

# Lu Xun's Early Essays and Present-Day China

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## *Lu Xunove rané eseje a súčasná Čína*

*Resumé* Takeuchi Yoshimi vo svojej knihe *Rojin* (Lu Xun; 1944) predstavuje Lu Xuna ako literárneho génia, ale jeho rané eseje odmieta ako relikty Lu Xunovho formatívneho obdobia. Tento článok, naopak, tvrdí, že tieto eseje slúžili ako predobraz celej jeho kariéry a názorov na Čínu a Západ. Kritici boli vždy pohotoví pri zdôrazňovaní Lu Xunových nedostatkov a predpovedali jeho skorý úpadok, keby by sa bol dožil súčasnej doby, písal a bol posudzovaný komunistickým systémom, ale len zriedkakedy sa pokúšajú zobrazovať, aký by mohol byť jeho názor na súčasnú Čínu. Tento článok vytyčuje deväť bodov príznačných pre Lu Xunovo myslenie a potom načrtáva, ako by sa asi mohol pozerat' na súdobú Čínu.

*Keywords* China · Literature (20th c.) · Lu Xun (1881–1936), »Moluo shi li shuo« 摩羅詩力說 (1907), »Po e sheng lun« 破惡聲論 (1908) · Takeuchi Yoshimi 竹內好 (1910–1977)

What concerns me is not how Lu Xun changed but how he did not change despite the potential for change. Indeed Lu Xun changed over the course of time, but he did not change in the real sense of the word. I see the true face of Lu Xun in his unchangeable aspects.<sup>1</sup>

Takeuchi Yoshimi, *Rojin* (1944)

Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881–1936) lived in Japan as a student and then an independent scholar for close to eight years from April 1902 to August 1909. For his first two

1 Takeuchi Yoshimi 竹內好, *Rojin* 魯迅 [1944] (Tōkyō: Miraisha, 1961), 47.

years there he studied Japanese language and preparatory subjects at the Kōbun Institute in Tokyo, then from September 1904 to March 1906 went on to study Western medicine at Sendai Medical Academy. After his withdrawal from medical school, he returned to Tokyo and began to do detailed research on modern European thought, the history and philosophy of science, as well as comparative literature, which produced five lengthy treatises he wrote in an archaistic classical prose style influenced by that of the anti-Manchu philologist Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (Zhang Binglin 章炳麟, 1868–1936) in *Minbao* 民報 (The People's Journal),<sup>2</sup> for whom he professed in a life-long admiration, mainly due to Zhang Taiyan's uncompromising oppositional stance *vis-à-vis* the powers that were in China.<sup>3</sup> But Lu Xun's choice of the style of language used in the essays is in itself a major statement, rejecting the ornate, Qing-identified *pian wen* 駢文 but at the same time bucking the trend toward simplified *wenyanwen* 文言文 spearheaded by Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873–1929) in his journal *Xinmin bao* 新民報 (The New People), a style which came to be referred to as *xinminti* 新民體. I have argued elsewhere that Lu Xun was trying to create a style that was at once more authentically 'Chinese' by reverting to the *guwen* 古文 of the Han, Wei and Jin eras, while at the same time attempting to develop a discursive style that could

- 2 Zhang Taiyan was first a contributor to and then editor of *Minbao*. As Lu Xun himself put it in his preface to *Jiwai ji* 集外集 [Collection of the Uncollected]: 以後又受到了章太炎先生的影響，古了起來。 »Later [i.e. after Yan Fu] I was influenced by Mr Zhang Taiyan and got 'ancient'«, *Lu Xun quanji* 魯迅全集 [Complete Works of Lu Xun], 16 vols (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1981; hereafter *LXQJ*), 7: 4.
- 3 See his moving 'recollections' of Zhang Taiyan in *LXQJ* 6: 545–551; 556–561. These have been translated into English in *Lu Xun Selected Works*, 4 vols., tr. by Yang Xianyi 楊憲益 and Gladys Yang 戴乃迭 (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1980; hereafter *SW*), 4: 322–326; 327–334. For an extended discussion of their relationship, see Chen Xueran 陳學然 («Chan Hok-yin»), «Zhang Taiyan yu Lu Xun de shitu jiaoyi chongtan» 章太炎與魯迅的師生交易重探 [A Re-Investigation of the Teacher-Student Relationship Between Zhang Taiyan and Lu Xun], in *Taida Zhongwen xuebao* 臺大中文學報 no 26 (Taipei, June 2007), 241–284. Chen Xuean concludes that the Zhang Taiyan admired by Lu Xun was the late-Qing anti-Manchu revolutionist/scholar and that they later grew apart due to opposing positions regarding the New Culture Movement and vernacular literature. Although this may be the case, I would submit that there is actually a degree of self-identification between the Zhang Taiyan whom Lu Xun described in 1936 and himself. In some ways Zhang Taiyan is a foil in Lu Xun's 1936 'recollections', but in others he becomes an *alter ego*.

accommodate modern concepts and also sound off with a moral and intellectual authority akin aurally and linguistically to that of the classics.<sup>4</sup>

These essays have been considered to have continuing relevance in part because Lu Xun himself included the majority of them (four) in *Fen* 墳 (The Grave), when he edited and compiled the first collection of his essays under that title in 1926. As he puts it quite prominently at the outset of his preface to the collection:

其中所說的幾個詩人，至今沒有人再提起，也是使我不認拋棄舊稿的一個原因。她們的名，先前是怎樣地使我激昂呵，民國告成以後，我便將他們忘卻了，而不料現在他們竟又時時在我的眼前出現。<sup>5</sup>

The several poets discussed here were never mentioned again by anyone else until now, and that is one small reason why I cannot bear to throw these old manuscripts away. How excited I used to get merely at their names! But after the proclamation of the Republic, I forgot them, only to have them unexpectedly reappear before me again and again nowadays.

