Newspaper Supplements as Literary Playground: 
The Case of Chenbao fukan (1921 – 1928)

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A man here who should write, and honestly confess that he wrote for bread, might as well send his manuscript to fire the baker’s oven; not one creature will read him: all must be court-bred poets, or pretend at least to be court-bred, who can expect to please.

Oliver Goldsmith (1728 – 1774),  

In the publishing world of China’s 1920s, marked not only by new ideas, but also yet unseen printing technology and distribution channels, ‘supplements’ to newspapers (fukan, i.e. literally ‘printed together’) present a particularly significant form of publication. Newspaper supplements are also important in number. The roughly 3,200 Chinese daily papers that are recorded for the period between 1898 and 1949 have as their counterpart some 7,500 ‘newspaper supplements’ – only in few cases independent publications, but for the most part integrated into their ‘mother’ papers, be it as single pages with a separate heading (and usually also an independent numbering), or be it even as an appendix in smaller size offered to readers in an increasingly competitive media environment. These supplements’ specialized topics cover a wide range from chemistry and nuclear physics up to local opera and telecommunication technology and were intended to satisfy
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the needs of an also increasingly educated readership. Far more than 1,200 among these 7,500 supplements discuss literary topics as their core. Newspapers that were sufficiently successful had therefore, up to 1927, ample means to create a space for already noted or rising authors of New Literature that could be kept basically free from interventions. As an uncontestably representative example, the Beijing Chenbao fukan (intermittently also named fujuan) shall serve for a case study, under the following perspectives that are dominantly inspired by sociological considerations: (1) material aspects of the supplement including issues of design and page-setup; (2) acceleration of debates due to the relative frequency of publication and their interaction with publications of lower periodicity; (3) networking (a) by the publishing house on the basis of its supplement as a printing product with an expanded topical range and (b) by editors and contributors on the basis of their regional origin; and finally (4) financial implications of the supplement publication.

To talk about first things first: Throughout the publication period of the Supplement to the Peking Morning Post (such its official English name used as a parallel title), both names fujuan 副刊 and fukan 副刊 have been used not only intermittently, but also in one and the same issue, so that fujuan sometimes served as head title, whereas fukan appeared in column margin on the top, or vice versa (which is why hereafter Chenbao fukan will be used uniformly to denote the same supplement named differently). And as if it were not enough in variation, also both writings of fu were employed, i.e. 副 with the ‘knife’ as radical, or 附 with the ‘mound’, so that free combinations of the following four characters occur:

This is not only significant for the situation of the Chinese language in the early 1920s. It is also typical for the fukan as publication mode, if not for writing in China at the time in general: The limits and borders drawn by not fully disinterested conventional literary history writing in the past and up to the present appear to be, if taken under closer scrutiny, deliberate, penetrable and volatile. This is particularly true for the concepts of genres of which realizations are often adapting to the
specific design and page-setup needs of the medium fukan, as will be demonstrated below.

In literary and cultural history writing, this is equally true for the pre-history of the Chenbao fukan, i.e. of its mother paper Chenbao: In contrast to the images of a dynamic center of publication and therefore also newspaper enterprises in Shanghai, drawn by a still dominant fashion in Chinese studies seeking to identify a spearhead of modernization in China (and thus, by the way, also providing an indirect apology to imperialist China policies since the Opium War), Peking was the leading place in newspaper publication, at least up to the mid-1920s: In the early Republican period, i.e. after 1912, more than 500 daily papers were published in China. In 1926, 105 of them appeared in Peking, while Shanghai occupied only the fourth position with 23 dailies, even after Hankou (36) and Ji’nan (Lin Yutang 1936: 124).

Among the many newspapers established in the early Republican period was also the Chenzhong bao 晨鐘報, first published on August 15, 1916, with the English subtitle “Morning Bell”. Together with Liang Qichao 梁启超 (1873 – 1929), also Tang Hualong 湯化龍 (1874 – 1918) was among its initiators, who had been successor of Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1861 – 1940) as minister of Education, served in the cabinet of Duan Qirui 段祺瑞 (1865 – 1936) and was killed in Canada in 1918, by a gunman commissioned by the Guomindang. In December 1918, the paper changed its name to Chenbao (“Morning Post”). Originally, the daily paper had been the official organ of the Progressive Party led by Liang Qichao, later of the Constitutional Study Society (Xianfa yanjiu hui 憲法研究會) that had been formed in opposition against Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859 – 1916) and his monarchist ambitions.

The Chenbao can be considered to belong to the tiny group of what is called a ‘quality paper’. A survey conducted in the then still very young Chinese academic field of ‘newspaper studies’ (baozhixue 報紙學) showed that in the early 1920s, the Chenbao ranged top among all Chinese daily papers in news coverage of foreign countries, with 18 percent of all editorial texts about events abroad.1 From the be-

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1 This essay has emerged from a paper prepared for the XXVIII. Deutscher Orientalistentag “Orientalistik zwischen Philologie und Sozialwissenschaft” (Oriental Studies between Philo-
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In the beginning, the *Chenbao* had reserved its page 7 (out of a total of 8 – as in many Chinese newspapers until the present day) for serialized novels, poetry and the vulgarization of sciences and technology. On September 9, 1916, Li Dazhao 李大剑 (1889 – 1927), the later co-founder of the CCP, left his editor’s position in the then main paper still named *Chenzhongbao* and took responsibility for this special page. He kept the editorship even after having been appointed director of the library of Peking University in January 1918 where he would become the mentor of Mao Zedong 毛泽东 (1893 – 1976) (Cui Yinhe 2007: 20). As of July 1st, 1920, Sun Fuyuan 孫伏園 (1884 – 1966) became his successor. He had started to teach at Peking University in 1918 and in the wake of the May Fourth movement developped a distinctive political interest. Upon establishment of the Literary Study Society (Wenxue yanjiu hui 文學研究會) whose founding member he was, Sun Fuyuan gave up his teaching position and became a full-time editor. It is due to his initiative that from October 12, 1921, the original page 7 began to be printed separately as a *fukan* of 4 pages. Possibly, he has even invented the...

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2 *Qinghua xuebao* 清華學報 2/1925; cited from Lin Yutang 1936, 141. The basis of the survey was a comprehensive statistical analysis of five big dailies in China, over a period of 40 days starting with Jan 1st, 1922.
term *fukan*, or to be more precise: he is certainly the person who contributed most to establish the previous adverb-verb compound *fu kan* ('printed apart') as a noun for 'supplement' in the modern language.\(^2\)

A special section for poetry had existed in the Shanghai *Shenbao* 申報 since the late 1870s, and the *Tongwen Hubao* 同文海報 (1898 – ca 1908) since 1900 even had a separately printed supplement in a smaller format titled “*Tongwen xiaoxian lu*” 同文消閒錄 (Leisurly Records). Nonetheless, Chen Shuyu believes that the word *fukan* was first used as a publication title by Sun Fuyuan when he managed to establish the *Chenbao fukan* as a separate entity (Chen Shuyu 1994: 5).

A total of 2,309 issues of the *Chenbao fukan* appeared from October 12, 1921, until May 31st, 1928, i.e. when the whole newspaper ceased publication. The supplement printed in vertical format in the beginning, originally had 4 pages. This corresponds to a quarter printing sheet folded once and results in the 16 *kai* format. From 1925, it had 8 pages (half-sheet folded twice) and finally, from 1927 until the end, just 2 pages. Unfortunately, microfilms and photomechanic reproducions do not provide a sufficient basis to establish safely which printing procedure was employed. However, the decreasing quantity of pages in the *Chenbao fukan* is misleading: It may be said that the *Chenbao fukan* had a number of ‘children’ initiated by the same supplement’s editor-ship. This progeny consistend in additional supplements with other names which are partly used as independent titles, partly as subtitles to the main heading *Chenbao fukan*. On certain fixed days of the week, these additional supplements were published in lieu of the original supplement, so they did in fact divide potential contents under various different specialized titles.

