

Volume One



LU XUN

SELECTED WORKS

Translated by

Yang Xianyi & Gladys Yang

LU XUN
SELECTED WORKS

VOLUME ONE

Translated by
YANG XIANYI *and* GLADYS YANG

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS
BEIJING

First Edition 1959
Third Edition 1980
Third Printing 2003

Home Page:
<http://www.flp.com.cn>
E-mail Addresses:
info@flp.com.cn
sales@flp.com.cn

ISBN 7-119-03408-1

© Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 2003

Published by Foreign Languages Press
24 Baiwanzhuang Road, Beijing 100037, China

Distributed by China International Book Trading Corporation
35 Chegongzhuang Xilu, Beijing 100044, China
P.O. Box 399, Beijing, China

Printed in the People's Republic of China



Lu Xun at fifty,
photographed in Shanghai in September 1930

CONTENTS

EDITOR'S NOTE	7
LU XUN: HIS LIFE AND WORKS <i>by Feng Xuefeng</i>	9

STORIES

PREFACE TO CALL TO ARMS	33
A MADMAN'S DIARY	39
KONG YIJI	52
MEDICINE	58
TOMORROW	68
A SMALL INCIDENT	76
STORM IN A TEACUP	79
MY OLD HOME	90
THE TRUE STORY OF AH Q	102
VILLAGE OPERA	155
THE NEW-YEAR SACRIFICE	168
IN THE TAVERN	189
A HAPPY FAMILY	202
SOAP	211
THE MISANTHROPE	225
REGRET FOR THE PAST	249
THE DIVORCE	272
THE FLIGHT TO THE MOON	283
FORGING THE SWORDS	296

PROSE POEMS

AUTUMN NIGHT	317
THE SHADOW'S LEAVE-TAKING	320
THE BEGGARS	322
REVENGE (II)	324
HOPE	326
SNOW	328
THE KITE	330

THE GOOD STORY	333
THE PASSER-BY	336
DEAD FIRE	342
THE DOG'S RETORT	345
THE GOOD HELL THAT WAS LOST	346
ON EXPRESSING AN OPINION	348
AFTER DEATH	349
SUCH A FIGHTER	354
THE WISE MAN, THE FOOL AND THE SLAVE	356
THE BLIGHTED LEAF	359
AMID PALE BLOODSTAINS	361
THE AWAKENING	363

REMINISCENCES

ACHANG AND THE <i>BOOK OF HILLS AND SEAS</i>	366
THE FAIR OF THE FIVE FIERCE GODS	374
WU CHANG OR LIFE-IS-TRANSIENT	380
FROM HUNDRED-PLANT GARDEN TO THREE- FLAVOUR STUDY	389
FATHER'S ILLNESS	396
MR. FUJINO	404
FAN AINONG	412
MY FIRST TEACHER	423
THE HANGING WOMAN	433

ILLUSTRATIONS

LU XUN AT FIFTY	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	facing page
THE SHAOXING HOSTEL WHERE LU XUN STAYED IN BEIJING FROM 1912 TO 1918	32
MANUSCRIPT OF "THE TRUE STORY OF AH Q"	104
THE ORIGINAL COVER OF WILD GRASS DESIGNED BY SUN FUXI, WITH THE TITLE IN LU XUN'S HANDWRITING	316
WU CHANG, DRAWN AND INSCRIBED BY LU XUN	384

EDITOR'S NOTE

This selection of Lu Xun's works includes stories, prose poems, reminiscences, polemical writing and essays dealing with many aspects of life and letters. It comprises four volumes, the last three of which contain selected essays.

Lu Xun's works are exceedingly rich and varied. Outstanding as a writer of short stories, he is even greater as an essayist and thinker; and we value the brilliant ideas and art expressed in his sixteen volumes of essays even more than his short stories. Again, he was well-known as an authority on Chinese literature, who did pioneer work with his original and profound researches in this field.

Lu Xun's studies on the history of Chinese literature have been left out of this selection, as they are for specialists in this field. A part only of his essays is here, and his poems in the classical style as well as his letters have not been included.

These four volumes, however, are representative of Lu Xun's writing during different periods of his career. From them the reader may gain a general picture of his role as the founder of modern Chinese literature, his ideological development from a revolutionary democrat to a communist, and his great contribution to China and humanity.

Volume One contains selections from his short stories, prose poems and reminiscences.

The first nine short stories are taken from Lu Xun's earliest collection of short stories, *Call to Arms*, the pre-

face to which is also included. The next seven stories are from his second collection of stories, *Wandering*.

"The Flight to the Moon" and "Forging the Sword" are from his third book of stories, *Old Tales Retold*.