The implication of this is that he felt the essays and the poets he exalted (especially in the longest of the essays »Moluo shi li shuo« 摩羅詩力說 (On the Power of *Mara* Poetry) as models for China were more relevant 'now' than in the late Qing and early Republic. Obviously he intended, with their republication when he dated this preface on 30 October 1926, to make a statement to readers almost twenty years after their composition, adding that he was writing the preface »in Xiamen (Amoy) on a night of great winds« (*da feng zhi ye* 大風之夜), taken traditionally to be a symbol of chaos, social change, and perhaps even coming revolution. After all, these were probably the essays, or at least the type of essays, he had intended to publish in his own abortive literary journal *Xinsheng* 新生 (*Vita nova*).<sup>6</sup>

4 See my chapter titled »Lu Xun's Han Linguistic Project: The Use of *Wenyan* to Create an 'Authentic' Han Vocabulary for Literary Terminology in his Early Essays«, in Lu Guoping 卢国屏, ed. *Yu shijie jiegui: Hanyu wenbuxue* 與世界接軌：漢語文化學 [Globalization and Chinese Cultural Studies], ed. by Lu Guoping 盧國屏 (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 2002), 289–312.

5 »Tiji« 題記, in *LX* 1: 3.

6 After the failure of *Xinsheng* the essays were first published for him in 1907–08 by the Chinese expatriate journal *Henan* 河南 which was affiliated with both the Tongmenghui 同盟會 (Revolutionary Alliance) and a regional hostel (*buiquan* 會館), thus ensuring it of some circulation among the overseas Chinese student, revolutionist, and dissident population in Japan, as

After withdrawing from medical studies, Lu Xun returned to China briefly at the request of his mother, who told him she was ill. There an arranged marriage to Zhu An 朱安, the daughter of another gentry clan, was forced on him. Several days after the ceremony, he returned to Japan, taking his younger brother Zhou Zuoren with him, but leaving his bride behind. It was from that point that his literary career was reactivated. His earliest plan was to publish the journal *Xinsheng*. He and his collaborators had manuscript paper printed, and chose cover designs: George Frederic Watts' (1817–1904) painting »Hope« for the inaugural issue and for numbers two and three, »The Tower of Skulls« by Vassily V. Vereshchagin (1842–1904) and a drawing of British soldiers executing Indian rebels lined up in front of the mouth of a cannon. In retrospect, Zhou Zuoren wrote:

In order to do that sort of job, it was necessary to have, first knowledge; second comrades; third time; fourth capital; fifth readers. It was not possible to predict the fifth category, but we were completely lacking in the other four.<sup>7</sup>

But according to Zhou Zuoren, the main thing they were lacking was capital and, he observed, in order to lead this type of literary movement one needs at least to have confidence in what one is advocating and also a lot of free time. They also wanted for collaborators—in the beginning there were just four. Among these, Yuan Wensou 袁文蕤 who was supposed to be a major contributor, went to

well as at home in China. *Henan* was later banned by the Japanese authorities under suspicion of revolutionary leanings at the request of the Qing embassy. In a possible connection, Henan, which was then being focused on by Sun Yat-sen as a potential cradle for the anti-Qing revolution, had been the place of Lu Xun's clan's ancestral origin prior to their migration to Zhejiang. His clan was said to have fled from Henan during the Tartar and Mongol incursions near the end of the Song era (960–1279), eventually becoming landlords in Zhejiang. See the genealogy in Wang Xirong 王錫榮, *Lu Xun shengping yian* 魯迅生平疑案 [Unresolved Questions Regarding Lu Xun's Life] (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2002), 13–15. As Lu Xun wrote in retrospect in 1922 in his Preface to Call to Arms (»Nahan» zixu «《呐喊》自序): »After discussion our first step was to publish a magazine, the title of which denoted that this was a new birth. As we were then classically inclined, we called it *Xinsheng* (Vita nova).« The title may have been derived from Dante, whom Lu Xun credits in »Mara« as having saved Italy by giving her a voice, i.e. creating the modern Italian language through his poetry.

7 Zhou Zuoren, [Preface to the New Edition of »Tales from Abroad«; 1921]. This preface was first published in new edition of *Yuwai xiaoshuo ji* (Shanghai: Qunyi shushe, 1921). There it is credited as »Zhou Zuoren ji« 周作人記. It may in fact have been written by Lu Xun and so is included in the *Yiwen xuba ji* 譯文序跋集 [Collected Prefaces and Afterwords to Translations; 1938], in *LXQJ* vol. 10.

study in England and stopped communicating with them. That left just Lu Xun, his brother and Xu Shouchang 許壽裳 (1883–1948). So, with the flight of their capital, the plan ended in failure.