\(^2\) Cf. *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大詞典 vol. 11, p. 949, where the main entry lists the writing variant with the ‘mound’ radical, citing a witness with verbal usage from *Ershi nian muzhu zhi guai xianzhuang* 二十年目睹之怪現狀 (1905 – 10), ch. 1, by Wu Woyao 吳沃堯 (1867 – 1910). The auxiliary entry with the ‘knife’ radical and nominal usage lists as witness a passage from Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881 – 1936) with his „*Lon fanyin muke*” 論翻印本刻 (1933; collected in *Nanqiang beidiao ji* 南腔北調集, 1934). The *Xiandai Hanyu cidian* 現代漢語詞典 (1979: 343a), however, just lists the writing with the ‘knife’ radical and gives as additional meanings ‘special page’ and ‘section [of a paper]’ or ‘column’. --- Note that the “inventor” himself employed the term *fuzhang* 副裝 when introducing himself as the editor of the new supplement to the *Jingbao* 京報 in late 1924 (see Sun Fuyuan 1924).
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The oldest among these numerous offsprings is *Wenxue xunkan* 文學旬刊 (Literature Tendaily) and was published from June 1st, 1923, until the end of September 1925. Its editor was the writer Wang Tongzhao 王統照 (1897 – 1957). Effective from Oct 1st, 1925, the *Chenbao fukan* 聯華旬刊 underwent reorganization when the poet Xu Zhimo 徐志摩 (1897 – 1931) took over editorship. To which extent a Manichean concept of camps still prevailed can be gathered from how it was put when a photomechanic reprint was published in 1981: “Xu Zhimo and the Crescent Moon Group took over control” (reprint 1981, cover p. 2).

New supplements are created soon afterwards as follows: On Fridays, *Guoji* 國際 (International Affairs) is published, on Tuesdays *Shehui* 社會 (Society) with practical advices for everyday life and topics that may be vaguely related to social sciences, and finally on Sundays the family supplement *Jiating* 家庭 (Home) in which education issues are discussed, games for children are proposed and children’s tales and stories are printed. This family supplement survived until the last day of the *Chenbao*.

A complete overview of all supplements may allow to see the outcome of their frequency and their chronological distribution:

- **Wenxue xunkan** 文學旬刊 82 issues June 1st, 1923 – Sep 25, 1925
- **Yilin xunkan** 藝林旬刊 (Tendaily from the Forest of Arts) 17 issues Apr 10, 1925 – Sep 30, 1925
- **Xin shaoxian xunkan** 新少年旬刊 (New Youth Tendaily) 9 issues July 8, 1925 – Sep 28, 1925
- **Guoji** 國際 84 issues Oct 2nd, 1925 – May 27, 1927
- **Jiating** 家庭 131 issues Oct 4, 1925 – May 27, 1928
- **Shehui** 社會 83 issues Oct 6, 1925 – May 31, 1927
- **Shijuan** 詩鶴 (Poetry Supplement) 11 issues Apr 1st, 1926 – June 10, 1926
To a certain extent, the first ever titled column appearing in *Chenbao fukan* as “Taolun” 讨论 (Discussion) in early 1923 may be seen as a percursor of its progeny or the sub-supplements, insofar as the column-title implied a functional differentiation becoming materially more manifest soon afterwards with the publication of the Literature Tendaily.

Moreover, the table reveals a few other important aspects in the history of *Chenbao fukan*: The earliest sub-supplements, with the exception of the Literature Tendaily with its relatively long life, seem experiments intended to channel possible authors’ and readers’ interests or inspired by spontaneous needs of the days, such as the New Youth Tendaily (see below). Only after Xu Zhimo took over, a clear conceptual line became evident which resulted in the establishment of sub-supplements with a fairly long existence. However, there is no evidence that Xu Zhimo himself was the spiritus rector to these developments; rather was it the publishing house’s policy and his appointment formed just an element of it. Finally, it is remarkable to note that the relatively short-lived poetry supplement *Shijuan*, evidently Xu Zhimo’s particular concern (see Xu Zhimo 1926a and 1926b), during not even three months managed to publish a considerable number of texts that have survived and are meanwhile considered canonical in modern Chinese literature. That the offspring with the far longest life, *Jiating*, appeared in its last issue with the sequel no 38 of The Friend’s Wife by Yiqing 綺青 and the 53rd continuation of After Divorce by Qianqian 乾乾 sufficiently illustrates its gradual shift from serious psychological considerations about the family system to banal novels — written by two authors who have not left any other tangible traces.

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1 No such table has been compiled so far (if we exclude the *Shanghai [...] fukan mulu* which is, according to its aim, incomplete, and reveals that the holdings that served to compile the reprint originated from different libraries), as far as I know, not even in Zhang Taofu 2007, so that orientation in his monograph is considerably impeded. Several recent authors give lists of the ‘sub-supplements’ which are, however, either incomplete or do not give details about quantità and chronology.

4 It is hardly possibile to identify the former with the *ci* poetry author Li Yiqing 李绮青 (*jinshi*...
Publication of the Literature Tendaily ends a bit less silently. After an anonymous ‘special announcement’, probably from Wang Tongzhao (1925a), he takes the word explicitly. His statement to readers may be quoted in full as a typical example of patterns in author – reader relationships:

The present supplement has been published since the year 12 [of the Republic; i.e. 1923], at that time under the shared editorship of Mr Sun Fuyuan and myself. Since last October, I was the only responsible editor. Because this year from June to Spetember I was not in Beijing and could not charge anybody with editing it, I decided to cease its publication and have therefore to summarize the experience of editing the supplement as I did above (Wang Tongzhao 1925b: 24).

These well-tempered words, all-too-obviously giving in to the powers that be and just alluding to the possible shifts in the publishing house’s policies after Sun Fuyuan left his office, give a very clear hint to what the implications of a Free Weekly Supplement (Ziyou zhoukan 自由週刊) of not further specified nature might be, which happens to be advertised right at the side of these words of parting.

From the very beginning, bound-up monthly volumes of the Chenbao were put on sale by the publisher. It is unclear whether they were reprinted for the purpose, or whether they were simply produced from remaining copies of the newspaper which had a circulation of some 7,000 copies. Both the supplement (including all its offspring) and the newspaper proper (zhengzhang 正張) were retroactively sold in separate volumes every month.

As may be inferred from an announcement by the publishing house, inserted in several monthly bound volume from June 1923 on, these volumes soon had a much wider circulation than the original issue – which is not suprising insofar as readers in other cities had little reason

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1890) and the latter with the painter He Tianjian 賀天健 (1892 – 1978). See Chen Yutang 2005: 450b (#4863) and 946b–947a (#10012).

5 Shenbao nianjian 申報年鑒 1921 and 1926; cited from Lin Yutang 1937: 146.
to become subscribers to a Peking newspaper that would have reached them with several days’ delay. The publishing house does not only pride itself to produce the periodical publication with the greatest circulation in China, but also indicates that more than 10,000 volumes were sold every month. The figure as such might be exaggerated in view of the purpose of the announcement, yet it remains to be noted that it was written in response to many business people expressing the wish to publish advertisements (Chenbao 1923).

