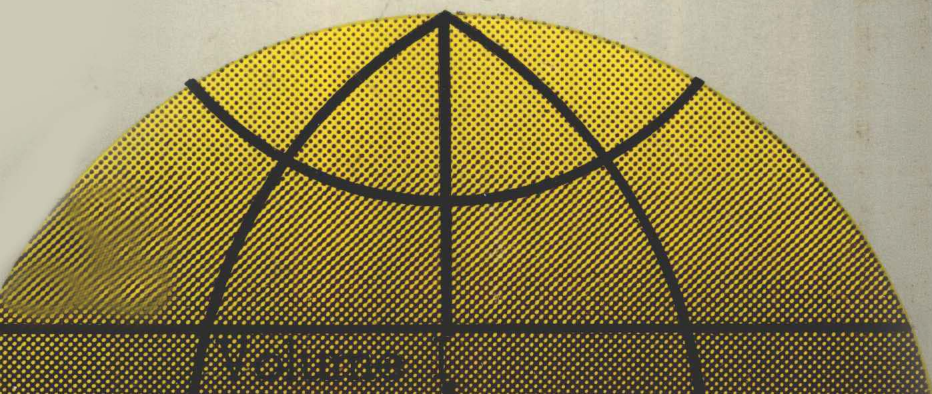


**Selected
Works by
Members
of China
PEN
Centre
of Shanghai**

Shanghai Translation
Publishing House



Volume I

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by Members of China
PEN Centre of Shanghai**

Volume 1

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PREFACE

Ke Ling

The Shanghai Centre of International PEN has edited and published in Chinese two volumes of "Selected Works of International PEN". In these two volumes, works by members of International PEN were introduced to the Chinese reader. In the Preface of the second volume, I wrote:

"It is a glorious undertaking to understand the unknown world, an unknown society, and especially to know and understand people. This means the spanning of a bridge between all peoples of the world, a bridge for friendship, peace and development. And it is literature that is the key to understanding people."

I also mentioned in the Preface of the first volume: "We have been estranged from the world for a very, very long time. People the world over are as much anxious to understand us as we are to understand them. Friendship can only be established through mutual understanding."

"Equally important and more pressing is to introduce works by Chinese writers (especially modern and contemporary writers) to readers abroad so that the world can hear the Chinese people's voice as well as feel their pulses."

Different countries have different national traditions, customs and habits, social systems, political views, modes of

thinking, religious beliefs and tastes. In spite of all these differences, people will still be able to communicate feelings and thoughts, and march forward hand in hand towards their common goal of a bright future. World histories of literature and arts have borne ample testimony to this observation.

This small volume of literary works is just a first step toward realizing the above goal of ours. Collected in this volume are a number of works by members of Shanghai PEN Centre. We are very proud that in this volume we can have an article by Mr. Ba Jin, the world famous writer and Chairman of the China PEN Centre, who is now living in Shanghai. Taking into account all contemporary Chinese literature, this volume is only a drop of water in a vast ocean, a grain of sand in a broad desert. For the time being we have only this English version. But we hope it is a good beginning so far as Shanghai PEN Centre is concerned (the Guangzhou PEN Centre has already outstepped us and the Taipei Chinese PEN Centre is said to have taken the same step). Through this book, readers may have a better understanding of the Chinese people's life, feelings and thoughts, their loves and hates, their likes and dislikes, and their joys and sorrows.

We hope that our efforts will win the approval of writers of Chinese descent abroad and both eastern and western Sinologists who are much concerned for China. Any generous assistance from them will be much appreciated.

February 23, 1988 in Shanghai

Translated by Wan Mingyu

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ESSAY

In Loving Memory of Xiao Shan

Ba Jin

Ba Jin is a renowned author and translator in China. His real name is Li Fugan. Born in 1904 in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, he attended school in Shanghai and Nanjing in 1923. In 1927 he went to France where he completed his first novel *Destruction*, which was published in Shanghai (1928).



At the end of that year he returned to China to engage in writing and translation.

His first novelette *New Life* was completed in 1931. By 1940, he finished writing six full-length novels, namely, *The Trilogy of Love* (*Fog, Rain and Lightning*) and *The Trilogy of Torrent* (*The Family, Spring and Autumn*), of these *The Family* is considered his best and most representative work. After 1943, he produced several novels including *Fire*, *Qi Yuan* (*Garden for Rest*), *No.4 Ward* and *Cold Night*, the latter being hailed as his most significant piece of work since *The Family*.