Eventually the early essays began to be translated into modern vernacular Chinese (*baihuawen* 白話文), first by Hong Qiao 洪橋 at Nanjing Normal University (Nanjing shifan daxue 南京師範大學) and an 'internal' edition was published under collective authorship in 1976.<sup>8</sup> Hong Qiao's work was never officially published until now because he was considered one of Hu Feng's 胡風 (1902–1985) rightist co-conspirators.<sup>9</sup> The essays were again translated into the vernacular and formally published in 1981 by Lu Xun scholar Wang Shijing 王士菁,<sup>10</sup> whom C. T. Hsia (Xia Zhiqing 夏志清, b1921) once praised as one of Lu Xun's most capable biographers. The next year the longest of these, »Moluo shi li shuo« was again translated into *baihuawen* by Zhao Ruihong 趙瑞蕪 (1915–1999), Professor of Chinese and Comparative Literature at Nanjing University.<sup>11</sup> William A. Lyell (1930–2005), a prominent American authority on Lu Xun, said a whole book could be devoted to this essay alone and indeed Zhao Ruihong did so. In 1983 a partial Chinese translation of Kitaoka Masako's 北岡正子 (b1936) articles in the Japanese journal on modern Chinese literary studies *Yasō* 野草 (Wild Grass), modestly titled Notes on the Sources Lu Xun Used in Writing *Mara*, was made by He Naiying 何乃英 (b1935) and published as a single volume.<sup>12</sup> In 1984 Zhao Ruihong published a revised edition of his translation,

8 A *neibu* 內部 ('internal circulation') book with no author accreditation treating six of the early essays came out under the title *Lu Xun wenyan lunwen shiyi* 魯迅文言論文試譯 [A Draft Vernacular Translation of Lu Xun's Theses in the Classical Language] (Nanjing: Nanjing shifan xueyuan Zhongwenxi ziliaooshi 南京師範學院中文系資料室, 1976).

9 Professors Hu Zhu 胡鑄 and Fu Xiao 符哮 argue that the campaign against Hu Feng was in reality just an extension of a purge by Mao against associates of Premier Zhou Enlai 周恩來 (1898–1976), which also saw General He Long 賀龍 (1893–1969) and erstwhile intelligence chief Pan Hannian 潘漢年 (1906–1977) as casualties. See the Hong Kong journal *Mingbao yuekan* 明報月刊 [»Ming Pao Monthly«], June 2006, 90–95.

10 Wang Shijing 王士菁, *Lu Xun zaoqi wupian lunwen zhuayi* 魯迅早期五篇註譯 [Five of Lu Xun's Early Essays annotated with a vernacular translation] (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1981).

11 Zhao Ruihong 趙瑞蕪, *Lu Xun Moluo shi li shuo zhushi, jinyi, jieshuo* 魯迅摩羅詩力說註釋今譯解說 [Lu Xun's »On the Power of Mara Poetry«, Annotated, With a Vernacular Translation and Commentary] (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1982; 2nd rev. ed., 1984).

12 Kitaoka Masako 北岡正子, *Moluo shi li shuo caiyuan kao* 《摩羅詩力說》財源考 [Enquiries on the Sources for »On the Power of Mara Poetry«, tr. by He Naiying 何乃英 and Chen Qiufan 陳秋帆 (Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 1983).

partly as a result of my own hunting down additional English sources on Byron and Shelley, which was also noted by Kitaoka.<sup>13</sup>

In 2006 Kitaoka revised a number of her earlier papers on the young Lu Xun, publishing these as a volume of her collected academic papers.<sup>14</sup> In 2007 it was announced that Hong Qiao's *baihua* translation of On the Power of *Mara* Poetry would finally be published formally after a number of revisions.<sup>15</sup> In late autumn 2007, the influential New Left spokesman and former *Dushu* 讀書 (Study) editor Wang Hui 汪暉 (b1959) gave a lecture at New York University devoted to the last of Lu Xun's early essays, »Po e sheng lun« 破惡聲論 (Toward a Refutation of Malevolent Voices), originally published in 1908.<sup>16</sup> This resulted in several articles in Chinese and one in English,<sup>17</sup> along with a new English translation of Lu Xun's essay.<sup>18</sup>

What is it about this group of ostensibly dated and stylistically-challenging essays that continues to attract and engage contemporary Chinese intellectuals? I remember being shouted down at an introductory meeting with the Head of

13 Kitaoka Masako, *Rojin Kyūbō no Yume no Yukue: Akumaba Shijimron kara »Kyōjin Nikki« made* 魯迅救亡の夢のゆくえ：悪魔派詩人論から「狂人日記」まで [Surrounding Lu Xun's Dream of (National) Salvation: From »On the Power of Satanic Verse« to »The Diary of a Madman«] (Suita-shi: Kansai Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2006), 81.

14 Kitaoka Masako, *Rojin Kyūbō no Yume no Yukue*. This work deals with the second half of Lu Xun's period of study in Japan. Ch. 1 discusses the role Lu Xun's study of German played in his idea of promoting a literary movement; ch. 2 his idea that the nation could be saved through the power of poetry and the formation of the idea of a school of *Mara* poets; ch. 3 the image and significance of man in On the Power of *Mara* Poetry; ch. 4 the poet as madman, the 'self' in The Diary of a Madman; appendices on *Tianyan lun* 天演論, Yan Fu's 嚴復 (1853-1921) Chinese adaptation of Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* as a premise to understanding Lu Xun's concept of man; Lu Xun and Petőfi, with a focus on the meaning of *xiwang* 希望 ('hope'); on Dr. Galla Endre (1926-2008) and Hungarian scholarship on the reception of the literature of the so-called 'oppressed nations' in modern Chinese literature 1918-37.