1. Materiality, Design and Illustrations

There are several more interesting technical details that all may be attributed to what Gérard Genette has labelled ‘paratexts’, but I want to
present here, more precisely, ‘publisher’s peritexts’, i.e. the placement and processing of texts and their presentation or discussion of a given text through other text – all factors shaping the appearance of a text which are not necessarily intended by their authors, but are due to the material conditions and the means of their technical reproduction (cf. Genette 2001: esp. 22-40).

Over the full period of publication of the Chenbao fukan three basic types of design and page setup may be identified. Their most important peculiarities are as follows:

(1) Until the end of 1924, the supplement is printed on 4 pages of 4 horizontal columns in vertical lines that are framed or separated from each other by lines. Each issue is page-numbered separately. In the center of the header we find the alternative title fukan 附刊 with the ‘mound’ radical. In each issue, there are three different date indications: In the header, the publication day according to the traditional (lunar) calendar as well as the Gregorian date with the respective ‘year of the Republic’ (minguo ... nian) are given, whereas the (Christian) year of the common era is indicated under the main title on each frontpage. The supplement’s title is written in lishu 譚書 (‘official script’) characters with some elements of the seal script (zhuanshu 篆書) and probably originates in a calligraphy provided by Liang Qichao. The issues carry annually running numbers.

(2) From January 1st until September 30, 1925, the Chenbao fukan is published with three horizontal columns with framing or separating lines. Despite the doubled space to 8 pages per issue, just some 30 percent more text is included, as the page setup is more generous. A parallel pagination is introduced, both in Chinese numerals, one in brackets in the footer per issue, the other running through monthly and placed in the side margin. Among the date forms, only the Gregorian calendar is left, with the ‘year of the Republic’ indicated. The line leading is handled flexibly, such that the number of lines varies between 27 and 40 per column – as in the instance shown below where the total length of a contribution published on May 3rd, 1925, has ostensibly been underestimated by the editor or typesetters (Lü Chen 1925, see plate 4). As a consequence, the article in its latter parts was set almost twice as densely as in the beginning. There was a precise reason to this hurry:
One day before a whole issue was to be devoted to the May Fourth demonstrations from six years before, there was an attempt to merge two events considered worth of commemoration: the movement named May Fourth and the centenary of Thomas Henry Huxley’s (1825 – 1896) birth who happened to have been born on May 4th. How delicate a task this was is extensively discussed and justified:

I do not advocate to fix memorial days arbitrarily. We may go about through the whole country and would not find anybody who would approve to do so, because otherwise people much concerned about their country would immediately add another memorial day. If [memorial days are fixed arbitrarily], some people concerned about an event or others who consider a person worth of veneration, may only let the respectively others commemorate. Therefore, it is not necessary to fix a memorial day and bother a country’s population or its institutions, or grant a day off and organize special memorial activities (Zhou Jianhou 1925: 16b).
This does indeed illustrate acceleration as elaborated below, and it is certainly not farfetched to see it as a genuinely modern phenomenon both in form and content. The horizons were suddenly widened, and modern printing made it possible to process the exponentially increased amount of information – even though it did not always work as planned, technically speaking.

In a comparable instance, the lectures given by the visiting Perry F. Ward (1884 – 1935) on the Ethics of Industrialism were seemingly considered of such importance that a special issue of 8 pages was published on March 15, 1925, with not less than 56 lines per column, whereas the regular issue on the following day was typeset with just 34 lines (no 58). The title was most likely calligraphed by Xu Zhimo, although he had not yet taken his office as an editor, or precisely for this fact.

(3) On October 1st, 1925, when Xu Zhimo took over editorship of the Chenbao fukan, the supplement changed to a horizontal format of
**Plate 5:** Basic Pattern of Page Design Type 3 (Oct 1st, 1925 – May 31st, 1928): Initial Page.

**Plate 6:** Basic Pattern of Page Design Type 3: Inside Page With Current Text Flowing Around Poetry and *chuangzuo* (here ‘serialized novels’) in a vertically separated block.
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4 pages with 3 columns each with frame and separating lines, and from July 1st, 1927, to 2 pages with 4 columns each without any lining – possibly for difficulties in paper-supply due to the Northern Expedition. It is difficult to establish in which way this reduced 2-page version of the supplement was printed and folded, whether it was on two sides of a 1/16 sheet or on one side together with other supplements which are not among the progeny of the Chenbao fukan.

In the final period, vertical lines, partly executed with ornaments from cubes and rhombs, were exclusively employed to separate poems from text in prose, such that in a number of instances the prose text flows around the poetry. Should be noticed that towards the final issues the heading ‘creative works’ (chuangzuo 創) appeared mainly for serialized novels which were printed at the end of an issue, running consecutively over all four columns and thus separated from the rest of each issue. As the usages of chuangzuo, in contrast to xiaoshuo 小說 (‘fiction’) for other prose texts in the same issues, suggest we find here an equivalent of what is nowadays named changpian 長篇 and zhongpian 中篇 (‘long’ and ‘middle-length’ fiction, i.e. ‘novels’ and ‘novellettes’) on the one hand, and duanpian 短篇 (‘short fiction’ or ‘short stories’) on the other.

Unlike during the period before October 1st, 1925, titles of the supplements are now designed as a frontispiece with some integrated text. After a short intermezzo with a half-nude – possibly considered too daring, although distinctive attributes of her femininity are simply amputated – who seems to sit upon the table of contents and is waving her hand, possibly towards new readers (nos 1283 – 1290, until Oct 15, 1925), a superman-like muscle-man appears, possibly on the basis of a woodcut. It reminds the male full of vigour on the cover pages of Acéphale (literally ‘brainless’, 1936 – 39) edited by Georges Bataille (1897 – 1962), but in this case, the Promethean figure has no fat, just muscles and sinews. Most likely, these frontispieces serving as de facto cover titles have all been designed by the poet Wen Yiduo 閔一多 (1899 – 1946), also a regular contributor and together with Xu Zhimo 陸小曼 a member of the Crescent Moon group.

Later on, the frontispiece to the ‘mother’ supplement was twice changed again, first to a couple where the male shamefully looks
downwards and hides his face, then in the end to a horseman that vaguely reminds Han dynasty representations, though in difference to them it visibly displays a naked body, as do the preceding frontispieces, and also finds parallels in Western iconography of messangers and postmen on horseback. Both these later frontispieces are clearly based on a wood-cut. The latter is unlikely to be executed by Wen Yiduo. In the left bottom corner it carries an ornament that may be an author’s name, but was not legible in any of the reprint reproductions, and is overall not suitable for being printed in a newspaper.
The earliest among the sub-supplements, Wenxue xunkan, has gone through interesting experiments in the design of its frontispiece. When it made its first appearance, for one single issue it carried an illustration that seems to present a hybrid from a number of different sources. At first glance, it appears to represent Daedalus and Ikarus, emphasized by

Plate 9: Frontispiece nos 1451 – 2167

Plate 10: Frontispiece nos 2170 – 2309
(Jan 7 – May 31st, 1928).

It is unclear whether the two issues nos 2168 and 2169 due to be published before Jan 7, 1928, are simply missing in the reprint.

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the sun ranging prominent in the middle of the picture, but in difference to the Greek tradition, Daedalus’ cloth of feathers is also in dissolution. Moreover, he presents a flower that could represent a rose to a baby-like Ikarus that has fallen into the sea (plate 11). However, the feathers flying away from Daedalus, together with the extended flower, are also reminiscent of a female figure blowing into a flower of dendelion, thus dispersing the seed-shops, displayed prominently on covers of the French dictionary publishing house Larousse of the time (in reduced and abstracted use until the present day) and symbolizing the spread of knowledge (plate 12). However, this illustration appeared only once, and also the maybe most felicitous design of just displaying the sub-supplement’s title in a vigorous *lishu* was not retained, but substituted by the four characters written in *xingshu*, probably again from the hand of Liang Qichao, the newspaper’s founder and mentor.