The fourteen stories in *Call to Arms* were written between 1918 and 1922. The eleven stories in *Wandering* during 1924 and 1925. The eight stories in *Old Tales Retold* were based on ancient myths and legends. One of them was written in 1922, the two in this selection were written in 1926, and the others during 1934 and 1935. All Lu Xun's stories are contained in these three collections.

The nineteen prose poems are taken from *Wild Grass*, a collection of twenty-three pieces written between 1924 and 1926.

Of the nine reminiscences, the first seven come from *Dawn Blossoms Plucked at Dusk*, which contains ten essays written in 1926 dealing with Lu Xun's childhood and early youth. The remaining two essays, from *The Last Essays of Qiejieting*, were written in 1936, the last year of his life.

A number of these selections have already been translated into various languages; but this is the first attempt at a systematic introduction of Lu Xun in English. The translation in this new edition has been revised.

LU XUN: HIS LIFE AND WORKS

Feng Xuefeng*

I

Lu Xun (Lu Hsun), whose real name was Zhou Shuren, was born on September 25, 1881, in Shaoxing in the province of Zhejiang. He came of a scholar-official family. His grandfather, who was holding office in Beijing at the time of Lu Xun's birth, was thrown into prison when the boy reached his thirteenth year; and the family never recovered from this blow. Lu Xun's father, a scholar who had received no official appointments, had always been a poor provider; moreover, he fell seriously ill about this time and remained an invalid till he died three years later. Because of this, Lu Xun's family was reduced to poverty. His mother, however, was a capable woman. The daughter of a scholar, she was brought up in the country but taught herself to read, and her generosity and pluck remained a lasting inspiration to her son. Her maiden name was Lu, and it was from her that Lu Xun derived his pen-name.

In his boyhood, all Lu Xun's relatives were struck by his intelligence. He entered school at the age of six, and immediately began to study the ancient classics. He remained in Shaoxing until he was seventeen, only leaving it once during all this time for a short stay in the country with one of his uncles. Lu Xun read a great

* (1903-76), a contemporary Chinese writer.

number of Chinese classics during these twelve years. Not only did he have a photographic memory, but he often hit upon a new interpretation of an old text and had the courage to challenge the established point of view and the traditional ethics of that feudal, patriarchal society. In addition to studying the orthodox classics and histories, he took a special interest in mythology, unofficial histories, miscellaneous essays, and anecdotes.

Young Lu Xun also took great delight in folk art: New Year pictures, tales and legends, religious processions and village opera. As a boy, we know, he loved painting. He collected picture albums and illustrated books, and used to trace the woodcuts in such albums and in old romances. He also drew cartoons.

One of the features of Lu Xun's boyhood which greatly affected both his character and his writing was the fact that he was acquainted with the countryside and a number of his friends were the children of simple, honest peasants. As he grew older, Lu Xun recalled these contacts and friendships as the best times in his life. In fact, they served as the significant beginning of his spiritual ties with the working people.

But, of course, what impelled Lu Xun to take the path which led to revolution was the encroachment upon the country by foreign powers and the bankruptcy of Chinese feudalism.

Lu Xun's boyhood coincided with a period of intensified imperialist aggression, when the Qing Dynasty was becoming more and more corrupt and impotent. In a vain effort to prolong its rule, it attempted to appease the foreign powers by yielding to them its own sovereignty and parts of its territory, while suppressing the patriotic resistance of the people. Reduced to a semi-colonial status, China was in imminent danger of being partitioned by the imperialists.

Although Shaoxing was comparatively cut off from the outside world, it could not fail to be shaken by the general

social crisis and the danger confronting the nation as a whole. The decline of Lu Xun's scholar-official family, coinciding, as it did, with the intensified threat from abroad and the tottering of feudal rule, made the sensitive lad reflect not only upon the fate of those around him, but also upon that of his country. From the age of thirteen to seventeen, owing to his family's poverty and his father's illness, Lu Xun became familiar with pawnshops and pharmacies; and the cold treatment he received left its mark upon him. He began to be conscious of the oppressive nature of a feudal, patriarchal society and, aware of its flaws and contradictions, he learned to hate and despise it. He did not want to follow in the steps of his grandfather or father, nor to become a merchant or a clerk in the magistrate's yamen, as did most of the sons of the impoverished gentry in Shaoxing. He insisted on taking a different path.

And so, when he was eighteen, with the eight dollars his mother had managed to raise for his fare, Lu Xun left for Nanjing to take the entrance examination for the Naval Academy, where no tuition fees were charged. He passed the examination, but was not satisfied with the institution. The following year he transferred to the School of Railways and Mines attached to the Jiangnan Army Academy, also in Nanjing. This school did not satisfy him either; but here he became acquainted with the ideas of bourgeois reform and constitutional monarchy, and read a number of translations of modern literary and scientific works by foreign writers.

