanese students to study in China, 3) we will welcome Chinese writers to write in Taiwan and Chinese publishers to publish in Taiwan [...].¹⁴

From this quote it is obvious that the official line was more eager to favour the spread of Chinese literature than to support the production of literature by local writers. Taiwanese writers were expected to study China, to understand it and propagate its culture. Literature written by Taiwanese was not expected to fulfil other than social and educational functions.

Another editorial of the same periodical, *To Know This Country, to Know Taiwan*, is one among many articles emphasizing ‘national character’ as being clearly opposed to the Japanese cultural legacy. Japanese elements in Taiwanese culture are identified in the article as the cause of mutual alienation and misunderstanding. The editorial introduces a proposal to overcome problems arising from the alienation between the Mainland and Taiwan and, at the same time, also defines literature to be produced in Taiwan in terms of its content:

If we want to propagate knowledge about our country, we have to start with cultural education. Extended courses on national language, literature, history and geography should be common at each educational level. Textbooks, except authorized ones, should be written in simple language. In addition to books on history and geography and books focusing on common knowledge, there should be reading materials for ordinary people. Furthermore these should be complemented by commercials, visual art, photos, film, theatre, and radio broadcasts, or disseminated via other media, so that the Taiwanese countrymen receive important information about the history of the fatherland and its current situation.¹⁵

The editorial further propounds the idea that people from Mainland China and Taiwan should learn more about each other’s background and familiarize themselves with the native regions of the other group. This chimes in with Chen Yi’s particular emphasis on cultural assimilation as a means of integration. Literature was reduced to a purely educational function and put on the same level as other text or media that were supposed to spread the state language.

14 »Jianshe Taiwan xin wenhua« 建設臺灣新文化 [Constructing New Culture in Taiwan], editorial in *Taiwan xinsheng bao* 台灣新生報 Nov 6, 1945.

15 »Renshi benguo, renshi Taiwan« 認識本國·認識臺灣 [To Know This Country, to Know Taiwan], editorial in *Taiwan xinsheng bao* Dec 13, 1945.

Unsurprisingly, the Taiwan Provincial Editorial and Translation Bureau, which was founded in 1946, roughly one year later than the other cultural institutions, had precisely the same objectives: to endorse literature which would transmit knowledge about China and its culture and which would improve the mutual understanding between both regions. These two articles outline strategies for the use of literature in ‘cultural reconstruction’ and explain what it should include. From the articles a distinction emerges between high literature, which is expected to be from the Mainland, and writing for educational purposes. However, even high literature was not perceived as independent artistic entity with aesthetic value of its own but rather appreciated solely in terms of its social function.

When defining various cultural spheres in Taiwan, the official line often had recourse to explicit standards or models. For the literary models (or canon) we may look at the literature propagated by the Taiwan Provincial Editorial and Translation Bureau. The Bureau’s Group for Preparation of Reading Materials of the General Public (Shehui duwu zu 社會讀物組), prepared a series of publications for Taiwan—the so-called Library of Restoration.¹⁶ The 21 titles that they proposed for publication can be divided into the following groups: 1) works introducing Chinese classical and modern literature (history, selected literary writings, Chinese classics, and biographies of important literary figures); 2) works introducing Chinese popular tradition (folk songs, folk tales); 3) literature dedicated to the state language; 4) literature discussing and interpreting contemporary issues and political themes (World War II, interpretation of the Japanese colonial period in Taiwan, Taiwanese history, geography of China, introductions to the Three People’s Principles, and constitution); 5) works introducing science; 6) literature intended to improve cultural and social standards (e.g. on hygiene).

Only six out of 21 titles, comprising traditional and modern, but also high and popular works, were dedicated to literature as such and constituted a ‘canon’ of essentially Chinese books. Among highbrow writings were titles such as An Anthology of 150 texts of Traditional and Modern Literature (*Gujin wenxuan bai wushi pian* 古今文選百五十篇) and Simplified Interpretation of the Classics (*Jingdian qianshuo* 經典淺說). Within the limited time of its existence, however, the Taiwan Provincial Editorial and Translation Bureau managed to publish only the second title. Then there were also titles rooted in popular or folk culture, such as Anthology of Folk Songs (*Tongsu gequ ji* 通俗歌曲集) and Anthology of