Note that despite the main title *Wenxue xunkan*, the ‘mother’ supplement’s name appears as a subtitle.

*Plate 11: Frontispiece*
*Wenxue xunkan no 1*
*(June 1st, 1923).*

*Plate 12: Cover illustration of Nouveau petit Larousse illustré (1930).*
Light in general and the sun in particular as well established allegories of knowledge and ‘enlightenment’ are repeatedly employed for design purposes. The most striking occurrence appears in 1923 when for the monthly volumes a female nude holding an electric light bulb was displayed on the cover page: striking because the picture was quite osé in China for the time (and probably abandoned for that reason after only four months), but striking as well because it is most likely copied from an advertisement by General Electric for Edison bulbs, thus embodying the unaffected trust in progress mediated by technology, as the equivalent to the belief in enlightenment by means of rational consideration.

Plate 13: Cover page of monthly reprint volumes January to April 1923.

The uncertainty about the publication period is due to the fact that in the photomechanic reprint edition of the Chenbao fukan, the monthly cover page for the bound volumes is missing for April 1923.
If in later monthly volumes a rooster appeared, it was not only a late echo of the ‘mother’ paper’s original name “Morning Bell”, but also nicely combined peculiarities of newspaper business and its morning and evening editions with the motif of (early morning) sunlight. The rooster as the animal ‘awakening’ is shown in an abstracted form since May 1925, but from October 1925 onwards is again combined with dominant light from the morning sun.

It may be seen as a logical conclusion from the experience in the aftermath of the May 30th Movement that soon afterwards, and in fact as the first sub-supplement under Xu Zhimo’s responsibility, we find International Affairs (Guoji), given that indeed imperial powers’ involvement in China was among the chief concerns of student activists. It was published under the editorship of Chen Hansheng 陳/健由7青青0/健由7b閒9 (1897 – 2004), a native from Wuxi 無/健由93錄b (Jiangsu) with an educational background in Chicago University. In a not altogether mistaken assessment of what ‘international affairs’ meant at the time, the supplement carried

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8 It is not unlikely that the monthly reprint volumes’ cover-design is drafted by Chen Hansheng, given that they are signed with Quan (see Plate 14, bottom left in the rooster’s wings), possibly cut off in the reprint for technical reasons from the full form Yuanquan 湯泉 Chen Hansheng frequently used as a pen-name in the Guoji supplement.
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**Plate 16:** Frontispiece Jiating nos 1–61 (Oct 4, 1925 – Jan 16, 1927).

**Plate 17:** Frontispiece Jiating nos 62–79 (Jan 23rd, 1927 – May 29, 1927), and 52 issues, nos 1969…2305 (June 5, 1927 – May 27, 1928).
the Statue of Liberty as a frontispiece throughout its publication period till May 1927.

The Family sub-supplement first had a visibly Western child on its front-page, holding a bunch of flowers that may well emerge from a cone as it is presented to children on the first day of schooling in some European countries (plate 16). In any instance, it indicates an interest in educational issues which is fully manifest in its first period. The ink-drawing in a bad imitation of Feng Zikai’s 豐子愷 (1898 –
1975) distinctive style, then already highly appraised, took over as a frontispiece in early 1927 and marks a shift to the idyllic – using a scene that probably never existed, neither in China nor elsewhere: a sleeping dog under a scarecrow.

In the Poetry Supplement that indeed covered Xu Zhimo’s original field and was established only half a year after he took his editorial office, the representation of Pegasos, according to tradition ‘the source of all wisdom’, is with all certainty due to Wen Yiduo, as is the frontispiece of the similarly shortlived sub-supplement Jukan (Drama, or Theatre). The painted face displayed there marks a revived interest in traditional theatrical forms – quite differing from the then already older May Fourth generation of writers. Maybe, however, that the time was not mature yet, as Jukan was discontinued as well, after only three months (see Xu Zhimo 1926c and 1926d). Both these supplements seem to have been Xu Zhimo’s particular concern, for which it is additional evidence that they immediately followed each other – both of them published weekly. This might have proved, given the specialized topics, too frequent for the more general readership.

Visibly again from the same hand is the frontispiece to the Shehui supplement, showing an art-déco treatment of parallelized lines combined with big spaces much similar to the Shijuan front-page. It demonstrates a bleak vision of social conditions, displaying a human in chains.

2. Acceleration

As can be seen from a great number of dated contributions, the Chenbao fukan had a pre-publication period of approximately 4 to 10 days. Exceptions from this pattern were made with lectures by prominent scholars, mostly such from abroad. The Bohemian economist Emil Lederer (1882 – 1939), then teaching in Heidelberg and to become one of the founders of the New York School of Social Research when forced into exile, talked about “Basics of an Economic Concept of History” at 5 pm and could have read a Chinese translation of his lecture two days later already (see Lederer 1925).
Such a speed was a little frightening to Xu Zhimo when he became editor upon returning from his second journey to Europe, as can be gathered from his programmatic article when taking over: “To write once every month is still alright, to have to say something every week is already pretentious, but to be compelled to talk every day is simply unconceivable – rubbish is the inevitable result, and it may just be thrown away” (Xu Zhimo 1925a: 1a). However, Xu Zhimo also relates how his friend Chen Bosheng, at the time editor-in-chief of the newspaper, had finally convinced him because he would have two advantages at the same time: First, he could join an already existing journal and therefore did not need to think about where he could provide the necessary capital to launch his own journal. Second, he would receive a guaranteed salary and therefore would not need to live the life of a vagabond (youmin) any longer. Finally, Xu Zhimo continues, he agreed to take the position as an editor under the condition that the journal would henceforth be published weekly or every three days (sanrikan), as his potential as a writer was not more than 30,000 characters per week. “Thus, a joke became reality,” Xu Zhimo concludes his report, not without adding that he had also made another condition: “If I am coming, I want to be the sole fully responsible editor” (Xu Zhimo 1925a: 1b, 1c) – possibly warned by the example of Sun Fuyuan who was forced to quit his job upon an intervention into editorial affairs and who had made his case public when Yusì was founded as ensuing measure.

Xu Zhimo makes explicit that his concept of liberty in his editorship also includes action that may result in the loss of readers. Yet to be sure, even before Xu Zhimo became editor, he had frequently taken advantage of the high frequency of publication of Chenbao fukan. His travelogues mailed from his journey to Europe were some time printed on consecutive days. And he also intervened – which would not have been possible in the same way, had the Chenbao fukan appeared weekly – in a debate about the translation of a quatrain by Goethe that has seen a number of parodies, not only in German:

Wer nie sein Brot mit Tränen ass,
Wer nie die kummervollen Nächte
Newspaper Supplements as Literary Playground: The Case of *Chenbao fukan* (1921 – 1928)

*Auf seinem Bette weinend sass
Der kennt euch nicht, ihr himmlischen Mächte.*

Several translation issues that were discussed originated in the fact that the English translation of the poem by Thomas Carlyle (1795 – 1881) was the basis. Yet the debate centered around a typical problem of intercultural transfer, namely whether the ‘bread’ (‘Brot’) may really be rendered as *mianbao 麵包*, or whether *fan 飯* (‘cooked rice’) in its metonymical usage denoting ‘everyday food’ or ‘food in general’ would not be a more appropriate rendering.