Lu Xun was in Nanjing for four years. His stay there coincided with the Reform Movement of 1898 which aimed at setting up a constitutional monarchy, the anti-imperialist Yi He Tuan Uprising, the subsequent invasion of Beijing in 1900 by the allied armies of eight imperialist powers, and the humiliating Protocol of 1901 which the invading powers imposed on China, when the country's fate hung in the balance. During these four years, Lu

Xun became convinced of the need for the whole nation to revolt against imperialism and the Qing Dynasty. The Chinese translation of T. H. Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* had a great influence on him at this period. It not only caused him to take Darwin's theory of evolution as his guide, but made him choose the study and promotion of science as his own revolutionary path.

In 1901, he graduated from the School of Railways and Mines, and the following year was awarded a government scholarship to study in Japan.

Directly Lu Xun arrived in Japan, he became a more ardent patriot than ever. The anti-Qing movement among Chinese students there was at its height, and Japan was preparing belligerently to become an imperialist power. Lu Xun's bitter indignation at conditions in China made him determine to devote his life to his country. In his spare time he studied European science, philosophy and literature. It was also in Japan that he first discovered such revolutionary poets as Byron, Shelley, Heine, Pushkin, Lermontov, Mickiewicz and Petöfi, whose works he read in Japanese or, with more difficulty, in German.

Lu Xun entered the Medical College at Sendai in the belief that medical science would aid the revolutionary movement in China. In less than two years, however, something happened to change his mind. He saw a news-reel lantern slide of the Russo-Japanese War which showed the tragic apathy of the oppressed Chinese. This incident shook him to his depths.

Soon after that Lu Xun left the Medical College, because, as he wrote, "this slide convinced me that medical science was not so important after all. The people of a weak and backward country, however strong and healthy they might be, could only serve to be made examples of or as witnesses of such futile spectacles; and

it was not necessarily deplorable if many of them died of illness. The most important thing, therefore, is to change their spirit; and since at that time I felt that literature was the best means to this end, I decided to promote a literary movement." This happened in 1906.

Although the literary magazine that he planned to publish in Tokyo between 1906 and 1907 never saw the light of day, essays written that year, such as "On the Demoniatic Poets," together with the translations he made in 1908 from Russian and other writers of eastern and northern Europe, formed an extremely important beginning to his career. In 1908, he joined the anti-Qing revolutionary party, Guang Fu Hui.

Thus, during these eight years in Japan, Lu Xun became a convinced revolutionary democrat, and grew firm in his decision to use literature as a means to arouse his fellow-countrymen.

Lu Xun returned to China in 1909, and taught physiology and chemistry in Zhejiang Normal School and Shaoxing Middle School. Then came the Revolution of 1911, which he welcomed with all his heart. He urged his students to work for it, and accepted the post of principal of Shaoxing Normal School. In 1912, after the establishment of the provisional government of the Chinese Republic, he was appointed a member of the Ministry of Education.

Very soon, however, he was disillusioned and began to go through a period of hard thinking and agonized groping in the dark.

The Revolution of 1911 was highly significant, but it did not accomplish its historical mission, for it merely overthrew the Qing Dynasty, while imperialism and feudalism remained unshaken. State power passed into the hands of warlords and politicians of different cliques whom the imperialists utilized to intensify their assault upon China. Thus, with warlords establishing independent regimes, ceaseless civil war, and a scramble among

the imperialist powers for spheres of influence, the semi-feudal, semi-colonial condition of the country became aggravated. In the sphere of ideas, a reactionary movement calling for a return to the past gained influence.

Lu Xun's painful groping lasted till 1918, the eve of the well-known May 4th Movement. He passed the whole of this period in Beijing, except for two visits to his mother in Shaoxing, when what he saw of the increasing impoverishment of the countryside made a deep impression upon him.

During these years, while working at the Ministry of Education he was engaging at the same time in most valuable studies of Chinese culture — annotating and compiling certain classical texts, and doing research into old bronze and stone inscriptions. It was during this period that he edited the works of Ji Kang, a great poet and patriot of the third century A.D., who dared to oppose feudal tyrants and the rigid Confucian traditions, thus reflecting to some degree the aspirations of the people.

During this period, Lu Xun also made a study of the Indian Buddhist classics translated into Chinese since the third century A.D.

Meantime great changes were taking place in the country. The European and American powers were so busy fighting the First World War that they had to relax their grip on China. This enabled Chinese national capitalism to develop to a certain extent. At the same time, the October Revolution of 1917 caused a new revolutionary upsurge in China which, led by revolutionary intellectuals, was to develop into a thoroughgoing, anti-imperialist, anti-feudal struggle. This came to a head in the May 4th Movement of 1919.

In April 1918, under the pen-name Lu Xun he published his first short story, "A Madman's Diary," written in the vernacular. This appeared in *New Youth*, a magazine which guided the cultural and democratic revolu-