16 The list of the publications is available in Huang Yinzhe, »*Qu Ribenbua*«, »*zai Zhongguobua*«, 102–104.

Chinese Stories (*Zhongguo gushi ji* 中國故事集). Out of the popular titles, the volume Dragon Gate: Collection of Fairy Tales (to be discussed later), which is situated between popular and high culture, was the only one that was actually published. Modern Chinese literature *per se* was represented only by one title dedicated to the figure and work of Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881–1936), which, however, was not published

The Library of Restoration shows an interesting phenomenon. From the editorials of *Taiwan xinsheng bao* and articles written by the director of the Taiwan Provincial Editorial and Translation Bureau, Xu Shouchang 許壽裳 (1883–1948),¹⁷ it is obvious that the culture to be introduced in Taiwan should be rooted in the legacy of the May Fourth Movement. The May Fourth Movement is known for its ostentatious refusal of tradition and traditional culture. But the canon that the Taiwan Provincial Editorial and Translation Bureau was planning to introduce hardly included any modern literature. This discrepancy can be understood in the light of the KMT's ambiguous attitude towards traditional culture, especially Confucianism, which served as a conceptual source for official rhetoric and propaganda. This ambivalence is embodied in the promotion of classical and traditional literature, which emphasized the legitimacy and antiquity of Chinese culture, features that were especially important in the post-war context when China was to find its position in the world. The highlighting of tradition was intended to prove the continuity of the Chinese literary tradition (a primordialist principle) and was on the front burner in post-war Taiwan. The legacy of the May Fourth Movement with its opposition against tradition and propagation of democracy and science was invoked in the early post-war discourse of the official line mainly in order to support nationalism and oppose foreign imperialism. Because of the previous Japanese presence, this was a crucial issue in Taiwan:

Everybody knows that in 1919 the May Fourth Movement eliminated the poison of feudalism that was accumulated throughout several thousand years and created a movement that advocated democracy and developed science. We may say that it was

17 For more information about Xu Shouchang in the early post-war scene see Huang Yingzhe, »Xu Shouchang yu Taiwan (1946–48): Jianlun Ererba qianxi Taiwan sheng xingzheng zhangguan gongshu de wenhua zhengce« 許壽裳與臺灣 (1946–48) : 兼論二二八前夕臺灣省行政長官公署的文化政策 [Xu Shouchang and Taiwan (1946–48): Taiwan Provincial Administrative Executive Office's Cultural Policy on the Eve of the February 28th Incident], in *Ererba xueshu yanjiu (1991)* 二二八學術研究論文集 (1991) [Scholarly Essays on the February 28th Incident (1991)], ed. by Ererba minjian yanjiu xiaozu 二二八民間研究小組 [Research Committee on the February 28th Incident] (Taipei: Zili wanbao wenhua chubanshu, 1992), 115–139.

perhaps the most important watershed in the modern history of China, which opened a new period. Even though not all of its aims have been achieved, the new destiny of our country started right there, and this is why its value is such high importance. I think that our Taiwan also needs a new May Fourth Movement in order to remove all of the Japanese poison, to propagate democracy and to develop science. Besides the goals of the May Fourth Movement, we should propagate and implement a sense of morality and spread nationalism. From the perspective of these claims, the value and mission of this new movement in comparison to previous ones is even bigger, more arduous, and more urgent!¹⁸

As mentioned above, one of the authors who was to be included in the Library of Restoration was Lu Xun. Even though this plan, however, never saw the light of day, it shows the importance of Lu Xun as a symbol of the May Fourth Movement.¹⁹ The year 1946 marked the 10th anniversary of Lu Xun's death and all important agents in the field competed to propagate interpretations of his legacy in various periodicals. One of the most prominent promoters of Lu Xun was Xu Shouchang who regarded him as an exemplary figure to be emulated in Taiwan, as he already was in China. Xu Shouchang was a direct participant of the Chinese new literature movement, a close friend of Lu Xun, and thus a personality with high prestige which was also acknowledged by the other agents in the field. He possessed the status that was necessary to provide an authoritative definition of Taiwan literature.

While early definitions of the official line were rather blurred and focused on didactic and social functions of literature, Xu Shouchang clearly identified Lu Xun's literary writing as the standard to follow. He appreciated several aspects of Lu Xun's work: his opposition to traditional society and literature, the promotion of progress and science, which was also the motto of May Fourth literature, and moreover the notion of nation and national awareness, which was one of the KMT's priorities.

Lu Xun was a warrior for national culture. He revealed the weak points of the national character [*minzuxing* 民族性] and pointed out the dark sides that still exist [in our society]. Being a solitary warrior, he opened up a new way of enlightenment

18 Xu Shouchang 許壽裳, »Taiwan xuyao yi ge xin de Wusi yundong« 臺灣需要一個新的五四運動 [Taiwan Needs a New May Fourth Movement], *Taiwan xinsheng bao* May 4, 1947.