15 See Zhou Zhengzhang 周正章, »Moluo shi li shuo Hong Qiao jinyiben xu« 摩羅詩力說洪橋今譯本序 [An Introduction to Hong Qiao's Modern Translation of »On the Power of *Mara* Poetry«], *Lu Xun yanjiu yuekan* 魯迅研究月刊 8/2007, 80-83.

16 For the original text of this essay, see *LXQJ* 8: 23-37.

17 Wang Hui's article is titled »The Voices of Good and Evil: What is Enlightenment? Rereading Lu Xun's "Toward a Refutation of Malevolent Voices"«, tr. by Ted Hutters and Zong Yangyang in *boundary2: an international journal of literature and culture* 38,2 (Summer 2011), 67-123.

18 See Lu Xun, »Toward a Refutation of Malevolent Voices«, tr. and annotated by Jon Kowallis, *boundary2: an international journal of literature and culture* 38,2 (Summer 2011), 39-62.

the Department of Chinese at Beijing University,<sup>19</sup> where I appeared as a graduate student<sup>20</sup> in autumn 1981 when I said I was interested in Lu Xun's early thought. »Early thought?«, thundered the Chairman, »I think only his later thought is of significance.« At that time, of course, the orthodox opinion was that the early Lu Xun was bourgeois, so only his later thinking, after he allegedly adopted Marxism, was deemed to be worthy of study. In fact it was partly because of my choice of topic that I almost did not get into Beida 北大.<sup>21</sup> But I might suggest that it is in part this official disapproval of the young Lu Xun, like the young Marx, that intrigues Chinese scholars and readers alike. For me, however, it has always been an attempt to trace back, locate and define concepts in Lu Xun's early thought that were part of a deeper structure which shaped and moulded his life-long priorities and convictions. In other words, I wanted to challenge the theory of the periodization of Lu Xun's thought in which he is depicted as developing from a gentry lad with the common touch, to a patriotic young scholar, to a bourgeois democrat, to an evolutionist, to a Marxist, to a Marxist-Leninist, and then finally to a Maoist who sent congratulatory telegrams to Yan'an and a canned ham to Chairman Mao.<sup>22</sup>

In *Rojin* Takeuchi Yoshimi points out that:

Many critics insist that Lu Xun underwent a radical change in his ideas during this period [the early 1930s...]. With regard to the nature of this change, opinions vary. Some say that it is a change from evolutionism to a class-oriented thought. Others

19 They have now officially reverted to the 'old' spelling of »Peking University« in English.

20 A so-called *gaoji jinxiusheng* 高級進修生 because I was working toward a PhD at Berkeley at the time.

21 My application was successful only after the intervention of Zhang Xiangtian 張向天 (orig. Zhang Bingxin 張秉新), a Hong Kong-based scholar of Lu Xun's classical-style poetry who was familiar with my work on Lu Xun's classical poetry, and personally acquainted with Wang Yao 王瑤 (1914–1989), then senior Professor in the Department of Chinese Literature. Wang Yao then took me on, with Sun Yushi 孫玉石 (b1935) as acting supervisor.

22 Leninism was impossible for Lu Xun: it was alien to his independent, ever-questioning spirit; see Feng Xuefeng's 馮雪峰 (August 1967) account of a meeting between Lu Xun and the then CCP General Secretary Li Lisan 李立三 on May 7, 1930, after which Lu Xun commented: »We just talked at each other.« See Zhu Zheng 朱正, *Lu Xun huiyilu zhengwu: zengdingben* 魯迅回憶錄 正誤增訂本 [Corrections to the Errors in Recollections of Lu Xun: Expanded Edition] (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 2006). His alleged support for Mao is based textually on one letter only, the Reply to a Letter from the Trotskyists, which was ghost-written for him during an illness by Feng Xuefeng. The text is in *LX* 6: 586–589; English translation in *SW* 4: 279–282.

say that it is from nihilism to hope. I do not deny that these changes might in fact have taken place in Lu Xun. However, I strongly disagree that these were precisely the factors that led Lu Xun to a decisive change.<sup>23</sup>

Takeuchi's book is valuable for its alternative vision of Lu Xun as a *bungakusha* 文學者 (*littérateur*), rather than a thinker or a political editorialist, and the challenge it thereby presents to the orthodox Marxist approach, but as I see it, the point at which Takeuchi falls short of arriving at a complete and overarching understanding of Lu Xun's thought lies precisely in his dismissal of the early essays as relics of a formative period. Re-contextualizing them within Lu Xun's complete *œuvre* as well as within their original time-frame, one comes readily to realize that they are not so simply discounted. If they were so in his mind, Lu Xun would not have reprinted four of them in so prominent a position at the very outset of what was would eventually become his collected works. They are the introduction—everything else is an elaboration.