The “himmlische Mächte” (‘Heavenly powers’) from the last verse also inspired some controversial positions, in which the proposed solutions ranged from *tianfu 天父* (‘Heavenly father’) and *tianshen 天神* (‘Heavenly spirits’) to *ziranli 自然力* (‘natural powers’) – evidently a veiled discussion about the concept of God that was ostensibly avoided by Goethe, too. In detail, Xu Zhimo first provides a criticism of the privately communicated translation by his friend Hu Shi 胡適 (1891 – 1962) and publishes his comment in the latter’s journal *Xiandai pinglun 現代評論* (subtitled “Critical Review”). This ignited the little heated controversy and resulted in not less than six different Chinese versions of the Goethe poem. Two of them originated from Xu Zhimo and four were proposed by other authors, yet Xu Zhimo had the last say published in *Chenbao fukan*. Participants in the debate less prominent than Hu Shi and Xu Zhimo saw their contributions considered under the heading *tongxin 通信* (‘correspondence’, ‘readers’ mail’ etc.). However, it has to be noticed that the *Chenbao fukan*, thanks to its frequency, was in the position to publish several responses at the same time to the actually ongoing discussion, even before other journals and periodical publications had their respectively next date of publication.

If soon afterwards, the ethnologist and expert in English literature Jiang Shaoyuan 江紹原 (1898 – 1983), who would later find himself among the co-founders of *Yusi*, felt entitled to expound his ideas about

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86 Details, also of bibliographical nature, can be found in Findeisen 2001, and make evident to which extent the debate was only possible thanks to a close communicative connection between *Chenbao fukan* and other journals.
poetry translation on a sample by Rabindranath Tagore (1861 – 1941),
it was certainly not only because the Bengali poet who had briefly be-
fore travelled there was extremely en vogue in China, but because the
medium, by its very frequency, almost invited such spontaneous state-
ments. Moreover, Tagore’s poems were widely translated into Chinese.
In this instance, Jiang Shaoyu discusses not less than three different
existing translations, namely by Peng Jixiang 彭基相 (a later Yusi con-
tributor as well, dates unknown), Yu Wenwei 余文偉 and Li Fangyuan
李芳園, and contrasts them with not less than four different own trans-
lation proposals, supposedly based on various differing principles, be-
fore giving his credo in form of an algebraic formula: “Translation
should proceed according to the pattern \((a+b)^2 = a^2 + 2ab + b^2\)” (Jiang
Shaoyuan 1924: 4a), suggesting that “2ab” denoted what has to be
achieved by the translator.

To which extent such short-term interventions were based upon
close personal relationships or even constituted them, becomes evident
from a letter written by the same Jiang Shaoyuan to the then editor Sun
Fuyuan where he addresses him as “Fuyuan wu xiong” 伏園吾兄 (‘my
dear older brother [Sun] Fuyuan’). The topic of discussion is a bio-
ographical series Sun Fuyuan is planning to bring out, and Jiang
Shaoyuan is making a number of detailed proposals, mainly with re-
gard to its internal organization. The letter written by Sun Fuyuan in re-
sponse was also printed (Jiang Shaoyuan 1923).

When on October 11, 1924, the famed French critic Anatole France
(b1844), widely translated and discussed in China, passed away, within
just two weeks’ time a special issue of the Wenxue xunkan was prepared
(no 51, Oct 25, 1924), also including a translation of his story about
“Abeille” (Bee), the daughter of an aristocrat (1882; in Balthasar,
1889).

3. Networking

There are two domains that most clearly display origin and develop-
ments of networks within and around the Chenbao fukan: the degree to
which the supplement was integrated and commercially processed
within the publishing house of the *Chenbao* on the one hand, and the regional affiliation (usually their place of origin, *ji*籍) and educational background or professional specialization (*xí*系) of the supplement’s editors and authors on the other.

### 3.1 Networking Inside the Publishing House

The paradigm of shared interests with the *Chenbao fukan* can be found as early as in the newspaper’s publishing house own book publication of *Five Major Lectures* by Dewey (1921) which already saw their 9th printing when they were publicized in November 1924 in the monthly volume with the compiled issues of *Chenbao fukan*, under the heading ‘distributed by the Morning Post publishing house’ (Chenbao she faxing 晨報社發行; see Dewey 1921). The background consists in the fact that the Progressive Party (Jinbudang 進步黨), also the founding body for the *Chenbao*, had also funded the sojourn of the philosopher John Dewey (1859 – 1952) when he stayed in China. The newspaper’s publishing house collects its own book publications under the title *Chenbaoshe congshu*晨報社叢書, to which is, for the sake of further differentiation, soon added a sub-series titled Theatre (*xiju* 戏剧). Far more than half of the texts printed in book-form (a number of 22 in 1924) had been previously published in the newspaper proper or in its supplements, whereas the remaining texts were mostly written by prominent members of the Progressive Party. The list of available titles published in the series looks as follows:


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In an early article, LuXun has nicely elaborated the intricacies of this double affiliation of an individual (see Lu Xun 1925). In any instance, beyond the great gesture of refuting both patterns of being identified, it testifies a well-developed perception of either perspectives at an early stage after May Fourth.
vol. 3 *Duwei wu da jiangyan* 杜威五大講演 [Five Major Lectures by Dewey].

vol. 5 Bing Xin 冰心 (1900 – 1999) & al., *Xiaoshuo di yi ji* 小說第一集 [First Collection of Short Stories].

vol. 6 —, *Xiaoshuo di er ji* 第二集 [Second Collection of Short Stories].

vol. 7 Chen Dabei 陳大悲 (1887 – 1944), ed., *Aimei de xiju* 愛美的戲劇 [Amateurs’ Theatre].

vol. 10 *Youyi di yi ji* 遊記第一集 [First Collection of Travelogues; 4 texts, among them ‘Images from a Journey to France’ by Sun Fuxi 孫福熙 (1899 – 1962), the brother of Sun Fuyuan].

vol. 11 Zhou Zuoren 周慎人 (1885 – 1967), *Ziji de yuandi* 自己的園地 [One’s Own Garden; 1923].

vol. 12 *Zhihui celiang* 指揮測量 [Measuring Intelligence].

vol. 13 *Dai Dongyuan wenji* 戴東原文集 [Works of Dai Zhen 戴震 (1723 – 1777), ‘on the occasion of the bicentenary of his birth’].

vol. 14 *Yizei Bijialin* 義賊畢加林 [The Traitor…].

vol. 15 *Daoyi zhi jiao* 道義之交 [About the Connection Between the ‘Way’ and ‘Righteousness’].


vol. 18 *Kuoren de xiaodao* 阙人的孝道 [Filial Piety of a Wealthy Man, a play by Pu Boying 蒲伯英 (1875 – 1935), actually the director of the “Morning Post” publishing house].

vol. 19 *Feiku shenghuo* 匪窟生活 [Life in a Bandit’s Cavern; fictionalized reportage by Zhang Jian’an 張健庵].

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11 Both the so far most authoritative bibliographical compilation by Tian Dawei (1987: 356b #4045) listing the publication among those with unidentified sources and the catalogue of the National Library that records a microfilm of the book, produced in 2005, have not been able to establish the volume’s origin.
Soon after that, i.e. in 1925, activities of the “Morning Post” undergo a process that emphasizes the relative independence of its various departments. While previously, all stages of production, including editorial office, publishing house, printing and distribution had been integrated under one single roof, printing is now in the hands of a company established for the purpose, the Mingming yinshuaju. This measure was certainly taken also for the acquisition of orders that are not related to the publishing business, i.e. job printing. As its purpose, the expansion of printing capacities, no doubt also for satisfying the increasing demand for the monthly volumes of the Chenbao fukan, is explicitly stated (Hedingben, Sep 1925, cover p. 3).