Ba Jin is a productive writer and enjoys a high reputation in both China and abroad. His works have had a great impact on the

anti-convention struggle of the educated youth.

After 1949, he wrote a great quantity of prose and feature articles and published a collection entitled *Xin Sheng Ji* (New Voice). The five-volume *Sui Xiang Lu* (Casual Thoughts) completed in recent years is the most distinguished collection of prose in contemporary Chinese literature. His works were compiled into 14 volumes under the title of *Ba Jin Wen Ji* (Ba Jin's Writings) and published between 1958 and 1962.

Since 1979 he has served as Chairman of the Chinese Writers' Association and at the same time of the China PEN Centre. He was awarded Italy's Dante International Prize (1982), France's Medal of Honour (1983), Honorary Doctor of Literature of Hong Kong Chinese University (1984) and Honorary Alien Academician of the American Literature and Art Institute (1985).

1

My wife, Xiao Shan, died six years ago today. Every moment of that day and the long days that preceded it is etched into my mind forever.

When I came home from the crematorium, everything was in a complete jumble. It took a few days before I could pull myself together, and then sitting alone at my desk I thought of writing something in her memory. I suppose that is how it all began fifty years ago: Whenever I had something I felt I just had to say but which I was unable to express in spoken words, I would sit down and write, finding solace and release in pen and paper. But during those days in August, 1972, when I sat for hours on end gazing at the sheet of clean white paper in front of me, I could not bring myself to write a word. After all of these years of being

herded back and forth from the 'cowshed',¹ "Have I actually turned into a cow", I asked myself, frustrated at the dullness that possessed me. It was as though some invisible weight was crushing down on my head, making my brain senseless and heavy. I put my pen down; I wouldn't write anything.

Six years have passed. Lin Biao, the 'Gang of Four' and all their wraiths turned me inside-out, but somehow I have managed to survive, and to their eternal disappointment, I am doing quite nicely. My head is still pretty clear, and I even do a bit of writing now and then. With the passing of those dark times, many of us can work again, but there are others who have already left us. In the last few months I have made frequent trips back to that crematorium to take part in memorial ceremonies, bidding a dumb and belated farewell to long-dead friends. As I stand there in the main hall I think of many things... That music—they played the same music then, too— my mind wanders away from the crowd of mourners and I am alone again, sobbing my last farewell to her, my Xiao Shan.

I remember something Juexin says in *The Family*, 'In death Jue will be an unhappy spirit.' How could I have ever guessed that these words would come back and haunt me forty-seven years after I wrote them? It hurts too much to cry, and my heart feels as though it's being torn at by hundreds of hungry claws. I stand lonely at her side; that lifeless form, that pallid face, those lips, lips that left so much unsaid. I clench my teeth as though that could stop the agony, my heart cries out her name....

I was thirteen years older than her, there was no reason that she should die before me. Why couldn't I have died first? Why has fate been so unjust? What crime did she commit?

They locked her up, too, hung a cardboard sign around her neck. It read, 'Cow ghost and snake spirit.'² They made her sweep the streets. What was it all for? Why did any of it have to happen? But then, yes, the logic of it all was really very simple: she was my wife. When she became ill they refused to treat her, that was because she was my wife, too. We tried everything, and finally, with the help of some friends, we got her into a hospital. But it was too late, the cancer had already spread and was eating away at her liver. She only had three more weeks to live and there was nothing we could do to save her.

She did not want to die, she wanted to live. She wanted to keep in pace with the times, to remould herself and be part of the building of socialism. Can anyone say that hers was an unreasonable and foolish wish? And she would be alive now if she hadn't been the 'stinking wife of Old Black K'.³ That is why all of it happened, I did it to her. I killed her.

She shared all of the agonies that I went through during my years of disgrace. They never beat me, yet her flesh got stung and bruised under the bronze-tipped whips of the 'revolutionary Red Guards from Beijing.' The large black circle around her eye took ages to finally fade away. She was beaten because she tried to protect me. When she saw those young people come breaking into our house in the

middle of the night she was scared that they would take me prisoner, so in the confusion she sneaked out the front gate to get the police. There was only one man on duty in the police box down the road and he refused to interfere. The Red Guards followed her and whipped her right there in front of the policeman. Then they dragged her back home and locked her up with me in the toilet.