19 For more information about reception of Lu Xun's thought and writings in the early post-war period see Huang Yingzhe, »Zhan hou Lu Xun sixiang zai Taiwan de chuanbo«, 149-177, and Shitamura Sakujirō 下村作次郎, »Zhan hou chuqi Taiwan wentan yu Lu Xun« 戰後初期台灣文壇與魯迅 [The Early Post-War Literary Scene and Lu Xun], in Nakajima, *Taiwan xin wenxue yu Lu Xun*, 122-145.

and of freedom for the wider population. Lu Xun, however, was a warrior for world culture as well and his books are recommended by the best writers of the world.²⁰

At the end of the same article, Xu Shouchang considered Lu Xun to be the symbol of the modern Chinese nation which is also worth following in Taiwan. This appeal was directed at Taiwanese readers:

Our Chinese nation is great because of Lu Xun, such a great figure and great thinker, appeared and strengthened our national self-confidence. We have to learn from Lu Xun! We have to learn from Lu Xun!²¹

The standard proposed by him and exemplified by Lu Xun's work and legacy did not, however, reflect specific features of early-post war Taiwan. It proves that the official line, including Xu Shouchang,²² envisioned Taiwan and its culture as part of China. Lu Xun could be understood as embodiment of the essence of modern Chinese literature.

Nonetheless, this standard did not solely exist on a theoretical level. Lu Xun was also imitated in actual literary writings. The next part of this article will analyse a publication that was supported by the Taiwan Provincial Editorial and Translation Bureau and that can serve as an example.

»Dragon Gate: A Collection of Fairy Tales« as Literature of the Official Line

Dragon Gate: A Collection of Fairy Tales was one of two publications which the Taiwan Provincial Editorial and Translation Bureau published with the official publishing house Taiwan shudian 台灣書店. According to plans by the Taiwan Provincial Editorial and Translation Bureau this collection that falls outside the category of high literature was dedicated to children. The author, Yuan Shengshi 袁聖時 (also known as Yuan Ke 袁珂, 1916–2001), was at that time an employee of the Taiwan Provincial Editorial and Translation Bureau. Later he migrated back to China and became a researcher at the Sichuan Institute of Sociology and the head of the Chinese Myth Research Society.

The collection consists of eight short stories, which are thematically derived from Chinese popular stories or myths. These short stories are not, as one would suspect, old stories rewritten in an accessible style for children in order to

20 Xu Shouchang, »Lu Xun de renge he sixiang« 鲁迅的人格和思想 [Lu Xun's Character and Thought], *Taiwan wenhua* 臺灣文化 2, 1 (Jan 1st, 1947), 1.

21 Xu Shouchang, »Lu Xun de renge he sixiang«, 3.

22 Xu Shouchang, »Lu Xun de jingshen«, *Taiwan wenhua* 1,2 (Nov 1st, 1946), 2–4; id., »Lu Xun de renge he sixiang«, 1–3; id., »Taiwan xuyao yi ge xin de Wusi yundong«.

propagate the Chinese cultural heritage; they are, rather, new stories loosely inspired by well-known narratives. The author transforms the structure of the original stories. These authorial ‘intrusions’ create a new space where new meanings are constructed, which, viewed from a conventional understanding of the original stories, appear unfamiliar and reveal the ideological influences on the author’s motivation.

To demonstrate the author’s interventions in narrative structures in order to convey a new meaning, we can take two short stories as examples. For the first one, *Kuafu and his People*,²³ Yuan Shengshi took his inspiration from the Book of Mountains and Seas (*Shanbaijing* 山海經) of which he produced an annotated edition.²⁴ The original story introduces a giant, Kuafu, who out of arrogance decides to chase the sun and thus runs from the east to the west. Following the sun makes him thirsty and even though he drinks all the water in the Yellow River, the Wei River, and a huge lake, he dies of thirst and fails to catch up with the sun.