In the earlier period of the Chenbao fukan, in the typical position placed around where the newspaper sheets are folded, we find the own publishing house’s announcements side by side with advertisements by the equally very active publisher of the New Tide (Xinchaoshe 新潮社) located at Peking University. In the monthly volume of October 1921 (seemingly printed separately with the old plates, but with fresh advertisements that, as a consequence, ran through a whole bound volume, usually alternating between two fillings), the Xinchaoshe also informs in detail about what they have in the pipeline: Already out in the New Tide Series are a volume on Scientific Methods (Kexue fangfa lun 科學方法論, ed. by Wang Xinggong 王星拱), on Superstition and Psychology (Mixin yu xinli 迷信與心理 by Chen Daqi 陳大齊), a translation of stories by Russian and Polish authors prepared by Zhou
Zuoren 周健 (Diandi 點滴, Raindrops) and a collection of Speeches by Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (Cai Jiemin xiansheng yanxing lu 蔡孑民先生言行錄), while a volume on Modern Psychology (Xiandai xinlixue 現代新學).
was in print and a volume of lectures by Dewey still in the editorial process.

During that period, the fourth page of the supplement was usually reserved for advertisement, so that we find an announcement of the journal *Xiju* 戲劇 (vol. 1, no. 4), published by Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, as well as for no. 4 of the journal *Philosophy* (Zhexue 哲學) and the newest issue of *Xinchao* 新潮 (vol. 3, no. 1). Another volume of Dewey Lectures published by the Morning Post is advertised, as well as further publications by the Xinchaoshe. But we find also glasses offered for sale, the undispensible attribute of an intellectual – understandably, because reading was sometimes practised under very adverse conditions. To relax from them, Five Stars Beer is praised with the slogan that it is a ‘Chinese product’ (guohuo 國貨), long before the Year of National Products was proclaimed in 1935.

The supplement’s fourth and last page reserved for advertisements was soon abandoned, in order to create more space for editorial contents. As a consequence, advertisements were restricted to the column around the sheet’s fold, and publicity for goods other than printed matters almost completely disappeared. However, the whole range of publications from the then vast field of New Culture was present. To give an example: On October 15, 1924, a small corner in the last column on the last page of the *Wenxue xunkan* 文學旬刊 carried the announcement of a translation of *Women of the Future* (Weilai de funü 未來的婦女, tr. by Shen Xiaocen 謝小岑) by an author named M. S. Lilienthal that could not be identified, offered to readers of the *Tianjin funü ribao* 天津婦女日報 (Tianjin Women’s Daily) if they subscribe the newspaper for at least three months. “This booklet defines the position of women of the future on the basis of the equality of sexes,” and carries a chapter entitled “From the Kitchen to the Factory”, thus clearly revealing its orientation.

Yet the most interesting advertisement, also from the perspective of graphic design, was produced by the Morning Post publishing house itself. Basically the very same books from its series listed above were presented in a strictly symmetrical shape that could be seen as displaying several courtyards grouped around a central ‘garden’: indeed
Plate 21: Advertisement for Morning Post Series in monthly volume of September 1923.
One’s Own Garden (Ziji de yuandi) by Zhou Zuoren. Can it be considered expressing particular appreciation of his work?

Quite in contrast to what might appear as an unintended typographical expression of seclusion, or at least the inclination to keep a clear reservation – which is by no means expressed in the supplement’s edi-
torial contents, to state it clearly –, and in addition to any open-mindedness that was always present, a clear cosmopolitan mood shifted into the Chenbao fukan at the time when Xu Zhimo took editorship. Insertion of foreign language portions in publications in general, and of Latin script in particular, was of course a fashion that all-too-often just served as an ideologized marker intended to demonstrate knowledge of the world outside of China. Nonetheless, it is still remarkable how naturally long passages in English and in German without any translation into Chinese were published in an article about birth control (Liu Yi-xiang 1925), not necessarily a field that would have required specialized knowledge to that extent. The quotations were taken from Havelock Ellis, *Physiology of Sex* [recte *The Psychology of Sex*], 6 vols. (1900 – 10), and from Alfred Grotjahn (1869 – 1931), *Das Gesundheitsbuch der Frau, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des geschlechtlichen Lebens* (1922). Or is it conceivable that, soon after the Latinization craze of May Fourth, the usage of foreign languages might have acquired the same function as Latin in Robert van Gulik’s (1910 – 1967) *Sexual Life in Ancient China* of 1961?

3.2 Persons and their Place of Origin

As for the local origin, the ‘inventor’ of fukan and founding editor-in-chief of the supplement is from Shaoxing, in the southeast of Zhejiang province. If his compatriot (tongxiang 同鄉), the writer Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881 – 1936), had privileged access to the Chenbao fukan, it is for sure not just due to their shared origin and the fact that Lu Xun had been among Sun Fuyuan’s teachers in the Middle School No 7 of Zhejiang Province. Several issues of the supplement were even, under different pen-names, exclusively written by Lu Xun. Moreover, a number of his important works were first published in Chenbao fukan, among them the Official Biography of A Q (“A Q zhengzhuan 阿Q正傳, 1921), and in 1924 his translation of Symbols of Sorrow (*Kumon no shōchō 苦悶の象徴, 1924) by Kuriyagawa Hakuson 廣川白村 (1880 – 1923), both serialized. During Sun Fuyuan’s editorship from 1921 to 1924, far more than half of the Chinese authors are from the area
around Shaoxing and Hangzhou. They represent a group with an educational background in which the older generation typically spent some time in Japan for study purposes, while in the younger generation a relationship of loyalty towards the previous generation prevails, more often than not reinforced by institutional bonds.

When in late 1925 Xu Zhimo took over the editorship of the supplement, the dominant area of origin of authors and contributors began to shift slightly eastward to the region of Ningbo (of which Xu Zhimo himself was a native) as well as to the southern parts of Jiangsu and Anhui provinces. Many of these writers had an English-language educational experience. Evidently, these backgrounds became also manifest in the sources used for translations that throughout the publication period made up the lion’s part in Chenbao fukan: While during Sun Fuyuan’s time, mostly Japanese texts and translations were used (and thus also shaped the perception of other literatures), the language of mediation became English afterwards.

This allows to assume a strong cohesion within the groups that did not only share their region of origin, but to a great extent also their educational background. It is significant within the first group that in addition there are also generational gaps that may even make necessary to postulate sub-genres of knowledge types. However, the cohesion within each group is so well developed that they occasionally moved their all their publication activities to other organs. This was the case when Sun Fuyuan left his editorial office and members of the first group began to publish their texts in the two freshly established periodicals, the independent journal Yusi 言絲 (1924 – 30) from p. 100 on the one hand, and the supplement Jingbao fukan 京報副刊 (477 issues from Dec 5, 1924, to April 24, 1926) to the Newspaper for the Capital, also initiated and edited by Sun Fuyuan and together with the Chenbao fukan as well as Xuedeng 學燈 (Shishi xinbao 時事新報, Shanghai) and Juewu 覺悟 (Minguo ribao 民國日報, also Shanghai) labelled the ‘four great supplements of the May Fourth movement’ by literary historians.