She did not just share in my suffering, she also acted as a constant source of strength and encouragement to me. I was regarded as a criminal in my own organization, the Shanghai Branch of the Chinese Writers' Union. Those were hellish days, and I often wasn't allowed to go home until nine or ten o'clock at night. But when I walked through the door and saw her face, all of the dark clouds that had gathered during the day disappeared in an instant. She was the one person to whom I could tell all of the injustices and complaints that I had to keep bottled up inside me all day. We even both went through a period when we had to take sleeping tablets to get to sleep at night, but we always woke at the crack of dawn. I would call out to her and she would reply. I would say plaintively,

'Life is so hard, now.'

'Yes, it is,' She'd reply in the same tone, but then quickly add, 'We'll be all right if we can just keep going.'

I really felt life was hard because at the time I was forced to do physical labour, political study and write endless numbers of personal histories, explanations of my relations with other writers and people who were under criticism, as well as reports on my 'ideological status' by which

they were supposed to gauge the sincerity of my political repentance. Anyone who wanted to could come up to me and abuse me, lecture me, or just order me about. People from other cities who came to Shanghai to 'link up' with the revolutionaries in our Writers' Union office could demand to have me stand in front of them and confess my crimes. I had no fixed office hours, and the directors of the 'cowshed committee' would decide each day when my presence was required and at what time I could be dismissed.⁴ People could come breaking into our house whenever they wanted and take anything they pleased. Although the mass public criticisms and televised struggle meetings had not yet started up, they were not far off.

She sighed in agreement, 'Life is so hard, now,' because they dragged her off to the office to be criticized twice. They forced her to do manual labour and later they put her up on the dais at mass meetings to be an adjunct to the criticism and struggling of others. The 'Great Criticism Bill-board' set up in Central Huaihai Road had big-character posters stuck up on it attacking me and listing the names of the members of my family written up for the reference of the masses. Naturally, the name of my 'stinking old lady' was given a prominence in these tirades second only to mine. The vicious words bit into her like venomous snakes. When the fanatical students of the Shanghai Drama Academy took her away in custody to the Writers' Union, a large wall-poster was put up next to the door of our house denouncing her so-called crimes. Thank heaven my son ripped it down before she came back home; it would have killed her if she had seen it.

The cold indifference, derision and abuse that she suffered gradually enveloped her and seemed to suck the very life force from her being. I stood by helpless as her health gradually deteriorated, the calm and composure she showed on the outside was nothing more than a deception. How could she possibly think that she could hide the burning anguish in her heart from me? How could she ever free herself from it? And yet she was always there to comfort me, she trusted and believed in me and was indignant at the way I was being treated. But she was also deeply worried, for she saw how dangerous my situation was and how much pressure the authorities were bringing to bear on me. Occasionally, she went to the office with me or we returned home together, and as we approached the Writers' Union office on the corner of Julu Street, or our house near Hunan Street, her head would sink down. I understood and felt for her, I began to worry that she would not be able to survive the invisible and endless torture.

I remember one time when they did not keep us in the office at the end of the day. When we got home she went off to the kitchen happily to cook dinner. I sat down with the daily paper, and on the third page I found a long article written by a couple of worker-writers who had recently become big names in the Writers' Union. The heading of the piece was, *Pull Aside the Mask that Conceals the Counter-Revolutionary Features of Ba Jin Once and For All*. I felt as though someone had hit me with a sledge hammer. I hurriedly read a few lines and then hid it; I couldn't let her see it.

She served dinner still in a happy mood, and we talked and laughed as we ate just like we used to. After we had finished eating and everything was cleared away she said she wanted to read the paper. I did my best to divert her attention, but she started looking for it and it was not long before she had it open with that article glaring up at her. The smile fell from her face, she did not say another word for the rest of the evening and went to bed early. Later, when I went into our bedroom, I found her sobbing quietly in bed. Our peaceful night had been ruined. I can see those tearful eyes looking up at me now. How I wished I could wipe her tears dry and see a smile on her worn and tired face. I would have given without hesitation some of the whole years left to me in exchange for one peaceful and carefree night together with her.

2

Zhou Xinfang's⁵ daughter-in-law told me that before Zhou's wife died, she was often taken outside by Red Guards and kicked around like a football. People tried to talk her into keeping out of the way, but she said, 'If I hide, then this is how they'll treat Mr Zhou.'

Xiao Shan was spared that kind of physical abuse, but she escaped none of the spiritual and emotional torment. Like Zhou Xinfang's wife, she somehow thought that by suffering herself she could somehow lessen the pressure on me. It was a stupid thing to think really, for in the end she was only hurting herself. She became a little weaker, a little paler every day. I could see the spark of life in her flicker-