In fact, the early essays broach all of his principal concerns and concepts—the first of which is his humanism, which also happens to be the departure point of Marxism, but that is another question. In his 1907 essay »Wenhua pianzhi lun« 文化偏至論 (On Imbalanced Cultural Development) Lu Xun says that China's failure to learn from the West has been simply the failure to understand that Western strength lies not in its parliaments, commerce, steel, railways, mines and weaponry, but in its people (*gendi zai ren* 根柢在人).<sup>24</sup> This extends to his admiration for the volunteerism and internationalist spirit of Byron, the ideals of Shelley, Pushkin and Lermontov, and the struggle against despotism and despair of Petőfi that we read about in On the Power of *Mara* Poetry.<sup>25</sup> The second is his opposition to materialism and championing of German-style idealism, *à la* Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Max Stirner (1806–1856), again as set

23 Takeuchi Yoshimi, *Rojin*, 132.

24 »The strengths of Europe and America dazzle the entire world, but the root [of these strengths] lies with their people; all those other things are only external manifestations of phenomena, the origins of which are deep and not so easily seen, while their glorious fruitions are clear and obvious to everyone [...].« 然歐美之強，莫不以是炫天下者，則根柢在人，而此特現象之末，本原源而難見，榮華昭而易識也。 From »Wenhua pianzhi lun« (my own translation in *Warriors of the Spirit: The Early wenyuan Essays of Lu Xun* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, Institute of East Studies Monographs, forthcoming). The Chinese text of the quotation is in *Lu Xun quanji* (1981) 1:56-57. For the entire Chinese text of the essay, see 1:44–62.

25 »Written in 1907« (as Lu Xun clearly dates it at the end) but first published in Tokyo in 1908 in nos 2 and 3 of *Henan* 河南. For the original text of the essay, see *LXQJ* 1: 63–115. English translation forthcoming in *Warriors of the Spirit*, tr. by Kowallis.

forth in *On Imbalanced Cultural Development*. A third is his life-long aversion toward blind patriotism, nationalism, militarism and chauvinism, which he denounced already in 1908 in »Po e sheng lu«, as 'bestial patriotism' (*shouxin aiguo zhuyi* 獸心愛國主義), borrowing a term from the prominent Danish literary and intellectual historian Georg Brandes (1842–1927).<sup>26</sup>

Fourth, in the methodology of the essays, which borrow from different sources that he read chiefly in Japanese and German translation,<sup>27</sup> we can also trace the roots of his well-known 1934 essay which championed the doctrine of 'Grab-ism' (*nalaizhuyi* 拿來主義),<sup>28</sup> arguing that China urgently needed to take on things that are culturally beneficial from foreign countries, while rejecting the dross of pop and material culture. This, of course, speaks to the dilemmas of the present day, with translation from foreign sources being increasingly limited and with consumerism and materialism being substituted for political liberties; a situation, I should add, that is not by any means unique to China today.

Fifth, there is his call to respect religion, in particular Buddhism, which he saw as one of the world's greatest philosophical systems, and, sixth, the rights of the individual, which need to be guarded against the tyranny of the majority that Lu Xun foresaw as having the potential to be more oppressive than any wayward king or despot. Here we in fact see not only a cautionary word for the future of mainland China, with issues around human rights, and respect for other peoples' religions in Tibet and Xinjiang, but a foreshadowing of the recent abuse of democracy by the Minjindang 民進黨 (Democratic Progressive Party) in Taiwan, where a popular joke, allegedly from mainland China, but with what I suspect is a Taiwan-modified punch-line recently ran: *Dao Beijing cai zhidao guan xiao, dao*

26 Lu Xun's term *shouxin zhi aiguo* 獸心之愛國 (lit. 'bestial patriotism') seems to be a Chinese translation from the English translation of Brandes' term 'a brutal patriotism'. See Kitaoka Masako, »Mara shi riki setsu no kōsei« 摩羅詩力説の構成 [The Composition of »On the Power of Mara Poetry«], in *Kindai bungaku ni okeru Chuugoku to Nihon* 近代文学における中国と日本 [China and Japan in the Literature of the Recent Historic Period] (Kyuko Shoen, Oct 1986), 97; reprinted in *Rojin Kyuubō no Yume no Yukue*, 57. The Danish term in Brandes' original is *raat Fædrelanderi* ('raw' or 'crude »fatherlandishness«) see his *Indtryk fra Rusland* [Impressions of Russia; 1888], in *Samlede Skrifter* [Collected Works], 18 vols. (Kjøbenhavn: Gyldendal, 1899–1910), 10: 465.

27 He also used English sources with the help of his younger brother Zhou Zuoren, who had joined him in Tokyo in 1906.

28 Text in *LXQJ* 6: 38–41.

*Shanghai cai zhidao qian shao, dao Taiwan cai zhidao wenhua da geming hai zai gao!* 到北京纔知道官小，到上海纔知道錢少，到臺灣纔知道文化大革命還在搞！<sup>29</sup>

Wang Dehou 王得后 (b1934), perhaps the most widely-respected senior scholar of Lu Xun studies in China, has suggested that Lu Xun's early essays in fact fit together as chapters in a full-length book: from *ren* 人 in The History of Humankind (*Ren zhi lishi* 人之歷史),<sup>30</sup> Lu Xun moves to science (»Kexue shi jiao pian« 科學史教篇)<sup>31</sup> in Lessons from the History of Science; from there to intellectual history (»Wenhua pian zhi lun«), thence to literature, both Chinese and Western (»Moluo shi li shuo«) and then ends with his views on religion in the 1908 essay Toward a Refutation of Malevolent Voices (»Po e sheng lun«).<sup>32</sup> Whether or not future scholars will agree with Wang Dehou's conception, there is ample evidence to suggest that the essays constitute a manifesto, not only for Lu Xun's literary career, but for his intellectual interests as well. Aside from the six points I have mentioned above, it is here we find the roots of his existentialism as well as his impatience with traditional Chinese literature (in *Mara*) and his championing of an oppositional stance as inherent to the intellectual's role in culture.