Yuan Shengshi’s short story deviates from this sujet, de-constructs symbolic meanings related to the main protagonist and adds some new ones of his own. Kuafu is a leader who guided his people out of the Kingdom of Darkness (*Anming guo* 闇冥國), which is situated in a cave. The new sujet employs gradation represented by three different obstructions preventing Kuafu and his people to meet the Sun. When overcoming these obstructions, some of the people leave Kuafu. In the end Kuafu is left alone on his pilgrimage, and because of his desire to approach the Sun, he is burnt to death. The story is concluded by a speech of the omnipresent narrator, who further clarifies that from the face of Kuafu’s burnt corpse emanates contentment, because his sacrifice became a foundation for humankind’s further development. People commemorate Kuafu as a seeker of ‘light’ (*guangming* 光明), but as the narrator reminds us, these words are also synonyms to ‘truth’ (*zhenli* 真理). The narrator thus concludes that the progress of mankind (*renlei* 人類) is founded on the legacy of Kuafu—the seeker of truth.

Kuafu, in comparison to the original story, is not characterized as a conceited person who moreover destroys everything on his way, but quite the opposite, as a hero who is ready to sacrifice his own life for an ideal. Even though Kuafu travels to meet sun rays, in the end we learn that he was a ‘light seeker’ (*guangming de xunqiu zhe* 光明的尋求者) and his pilgrimage is a symbolic one

23 »Kuafu he ta de zimin« 夸父和他的子民, in *Longmen: tonghua ji*, 1–9.

24 See *Shanbaijing jiaoyi* 山海經校譯 [The Classic of the Mountains and the Sea, Collated and Translated], ed. by Yuan Ke (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1985), 201.

leading from ‘darkness’ to ‘light’, from ignorance to knowledge, from an underdeveloped to a developed stage. One of the most important ideas of the short story is its unexpected turn toward national pride, which is foisted on the reader by the narrator who emphasizes the legacy of this Chinese legendary figure to all of mankind.

From this perspective, the short story Kuafu and his People meets the definition of Taiwan literature propagated by the official line: there is an obvious connection to the vocabulary of the May Fourth Movement embodied in the symbolic oppositions of dark vs. light and ignorance vs. knowledge. The journey from a primitive stage to more developed conditions points to an oversimplified understanding of evolutionary theory, which was also popular in the May Fourth era. The short story contains a strong emphasis on the need for enlightenment, which the official line saw as a priority in the process of ‘cultural reconstruction’. It also nourished national pride and awareness, which was in accordance with the framework of the official line.

The second example of originally traditional story, rewritten by Yuan Shengshi, also displays a very straightforward resemblance with the May Fourth legacy. The short story *The Duke of She Encounters a Dragon*²⁵ is based on the proverb ‘The Duke of She likes dragons’ (*She gong hao long* 葉公好龍), which is derived from *Xin xu* 新序, a collection of anecdotes edited by Liu Xiang 劉向 (77 BCE–6 CE).²⁶ The original story introduces a historical figure, the Duke of She, who was famous for his fondness of dragons. But when a Celestial Dragon visited him, it turned out that the Duke just liked dragon ornaments and not actual dragons.

Yuan Shengshi prefaces his short story with an alleged²⁷ quotation from *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (attributed to Master Zhuang, *tr* 369–286 BCE) which concisely summarizes the original story in two lines of Classical Chinese. The literary allusion (though made up) at the beginning of the story evokes the literary style and aesthetics of traditional literature where the legitimacy and authenticity of a text were conventionally achieved by references to ancient texts. A heavily didactic introduction in colloquial Chinese follows and explains to readers various meanings of the dragon in Chinese culture and other uses of this word in different sayings. The narrative itself starts after the prologue and the introduction.

25 »She gong jian long« » 葉公見龍, in *Longmen: tonghua ji*, 10–20.

26 *Xinyi »Xinxu« duben* 新譯新序讀本 [A *Xinxu* Reader with a Modern Translation], ed. by Ye Youming 葉幼明 (Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 1996), 5.27: 202.

27 There is no relevant passage in the text of *Zhuangzi* which would include this story.

The narrative consists of a frame that shows the duke in his sleep and an inserted story that is subsequently revealed to be a dream. The duke, like the protagonist of the source text, is fond of dragons. But Yuan Shengshi's short story adds something new and unexpected which explodes the structure of the source. The Duke of She does not meet a dragon, but an ancient lizard, which he mistakes for a dragon. In a highly sophisticated and scientific manner, the lizard unsuccessfully tries to explain his own origin, the prehistory of the Earth, and the rules of evolution determined by the struggle of species. The lizard's monologue resembles the speech of a master to a disciple. The duke, who represents the traditional society and perception of the world, fails to understand the lizard's message and demands a 'real' dragon, as he knows it from artistic depictions. The lizard, realizing that the duke is incapable of receiving his teaching, lurches toward him to devour him. At this point, the framed story ends and the duke wakes up.