The cohesion mentioned above is by no means similar to another one based on preceding institutionalized association how practised in the wide-spread literary societies of the time. However, the fact that
several authors might, over a certain period of time, appear homoge
nous in the choice of themes, in the preference for genres and stilistic
devices, and that therefore shared patterns may be identified. This has
frequently misled literary historians to assume ‘literary communities’
or ‘schools’. The polysemic usage of she 在 modern Chinese, em-
ployed both for ‘societies’ and simply denoting a ‘publishing house’ or
rather its ‘location’ may have favoured such inappropriate concep-
tions. It has to be retained here that in such instances eventually com-
mon editorial activities within a particular periodical publication plays
the primary role, before any shared aesthetic or ideological values, and
that such shared activity is of course favoured if place of origin and ed-
cational background are congruent. In this respect and under this per-
spective, free association for literary aims are an essentially different
phenomenon, even though they might also result in collective publica-
tion activities that are also possible if the common ground is fairly
small: In sum, to postulate “groups” or “schools” or “associations”
merely on the basis of the fact that authors have published in the same
journals, is a typical ex post construction by historians of literature.

4. Financial Implications

As for the financial and more generally economic situation of the
Chenbao fukan, material available in printed sources is scarce. It is,
however, obvious that the whole range of personal relationships men-
tioned above also had financial implications, from the very beginning
when the ‘mother’ newspaper Chenbao was established.

For free authors and translators, the Chenbao fukan offered royalties
in three different forms for every contribution: (1) book-purchase
vouchers of unstated value, of course for publications from the own
publishing house, or (2) three monthly bound volumes of the very sup-
plement, or (3) a payment in cash. Given the explicit norm of 3,000

12 A widely read history of modern literature up to 1949 iterates the pattern by speaking of a “Yusi
school” and a “Xiandai pinglun school” (Qian Liqun 1998: 157–159), whereas Yan Jiayan
(1989) is prone to the pitfalls of such obvious misconceptions by his very methodological
approach.
characters per contribution and considering the price of the bound Chenbao fukan volumes, this results in a fairly modest royalty of 0,30 Yuan for 1,000 characters, or 0,90 Yuan for one standard contribution. It may suffice to consult the price-list for advertisements in the same Chenbao fukan to clarify the proportions: a whole page amounted to 50 Yuan, a half to 30 and a quarter-page to 20 Yuan.

Under these conditions, it is not surprising that authors regularly or chiefly writing for newspapers supplements frequently happened to be not taken very seriously by other fellow writers in a different situation. If an author managed to write two contributions every day (equalling a daily output of 6,000 characters)\(^\text{13}\), with a maximum monthly gross income of 54 Yuan he would have just reached the minimum of subsistence that may allow to maintain conditions conducive to literary writing – but in practice opportunities were rare so that he might have earned half of it.

It is difficult to know how much the editor’s salaries of Sun Fuyuan and Xu Zhimo were. Yet from available figures for Xu Zhimo at least it must have been around 150 Yuan monthly to which were added royalties from his current publications as well as from his books (cf. Chen Mingyuan 2005: 164). To assure a middle standard of living for a family of 5, estimates have found 132,40 Yuan necessary in Beijing in the early 1920s (Chen Mingyuan 2005: 105). If we accept the gradation in four categories of writers as for their economic situation in Shanghai around 1930, and if we further take into consideration that life in Shanghai was by 10 to 15 percent more expensive than in Peking, we may assume royalties for Xu Zhimo of around 3 Yuan per 1,000 characters, i.e. five times as much as was offered to free-lance contributors.\(^\text{14}\)

This situation presents the economic background to the formulas wei sheng mai wen 為生賣文 (‘to make one’s life by writing’), or worse wengai 文丐 (‘a beggar in matters of literature’), employed in

\(^\text{13}\) To provide a base of comparison: Even the notoriously prolific translator Lin Shu 林舒 (1852–1921) is said to have written a maximum of 18,000 characters every day.

\(^\text{14}\) Chen Mingyuan 2005: 164-188 bases his consideration on the four grades proposed in the journal LuXun feng 魯迅風 vol. 1, no 2 (June 25, 1939). Here, Yu Dafu 郁達夫, Tian Han 田漢, Ba Jin 巴金 and Mao Dun 茅盾 are classified as first-grade with an income of around 400 Yuan.
many a writer’s biography, especially if they were from the generation of those born after 1900, as mentioned above. Economically speaking, the antagonist to such beggars were those intellectuals who had their main source of income as university teachers of state officials, and therefore did not need to rely exclusively on their royalties. Under such conditions, to publish a journal or a newspaper supplement could be quite a profitable business for a publishing house. No wonder that occasionally it also entailed harsh competition, as can be seen from a gloss published in *Chenbao fukan* in 1924:

Nuli 努力 was originally published by Mr Hu Shizhi [i.e. Hu Shi] alone, and he has of course the right to spend his life as he pleases. I am just a subordinate soldier who is waving the flag and calling for the battle [nahan 呼喊] and have no legitimation to propose anything to the Nuli publishing house. Yet at the moment, Mr Hu Shizhi is just recovering from an illness in Beidaihe and hence has no leisure to read what the two gentlemen Xiao Baoheng and Zhengshui are writing about him. Therefore, being a subordinate soldier, I cannot help writing some words in response to them.

When last fall [1923] the Commercial Press knew about the intention to establish the Nuli yuekan, it tried hard to publish it [chengban 成版] or at least to act as publishing house in commission [baoban 包版], while at the same time Yadong tu shuguan 亞東圖書館 wanted to take over responsibility for distribution. In the competition between the two publishers, Commercial Press finally won the battle. In the end, the Commercial Press showed its capitalist face, saying: “We shall pay our contributors 3 to 5 Yuan per 1,000 characters!” (Gao Yihan 1924: 4c)

The economic status of the famed Hu Shi who in the initial period of its publication now and then wrote some contributions for the *Chenbao fukan* and after that established his own journal, is here clearly marked by his sojourn in the then noble seaside resort of Beidaihe. It also becomes evident that the biggest and most powerful publishing houses of their time competed on the market for newspaper supplements.
There are several important events during the history of the Chenbao fukan: One is no doubt when Sun Fuyuan – who had created conditions and an environment in which indeed a wide range of opinions found a space for articulation – left his position in protest against the editor-in-chief for the whole newspaper enterprise, including the supplement, Liu Mianyi (dates unknown) who had, when the printing process was already underway, on November 7, 1924, removed a relatively harmless vernacular poem by Lu Xun, may be because he thought it was too daring. The poem’s concluding verses read as follows:

My love presents me with some roses;  
What should I send her in return?  
Nothing but a coral snake!  
Since then our romance has come to an end,  
I know not why – just let her get away!  
(Lu Xun 1981: 52)

If it happened for such considerations, as ever in assessing supposedly pornographic writing, it is occurring in the eye and the mind of the reader.  

As a result, the journal Yusi was founded by all those who under such interventionist circumstances considered the Chenbao fukan not any longer their haven and at the same time wished to demonstrate solidarity with Sun Fuyuan, though certainly also relieved to be spared of loyalty conflicts with him. In fact, this was the first independent action of self-help among writers who had to a great extent become fully professionals and had good reasons to expect their new enterprise would secure their livelihood to the same extent as had done the Chenbao fukan before. One among those who contributed capital to the new enterprise was Li Xiaofeng 李小峰 (1897 – 1971), briefly afterwards himself a publisher with his Beixin shuju 北新書局 and hence also involved with commercial interests.15 After Sun Fuyuan had left, the supplement sorely lacked substantial contents and had to bridge the gap
by a detailed instruction how to build a radio receiver with an antenna – the newest communication technology at the time (nos 267 – 268, Nov 9 – 10, 1924).