After the events of 1989, in the process known as 'reconsidering' or 're-thinking' (*fansi* 反思), Lu Xun came under attack as a symbol of everything that was wrong with the May Fourth New Culture Movement and the havoc it allegedly wrought on Chinese society throughout the 20th century (culminating, as we might well read it, in the Beijing Spring of 1989) as well as for damage to the national psyche and self-esteem done by his condemnation of Chinese

29 As quoted in the editorial »Cultural Revolution Redux« from the pro-Guomindang *China Post* (Taipei), Dec 8, 2007, 4. Their translation ran: »One doesn't know he's poor before visiting Shanghai, doesn't know he's nobody before visiting Beijing, doesn't know the Cultural Revolution is still alive before visiting Taiwan«. This was prior to Ma Yingjiu's 馬英九 (»Ma Ying-jeou«, b1950) first election as President of the ROC.

30 Text in *LXQJ* 1: 8–24; English translation by Tao Naikan in *Renditions* (forthcoming 2013). See the discussion of this and a number of the other early essays in Lydia H. Liu, »Life as Form: How Biomimesis Encountered Buddhism in Lu Xun«, in *Journal of Asian Studies* 68,1 (Feb 2009), 21–54.

31 The original text is in *LXQJ* 1: 25–43; English translation by Nathaniel Isaacson in *Renditions* (forthcoming 2013).

32 See the collection of Wang Dehou's articles published under the title *Lu Xun jiao wo* 魯迅教我 [What Lu Xun Has Taught Me] (Fuzhou: Fujian jiaoyu chubanshe, 2006), 234–238. English translations of these three essays forthcoming in *Warriors of the Spirit*, tr. by Kowallis.

tradition as inhumane and unjust. In order to fully examine this critique of Lu Xun, we need first to determine what his critics mean by 'Chinese tradition', for, in all fairness (and in keeping with the position of Sinology), Chinese tradition historically was multifaceted, complex, pluralistic and cannot simply be boiled down to what modern people generally refer to as 'Confucianism' or *lijiao* 禮教 ('ritual teachings'), as Lu Xun called it—something that I think most serious contemporary scholars in China would also agree with.

As part of this rhetorical and ideological process, Lu Xun was set up as a straw man in a bogus comparison with Hu Shi 胡適 (1891–1962), who was deemed 'constructive', whereas Lu Xun's social criticisms were deemed 'destructive'.<sup>33</sup> In fact, Lu Xun was much more steeped in classical scholarship than Hu Shi. He had extensive education in the Confucian classics, exposure to the Daoist and folk Buddhist traditions at an early age, sitting successfully for the first rung of the official exams and later studied the philology, Wei, Jin and Six Dynasties prose-style, and the Buddhist scholarship of Zhang Taiyan, and did his own scholarship on the local history of his native place Kuaiji 會稽 (i.e. Shaoxing 紹興 in Zhejiang province) as well as editing collections of all but forgotten ancient fiction. By contrast, Hu Shi, primarily received a treaty-port education before going to the United States, where he studied agriculture and Western philosophy. Lu Xun's motivation, as he tells us at the outset of *Mara*, and in other places such as a 1918 essay on preserving the 'National Essence',<sup>34</sup> is in seeking ways to preserve what is good and still of use in Chinese culture, not to destroy it. By contrast, Hu Shi went on the record as advocating *quanpan xibua* 全盤西化 or the 'total Westernization' of China. Lu Xun's scholarship on neglected or undervalued aspects of Chinese tradition, such as his *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilüe* 中國小說史略 (A Brief History of Chinese Fiction; 1924), *Gu xiaoshuo gouchen* 古小說鉤沉 (Ancient Fiction Retrieved; 1909–11/1938), *Kuaiji jun gushu zaji* 會稽郡故書雜集 (Old Accounts of Kuaiji Commandery; 1915), are still highly valued, yet Hu Shi produced nothing comparable. Both as a creative writer and an essayist, Lu Xun is still widely read and admired; Hu Shi, by contrast, is seen as uncreative, tedious and preachy.

So what is the crux of the contemporary quarrel with Lu Xun? Ultimately what is seen by these critics, be they neo-liberals, hard-line Communists, hard-line Nationalists, or Falun Gong 法輪功 ideologues is that 'Chinese tradition' boils down to a contrived 'cultural essence'—simple obedience to authority.

33 Wang Dehou, *Lu Xun jiao wo*, 120–121.

34 This is »Suiganlu sanshiwu« 隨感錄 (三十五) [Random Thoughts, no 35; Nov 15, 1918], in *LXQJ* 1: 305–306; tr.. in *SW* 2: 29–30.

Because Lu Xun opposes the distortion and use of tradition as a cloak for authoritarianism, his works will always be viewed with a degree of suspicion as potentially subversive by any state power, be it the Guomindang or the Communists, or resented by those with an ambition to turn back the clock, be they religious or economic fundamentalists.