If we substitute the relationship of both protagonists with the concepts of 'tradition' and 'modernity', we can interpret the lizard's last move as a radical endeavour to solve the tension between a modern, scientific worldview and the traditional one by eliminating the latter. In an innovative manner, Yuan Shengshi's short story employs scientific knowledge which stands in direct opposition to the tradition. The juxtaposition of the 'old' and the 'modern', or 'tradition' and 'modernity', as well as an excessive emphasis on the scientific interpretation of reality which, in functional terms, destroys the structure of the original story, point again to the legacy of the May Fourth Movement, at least as it was perceived by the official line. The same literary device, i.e. a strained use of science or scientific knowledge in the narration, can be found in another short story, *The Offspring of the Bats*.²⁸ The blunt expression of the opposition between simplistic concepts of tradition and modernity, however, reduces both stories to their didactic function, which lets them appear more like propaganda than literary writing.

Yuan Shengshi's short stories display another very prominent feature that points to the literary legacy of the May Fourth Movement: a resemblance with or thematic approximation to the work of Lu Xun who, as mentioned above, was propagated as the standard for literature published in Taiwan. We may take the sixth short story in the volume, *Origin of Madmen*, as an example for this.²⁹

The plot of the story introduces a young scholar (*xiucai* 秀才) who comes to a land inhabited by madmen. They carry chains as a sign of their madness, which

28 »Bianfu de zisun« 蝙蝠的子孫, in *Longmen: tonghua ji*, 58–62.

29 »Fengren de laiyou« 瘋人的來由, in *Longmen: tonghua ji*, 53–57.

at the same time signify their social status. The scholar, in order to prevent his exposure as an outsider, gets a chain of his own, and thus he becomes part of this society. He initially serves as a teacher and then as an official at a magistrate's office (*yamen* 衙門). Only after some time he realizes that the madness manifests itself in the form of injustice and an inability to distinguish between right and wrong. Therefore he casts off his chain, starts to publish in newspapers and attracts followers. For the rest of society, however, he becomes a madman. As a result, he is locked into a madhouse and finally starts doubting his own sanity. The story closes with the remark that this is the origin of madmen.

Yuan Shengshi's narrative strongly resembles the first modern short story written by Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman* (1918).³⁰ Yuan Shengshi, like Lu Xun, plays with a paradox which arises from a situation where a sane man is placed in a society pervaded by madness. The protagonists in both short stories finally acknowledge that they themselves are 'mad'. In Lu Xun's short story, the traditional society which is based on the Confucian values of 'humanity' (*ren* 仁), 'righteousness' (*yi* 義), and 'morality' (*daode* 道德) is revealed by a madman as cannibalistic. The society in Yuan Shengshi's short story is similarly insane but does not destroy people physically. It rather tends to twist their character. Lu Xun's short story ends with an emotional appeal to save the innocent children who have not been influenced by society. Yuan Shengshi's short story, on the other hand, concludes with a rather resigned critique of contemporaneous society. While on the thematic level both stories are very much alike, they differ in form. Lu Xun's short story is framed by an introduction in Classical Chinese and the embedded story has the form of diary entries written in colloquial Chinese. Yuan Shengshi's *Origin of Madmen* is a conventional Er-form narration written in colloquial Chinese.

Many of Lu Xun's short stories³¹ share another significant feature: a scene with a passive, one may say cowardly, crowd of bystanders who observe events but do not take part in them. Lu Xun also invokes a similar situation in his »Introduction« to the collection of short stories *The Outcry* (*Naban* 呐喊, 1923).³² In Lu Xun's words, this crowd was ill and needed to be cured:

The people of a weak and backward country, although they may be strong and healthy, could only serve as material and audience to such meaningless spectacles. No

30 »Kuangren riji« 狂人日記, in *Lu Xun quanji* 魯迅全集 [Complete Works of Lu Xun], 18 vols. (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 2005), 1: 444–456.

31 E.g. »Yao« 藥 [Medicine], in *Lu Xun quanji*, 1: 463–472; »A Q zhengzhuan« 阿Q正傳 [True Story of A Q], *ibid.*, 1: 512–559; and »Kong Yiji« 孔乙己, *ibid.*, 1: 457–462.