The so-called May 30th Movement of 1925, first in protest against the British police who had shot demonstrators in Shanghai, unlike in other journals and periodicals, took almost two weeks before it found its expression on the pages of the *Chenbao fukan* (see Yang Xueying 1925). However, after that, the spirit of solidarity across social groups and classes, seen as a turning-point in modern Chinese history by some historians (cf. Osterhammel 1997, and many others), pervaded the whole supplement. Not less than 7 special issues on the Shanghai incident (“Hu’an tehao” 漁案特號) with the number of pages doubled to 8 were published (June 14, 15, 20, 22, 23, 26, 27), covering the whole range of topics from workers’ conditions to the foreign capital control in Chinese industrial enterprises. The sense of autonomous social organization is clearly expressed in the fact that another series of special issues (“Hu’an zhuanghao” 漁案專號, was not only separately numbered, but the Normal University Students’ Association (nos 1 – 3, June 13, 16 and 21st) was entrusted with its editorship. It culminated in an independent title edited by students of the National University of Law and Administration *Guoli Beijing fazheng daxue Hu’an teka* 國立北京政法大學漁案特刊 (2 issues, no 2, June 29, 192516) and was concluded by the scores to a patriotic song declaring war to Britain (Anon. 1925). As immediate outcome, the New Youth Tendaily was established. Despite the pervasive patriotic fervour in its opening statement: “Let us do it! Let us struggle! Ahaed! To the battlefield!” (Zhou Rong 1925: 1a), the whole enterprise came to an early end, giving in to more practical needs such as the long summer break. The last issue, no 9 published on Sep 28, 1925, gave the following explanation:

Over three months’ time, this supplement had its readership. Because some of our comrades have returned home during summer,

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15 On the exact circumstances of the initiative see Sun Yurong 1992.
16 The first issue is missing in the reprint, so it is impossible to establish its publication date. However, there is no doubt that ‘no 2’ is not a typographical error, as the page-numbering running from 9 to 16 clearly indicates there was a preceding issue.
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while others have opened evening schools, and still others are undergoing a military training in the students’ army [...], we feel unable to edit the supplement properly.

The supplement will therefore temporarily cease publication. – We have decided in the New Youth Learned Society [Xin shaonian xuehui 新少年學會] to publish a journal independently, and will soon present it to the readership.

The supplement has been printed and distributed by the publishing house of the Morning Post. For this, we want to express our sincerest gratitude! (Wang Sanxin 1925a: 24c).

The sequel to the New Youth supplement was no more felicitous and disappeared after only two issues (see Wu Jie #26391). May well be that it was suffocated by a clear tendency of the patriotic students to form pompous bureaucratic bodies, such as the Committee of the Central Office of the Chinese Youth Group for the Defense of the Country (Zhongguo shaonian weiguo tuan 中國少年衛國團) that had charged Wang Sanxin and his colleague Tan Rongkui 譚榮奏 to edit the supplement (Wang Sanxin 1925b: 24c). As address for correspondence, the Yard No 3 of Peking University (北大第三院) was indicated throughout the publication period.

When later that year Xu Zhimo took over the chief-editorship for *Chenbao fukan*, in his opening article, he gives a vivid impression of the dreams about the potential to exert an impact on the literary scene that may have come along with accepting such a position:

I always wanted to make a journal. The earliest plan was about an “Ideal Monthly” [Lixiang yuekan 理想月刊]. When the Crescent Moon Society was formed, it was intended that soon afterwards a Cres-
cent Moon Weekly or Monthly should be published. If this project failed, it was not for the lack of people or of money, but because of my own “undetermined heart” [xin bu ding 心不定]. A friend said I was like a sparrow in the skies, while another found my “footprints’ track formed the shape of a creeper”. It is true, I always led a happy-go-easy life and never knew what I am going to do the next day (Xu Zhimo 1925a: 1a).

Leaving the romantic attributes of an artist aside that are casually interwoven in this self-portrayal, his term of office in the Chenbao fukan is anything but chaotic. Though we may assume that the ‘reorganization’ also made visible by the new horizontal format from October 1st, 1925, was by no means conceived by Xu Zhimo alone, if he was involved at all, there was an orderly development with a reasonable thematic division among the single sub-supplements.

Another important event was a big fire on November 29, 1925, in the premises of the publishing house located in the Xuanwu menwai dajie 宣武门外大街 no 181 where it had moved from the Chengxiang hutong 丞相胡同 located in the same area, in May earlier the same year. The fire destroyed, among other infrastructure, printing machines. As a result, neither the main paper nor the supplement could be published for seven days, and there is no doubt that for Xu Zhimo this event presented the first test to his managerial skills as freshly appointed editor of the Chenbao fukan. However, in his first editorial after the event, he seems to criticize how the situation is handled, mentioning how a London paper whose printing office was hit by German bombs during the war, anyway appeared unaltered the next day, with the sole difference that a news notice about the fire was inserted (Xu Zhimo 1925c).

Conclusions

Not least because Chenbao fukan was the earliest among newspaper supplements established in the immediate aftermath of the May Fourth era in the narrowest sense, and in fact may be credited to have estab-
lished the very term of fukan in the modern language, it displays the widest range of experiments with the publication form, from its emancipation from being a single reserved page in an ordinary newspaper, up to issues of page-setup and cover-page design, as has been demonstrated. Very importantly, it has demonstrated that the technical possibility of separate reprint (in this case: of monthly bound-up volumes) offered the opportunity of a country-wide distribution, usually not accessible to newspapers which, with few rare exceptions, circulated locally.

Technical and formal experiments, entailing sometimes frequent changes in format and also had an impact on the actual realization of genre conventions, left traditional patterns of social association, be it along the lines of origin or of professional specialization, basically unaffected. On the contrary: the stronger such bonds were, the better the chances to develop potentials of printing and distribution technology to the highest degree of their potential.

Though recent research has opened the view towards media-related peculiarities in cultural production, ie. also to the special conditions of newspaper supplements, biased patterns of representation, systematically formed in the 1950s, still exert an overwhelming influence – and in many cases to the detriment of a balanced view on the phenomenon of newspaper supplements, and the Chenbao fukan in particular. Though uncontestably, the Chenbao fukan has been the haven to works that have proved to be of lasting importance to the development of modern literature, emphasizing the particular supplement’s role by way of reference to these works crossly distorts the core function of Chenbao fukan. If contemporary research underscores supplements’ function as a forum of ‘pluralist discourse’ (e.g. Zhang Taofu 2007: 28 – 46), it may express an unfulfilled expectation with regard to the function of the press. However, it does not preclude somehow atavist positions that are unable to apprehend the shift in editorship between 1924 and 1925 other as “transforming it gradually into an organ of the Crescent Moon group” (Chen Shuyu 2009). Unnecessary to state that such view does not allow to take notice of the fact that a leftist writer as confirmed as Hu Yepin 胡也频 (1903 – 1931) published his play Madman (“Kuangren” 狂人) in seven installments precisely in the same supple-
ment, but long after Xu Zhimo had taken over (Hu Yepin 1927) – where the cold-blooded consultation of material readily available would have swiftly corrected such distortions.

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Summary

The Supplement to the Peking Morning Post is considered one of the ‘four big supplements’ (si da fukan) in Republican China. Though scholarly interest in that previously unknown publication form in China’s daily press has considerably increased over the past few years, the overwhelming majority of studies on the topic does not transcend an apologetic impulse *ex post* by ascertaining supplements’ importance on the basis of the canonical status, acquired much later, of (literary) texts published therein. This is why the present article aims at reconstructing material and sociological contexts of the publication form, taking into consideration graphic design, page set-up, illustrations, the economic situation of authors etc. Given the huge textual body of an estimated 20 million characters, the approach is doomed to be selective, but nonetheless provides evidence that supplements were much more marked by experimentation on all levels than hitherto noticed.