Another case in point is the ‘storm in a teacup’ over the substitution (by the Board of Education in Beijing Municipality) of his emotionally provocative essay »Jinian Liu Hezhen jun« 紀念劉和珍君 (Commemorating Ms Liu Hezhen)<sup>35</sup> in memory of the young women student martyrs Liu Hezhen (1904–1926) and Yang Dequn 楊德群 (1902–1926) with a more low-keyed one »Yi Wei Suyuan jun« 憶韋素園君<sup>36</sup> which commemorates the hard life of an impoverished young editor of a translation series (1902–1932), who never abandoned his ideals, even while dying a lingering death of tuberculosis, rather than a quick one before the rifle barrels of Duan Qirui’s 段祺瑞 (1864–1936) troops. Some suspect that the Beijing authorities were worried that parallels could too easily be drawn with the events of 1989—either that or they were concerned that the essay might inspire copy-cat demonstrations at the time of the Olympics. Actually, any careful reading of Commemorating Ms Liu Hezhen shows that Lu Xun was not advocating that students take to the streets and confront troops—quite the opposite: he was railing against the cruelty of the warlord regime. It was also this essay that ran afoul of the authorities and the threat of retribution at least partially accounted for his leaving Beijing in 1926 together with Xu Guangping 許廣平 (1898–1968). In an article from that period written by the American academic Robert Merrill Bartlett (1898–1995), then in Beijing, titled »Intellectual Leaders of the Chinese Revolution«,<sup>37</sup> Bartlett tells us:

I visited Lu Sin [Lu Xun] before he left Peking for Amoy [Xiamen] in the Summer of 1926. Being a »radical«, he felt it imperative that he get away from the stifled intellectual atmosphere of Chang Tso-lin’s [Zhang Zuolin 張作霖 (1873–1928)] rule.

35 *LXQJ* 3: 273–278.

36 *LXQJ* 6: 63–70.

37 This article was published shortly afterward in the American journal *Current History* 27,1 (Oct 1927), 55–61. It introduces Liang Qichao, Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879–1942), Wu Zhihui 吳稚暉 (1865–1953), Sun Yatsen, Lu Xun, Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892–1978), Hu Shi (in that order) and names a number of other figures such as Li Dazhao 李大釗 (1888–1927) and Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885–1967), but the interview with Lu Xun in the summer of 1926 is unique. At the time of publication, Bartlett gave his title as »Professor of Western Philosophy and Literature at Peking University« and added that he was author of a book »in preparation« titled *Contemporary Thought*.

So he joined in the general exodus to the South which has robbed the capital of most of its literati. »I have found more in Russia than in any foreign culture«, he told me: »There is a certain sympathetic relation between China and Russia, a common bond in culture and experience. Chekov is my favourite writer. Among my favourites I should also name Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoievsky, Gorky, Tolstoy, Andreev, Sienkiewicz, Nietzsche and Schiller. Russian literature has been the most fully translated of any foreign literature and perhaps the most influential in modern China. This is due to similar political and spiritual conditions in the two countries. China is facing the same human struggles which the Russian novelist met. Mr Liang Chi Chao [Liang Qichao] may fear Russia, but I do not.«<sup>38</sup>

This interview on the eve of his departure from Beijing, gives additional evidence of his continued interest in a number of the writers and thinkers who feature in the early essays, as well as his own articulation of the reasons he left Beijing.

In a lecture given at the University of New South Wales (Dec 6, 2007) German scholar Wolfgang Kubin (b1945, Gu Bin 顧彬) posed the question of how we read texts: as historical documents or as literary stimuli that lead us to reflect on the present day. Literary scholars in China would often insist on the former, but the broader Chinese readership have a tradition of *jiegu fengjin* 借古諷今 or 'borrowing the past to satirize the present', which means that just about anything remotely literary and Chinese can be seen as potentially subversive, be it a film about a die factory set in the 1920s or a television series about the late Qing, such as *Zou xiang Gonghe* 走向共和 (On the Road to a Republic; 2003). The only things that seem safe right now are dubbed soap operas imported from South Korea, which now seem as ideologically unthreatening as their counterparts the spy thrillers from North Korea did in the late 1970s. And if we look hard enough for threats in Lu Xun's essay commemorating Wei Suyuan, we can certainly find them: here he condemns the philistinism of the publishing industry and the alleged superficiality of its readers for supposedly being unwilling to accept and/or promote foreign literature in translation. Here we see a parallel with the government alliance with market forces of the present-day to restrict the translation of foreign writings more and more, with the exception of Stephen King (b1947) novels and How I Got My Daughter into Harvard With No Sweat type books. I remember Xu Shoushang's anecdote about Lu Xun once greeting him with a sigh and the words: »Lin Shu has gone and translated yet another Rider Haggard novel!«<sup>39</sup>