32 *Lu Xun quanji*, 1: 437–443.

matter how many of them fell ill and died, there was no need to consider this unfortunate. The most important thing, therefore, was to transform their spirit...³³

In Yuan Shengshi's short story *Mirror*,³⁴ which in many ways resembles the fairy tale of Snow White, there appears a similar motif, but the crowd is assigned different characteristics. The meaning of the short story is created through the opposition between beauty and ugliness (figuratively also between good and evil, truth and hypocrisy etc.), and a mirror serves as a medium that reflects reality and enables a distinction between the two. The mirror is thus understood as a symbol of fearless disclosure of the true state of affairs, which is denoted by the concept of beauty in the short story. The main character of the story is an ugly old queen who dislikes beautiful women and tries to destroy all mirrors in her realm to suppress reality. She is confronted by a young woman who possesses a mirror and is consequently sentenced to death. This woman who is surrounded by many other 'followers and seekers of beauty' proclaims that »Beauty is even more important than death«. In this climactic scene the queen realizes that the faces of the quiet crowd of bystanders, who have been deprived of the chance to seek the truth, are like mirrors and thus resemble the very instruments of truth she attempted to suppress. Since she is unable to have them all executed, they represent an overwhelming force that can even stop a ruler. Explanations by the omnipresent narrator frame the story and support this interpretation. The meaning of the story is reinforced by an allusion to the term *guangming* 光明 which was the object Kuafu's pilgrimage and sacrifice in the first short story, *Kuafu and his People*.

The crowd, in Yuan Shengshi's narrative, though apparently quiet, is thus not passive. In a constellation that resembles the traditional concept of the Mandate of Heaven, they mirror the ruler's leadership abilities and, in this way, express the people's dissatisfaction, which gives the short story a revolutionary undertone. Similar to Lu Xun, Yuan Shengshi wants to mobilize people in order to change society. Therefore the short story again confirms the social function of literature.

At first sight, the collection *Dragon Gate: A Collection of Fairy Tales* resembles Lu Xun's *Old Stories Retold* published in 1935.³⁵ Lu Xun also operated with folk or popular stories. He freely manipulated them, employed irony, modified their original meaning and added new semantic levels. Even though the

33 *Ibid.*, I: 439.

34 »Jingzi« 镜子, in *Longmen: tonghua ji*, 21-34.

35 Lu Xun, *Gu shi xin bian* 故事新编 [Old Stories Retold], in *Lu Xun zuopin quanji* 鲁迅作品全集 [Complete Works of Lu Xun], 33 vols. (Taipei: Fengyun shidai chuban gongsi, 1989), vol. 4.

sujets in the original stories and Lu Xun's adaptations appear similar, the new background and the colloquial rather than literary language not only created a space for the generation of new meanings, but also marked a clear boundary between the subject-matter of both versions. The collection *Old Stories Retold* occupies a special position in Lu Xun's writing. In it, he explored novel ways to juxtapose the old and the new, a contrast that was at the heart of the literary revolution and the birth of modern Chinese literature, which defined itself against the background of the tradition. It is worth mentioning that this juxtaposition in *Old Stories Retold* does not mean opposition and does not imply a judgment of value. At this point Yuan Shengshi departed from the model provided by Lu Xun. Yuan Shengshi, who in the majority of his short stories emphasized the didactic function of literature, explicitly passed judgment on tradition and directly conveyed his views to his readership, often via the voice of the omnipresent narrator. Such directness of expression is another characteristic that distinguishes the two collections. The *Dragon Gate* collection tends toward an overly simplistic mode of expression and thus leaves no space for the reader to draw his own conclusions. In this regard, Lu Xun's style is more sophisticated and allows readers to generate their own meanings from the stories.

As explained above, Yuan Shengshi's choice to imitate Lu Xun's work was not coincidental but rather in accord with the official line's definition of Taiwan literature. As a symbol of the May Fourth Movement legacy, Lu Xun could legitimize not only literature as it was officially defined in the Taiwanese context, but also the work of a young writer such as Yuan Shengshi.

Dragon Gate: A Collection of Fairy Tales in many ways fulfils the ideological demands of the official line. It unambiguously acknowledges the reductionist understanding of the May Fourth legacy that was upheld by cultural institutions in the late 1940s. It emphasizes national awareness and promotes ostentatious manifestations of modernity. It mediates moral standards, which were to be followed in modern Chinese society as such, including Taiwan. The collection also complies with Xu Shouchang's appeal to learn from Lu Xun, and one can find various approximations to his work on different structural levels (e.g. thematically, in terms of the choice of protagonists, through the adaptation of earlier sources etc.). Because the author followed the official line so strictly, the collection accents the didactic function of literature but remains utterly unambitious aesthetically. It lacks Lu Xun's detached viewpoint and lightness of touch which are achieved by his use of irony. It is the blunt didacticism of the *Dragon Gate* collection that distinguishes it most clearly from Lu Xun's work.

Conclusion

This article has introduced literature and literary discourse as it was propagated and supported by the official line. As a dominant agent in the first years after the retrocession, the official line could and did employ its political power to define Taiwan literature as a part of the 'cultural reconstruction' process. Even though this definition received support from important agents in the field and gained dominance on a discursive level, the literary production that adhered to it can hardly be included in mainstream literature.

Even though the *Library of Restoration of which Dragon Gate: A Collection of Fairy Tales* was a part, followed the dominant definition of literature to be published in Taiwan, it did not enjoy much attention from academics or a wider readership. There are various reasons for this which have to do with both its literary qualities and contemporaneous political developments. Blind adherence to the literary style propagated by the official line was not sufficient to win the interest of the audience. The majority of readers could not read Mandarin Chinese, and for this reason alone it is understandable that the official line's endeavors fell into oblivion.

Official literature in the early post-war period faced several problems. Firstly, it was propagated by a political clique that went into decline after May 1947, so that it enjoyed only a short existence. Few of the projected titles were actually produced, and those that were published failed to be widely distributed. The new cultural institutions that were established after 1947 pursued different methods to achieve the goals of 'cultural reconstruction', and the literary projects of the early post-war period were forgotten.

Secondly, in the 1980s and 1990s, with the appearance of a new historical narrative of Taiwan literature that focused on Taiwanese subjectivity, the official literature affiliated with the KMT was difficult to accommodate within the new paradigm. The study of the early post-war period is dominated by the February 28th Incident and its various causes and consequences. Post-1980s studies on literature tend to introduce neglected Taiwanese writers and intellectuals who were forced into silence after 1949, or they reveal the mechanisms of the 'cultural reconstruction', which were briefly outlined above. However, what is generally lacking is an attempt to analyze actual literary writings in order to explore aspects of early post-war Taiwan literature such as its character, social and political influences, and auctorial motivations.

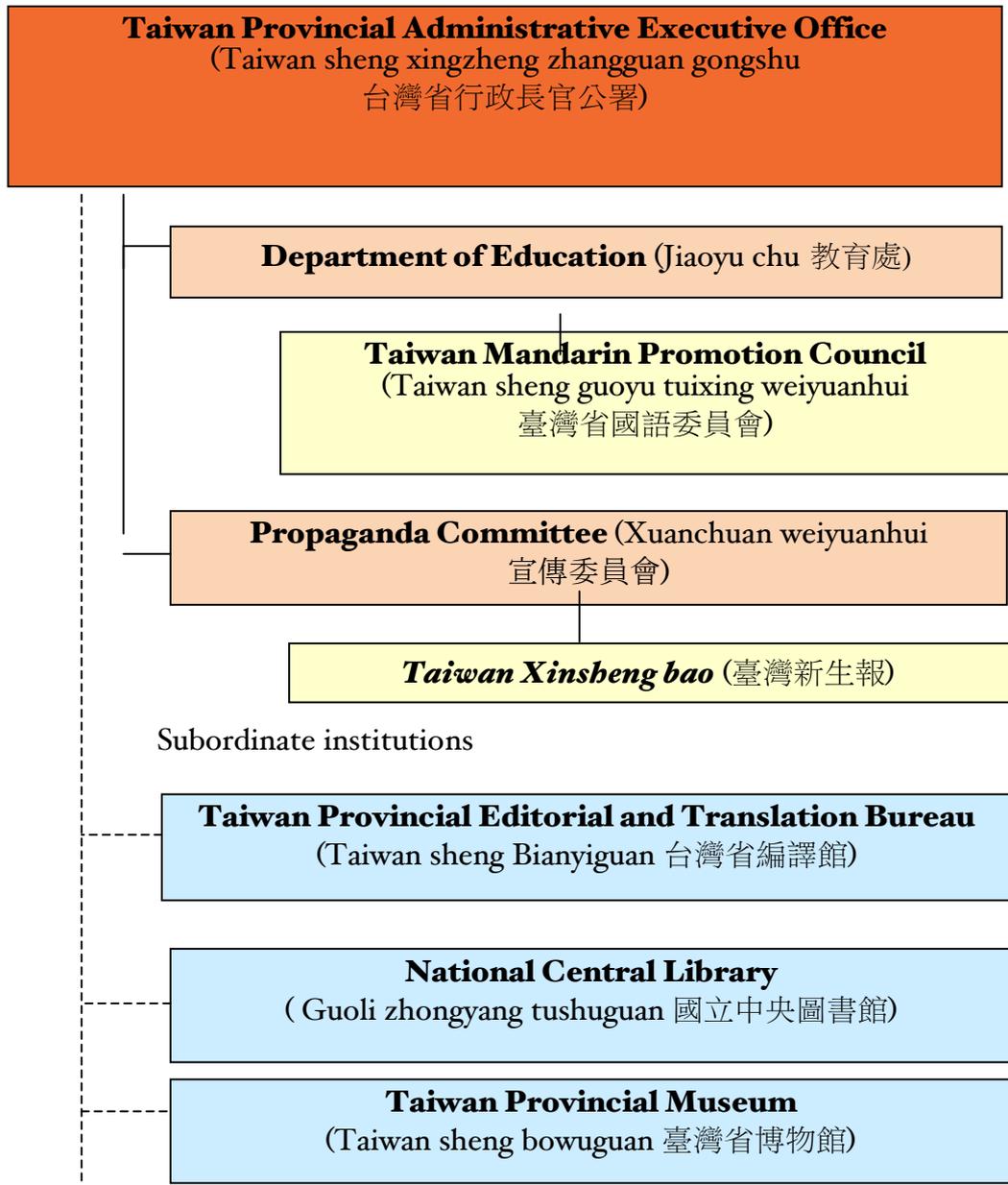
Literary historians play an important role in defining the mainstream, the dominant, and the canon. As is well known, the literary works that appear in