38 Bartlett, »Intellectual Leaders of the Chinese Revolution«, 58.

39 Xu Shoushang 許壽裳, *Wangyou Lu Xun yinxiang ji* 亡友魯迅印象記 [Impressions of My

Finally, in the 1913 essay »Ni bobu meishu yijian shu« 拟播布美術意見書 (A Proposal for the Dissemination of Aesthetic Knowledge),<sup>40</sup> Lu Xun saw the nurturing of art and the development of a sophisticated aesthetic sense in the populace as vital in imbuing present-day China with a vibrant culture. He called for the establishment of museums, art galleries, theatres, concert halls, literary and art associations. If we look at China today, however, we find that far from supporting the socialist project of libraries and museums for the people, as we find in Europe, the government allocates its resources almost exclusively toward events like the Olympics, their Sixtieth Anniversary celebrations, and the armed forces while the museums and libraries languish with under-funding and public healthcare becomes a historical anecdote. Curators canvass the world and the American foundations for money to build a theme park in Dunhuang 敦煌, while the Lu Xun Museum and Archives in Beijing rent out office space and their courtyard as a parking lot to private companies to pay for their operating costs. Here I see an end to the socialist project of education and culture for the public and the beginning of a Hitlerian-style state capitalism, the grand view of which echoes back to the Berlin Olympics, with culture as media spectacle once again displacing and negating the cultivation of the individual, which is central to Confucianism as well as the Western humanist tradition.

Lu Xun as a Confucian? This point has been brought forth by James R. Pusey, Cheung Chiu-ye and others;<sup>41</sup> whether or not it is valid, I think it easy enough to conclude that the fetishization of the Olympics and the militarization of the Sixtieth Anniversary celebrations of founding of the PRC was anything but the type of internationalization championed by Lu Xun, the financial bailout, destruction of architecture and dislocation of neighborhoods, mega-spending on empty satellite towns and other real estate development schemes, the gargantuan real estate prices for apartments in the major cities is anything but what Lu Xun would have seen as the appropriate allocation of national

Departed Friend Lu Xun] (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1953), 10. Lin Shu 林紓 (1852–1924) was a successful 'translator' and popularizer of Western fiction. He himself did not know foreign languages, but worked with an informant, adapting and rewriting the stories in an elegant prose and narrative style that suited the tastes of the late-Qing readership.

40 Text in *LXQJ* 8: 45–50; English translation forthcoming in *Warriors of the Spirit*, tr. by Kowallis.

41 James R. Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983); Cheung Chiu-ye [Zhang Zhaoyi 張釗怡], *Lu Xun. The Chinese »Gentle« Nietzsche* (Frankfurt a. M. [etc.]: Lang, 2001); and Wang Dehou, *Lu Xun yu Kongzi 魯迅與孔子 [Lu Xun and Confucius]* (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 2010).

resources, and the oppression in Tibet and Xinjiang is anything but what he would have advocated as the correct way of treating religious and ethnic minorities.<sup>42</sup>

As he put it in 1907:

誠若為今立計，所當稽求既往，相度方來，摺物質而張靈明，任個人而排群數。人既發揚踔張勳矣，則邦國亦以興起。奚事抱枝拾葉，徒金鐵國會立憲之雲乎？夫勢利之念昌狂於中，則是非之辨為之昧，措置張主，輒失其宜，況乎志行污下，將借新文明之名，以大遂其私慾者乎。

If we truly intend to form a master plan for our present undertakings, the past should be examined as a gauge by which to calculate the future. We should repudiate material[istic trends] and stress the development of the native intelligence of the human mind, relying on the [potential of the] individual and dismissing [the relevance of] sheer numbers. Once people are enlightened and their capabilities brought into full play, the nation shall surely thrive. To what purpose should we grasp at the superficial aspects of Western culture and cling to its external trappings, as those who talk vainly of finance and weaponry, parliaments, and constitutions would have us do? If the lust for power and profit eats so easily away at the mind, obscuring right and wrong, and rendering all designs and espousals entirely misplaced, think how much more damage will be wrought by those already motivated by base interests, who will have ready recourse to the name of 'modern civilization' as a cover for their relentless pursuit of private designs.<sup>43</sup>

Here Lu Xun not only repudiates materialism and corruption, stressing the value of the individual and the human spirit, he also broaches the question of representative government, i.e. what we call 'democracy', as smoke and mirrors. Here we have the essence of Lu Xun, which is fundamentally anarcho-socialist and profoundly skeptical of the 'modernization' project as it was being carried out in the late-Qing, throughout much of the 20th century, and as it continues to be carried out with a vengeance by the PRC government using the Olympics, the economy, and territorial integrity as so many smokescreens.

42 See his 1933 essay »Wanghua« 王化 [A Kingly Culture], protesting the treatment of Muslims in Xinjiang and the bombing of the Yao minority people in Guangxi by the Guomindang government. *LXQJ* 5: 135-136; tr. in *SW* 3: 277-279.

43 From »Wenhua pianzhi lun« (On Imbalanced Cultural Development), tr. in *Warriors of the Spirit*; original text in *LXQJ* 1: 46.

To quote Lenin (1902) and his famous predecessor Nikolaj G. Chernychevsky (1828–1889) with his novel (1862–63): *Što delat'?* Что делать? *Was tun? Zenme ban?* 怎麼辦? *He wei?* 何為? How then shall we live? The encouraging conclusion is that China, the United States, Australia and Slovakia all need their intellectuals now more than ever as an oppositional voice when »all other channels are blocked«, as Lu Xun described China in 1908 at the outset of »Toward a Refutation of Malevolent Voices«. <sup>44</sup> He then dedicated his life to the unblocking. We now search for his successors.

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44 *LXQJ* 8: 23.