anthologies or are discussed in histories usually represent only a fraction of the literary production of a period. The picture presented by literary histories is inevitably reductionist.³⁶ This article draws attention to a frequently neglected aspect of the early post-war literary field and its production and thus complements more conventional portrayals.

The reflection on the actual literary production of the official line points to a new road of inquiry. Aside from the bluntness with which this literature conveys its ideological tenets of its promoters, it also betrays a lack of consideration for specific local conditions and a naive belief in the transformative power of culture and literature as a means to usher in the political integration of the two regions. This reflects to some extent the character of Chinese nationalism based on a strong confidence in the cultural dominance of the centre over manifestations of non-majority or peripheral identities. But it also indicates that literature was still understood from a functionalist perspective in terms of its social usefulness. Literature as a tool for the improvement of society is thus another angle from which early post-war literature may be studied and understood.

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36 See Franco Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History* (London; New York: Verso, 2005), 3–33, for a quantitative treatment of mostly neglected 19th century European novels and its theoretical implications.

The Institutional Structure of the Official Line

*Political Affiliations of Prominent Representatives of the Official Line*³⁷

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Political Affiliation</i>
Taiwan Provincial Administrative Executive Office	Governor	Chen Yi	<i>Zhengxue</i> Clique (<i>Zhengxue pai</i> 政學派), native of Zhejiang, studied in Japan
Department of Education	Director	Fan Shoukang 范壽康	<i>Zhengxue</i> Clique, one of Chen Yi's collaborators from Fujian (<i>Chen Yi zhi Min bandi</i> 陳儀治閩班底);
Propaganda Committee	Deputy Director	Song Feiru 宋斐如	Taiwanese, studied in Japan
	Director	Xia Taosheng 夏濤聲	One of Chen Yi's collaborators from Fujian, Clique of Patriots (<i>Guojiazhuuyi pai</i> 國家主義派)
	Secretary	Shen Yunlong 沈雲龍	One of Chen Yi's collaborators from Fújiàn, Clique of Patriots
	Committee member	Hu Bangxian 胡邦憲	One of Chen Yi's collaborators from Fujian
Taiwan Provincial Editorial and Translation Bureau	Director	Xu Shouchang 許壽裳	Native of Zhejiang, Chen Yi's friend and his classmate in Japan

37 Information about political affiliations is taken from Chen Cuilian, *Paixi dougzheng yu quanmou zhengzhi*, who discusses these figures in other contexts throughout her book.

National Central Library	Director	Fan Shoukang	One of Chen Yi's collaborators from Fujian
Taiwan Provincial Museum	Director	Chen Jianshan 陳兼善	Native of Zhejiang
<i>Taiwan xinsheng bao</i>	Editor	Li Wanju 李萬居	One of Chen Yi's collaborators from Fujian, member of the Youth Party (<i>Qingnian dang</i> 青年黨), Clique of Patriots
	Deputy Editor	Li Liewen 黎烈文	One of Chen Yi's collaborators from Fujian