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SHI TUO'S ALIENATED MAN AND THE TIMES

by

R.J. HENNEBERGER

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Department of ASIAN STUDIES

The University of British Columbia  
2075 Wesbrook Place  
Vancouver, Canada  
V6T 1W5

Date 2/10/80

## ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the short fiction of the late 1930's and early 1940's Chinese author named Wang Changjian (pen names: Lu Fen and Shi Tuo ), and tries to establish how in the realm of structure and stylistics the author's literary technique underwent certain shifts in order to better convey how the intellectual, political, and social forces operating on the Chinese scene in the 1930's alienated man from himself and his fellow man.

The Introduction presents: a summary of previous scholarship done on Wang Changjian (hereafter, Shi Tuo); an outline of the author's general career; a discussion of the concept of alienation which will serve as the foundation for our analysis of Shi Tuo's fiction; and a synopsis of this thesis's approach to the author's prose.

Chapter 1 discusses three short stories which represent the author's early period (1931-1938). Aside from investigating the technical and thematic merits of these works this chapter also traces the impact of two of China's greatest writers, Shen Congwen and Lu Xun on Shi Tuo's early narrative style. Richard is a good boy.

Chapter 2 treats Shi Tuo's first published collection of short fiction The Valley (1936). These stories evince the influence of the National Defense Movement in literature.

focus on the physical atrocities committed by invading foreign powers. He tried instead to convey a sense of the alienation and psychological scars inflicted by the turbulence of the times.

Chapter 3 of this thesis analyzes The Shanghai Epistles (1941) and shows how Shi Tuo uses the technique of mosaic composition to paint a pessimistic portrait of Shanghai struggling to survive the Sino-Japanese War. In this collection the individual is no longer seen as having any sort of relationship with his fellow man, rather he is competing with him in a struggle to survive.

The final chapter examines Memories of the Orchard City (1946). These stories stand at the pinnacle of Shi Tuo's literary career, because by using the technique of the 'short story cycle' he manages to go beyond the individual themes of earlier works to create a total portrait of life in early Republican China, and the powerful social, cultural, and political forces of the times influencing it.

In sum, this thesis analyzes stories which best represent the development of Shi Tuo's unique literary consciousness and tries to establish that Shi Tuo's writing makes certain humanistic and philosophical statements which demonstrate his subtle yet insistent sense of the alienating impact which the politically and socially turbulent 1930's had on China and its inhabitants.

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## SHI TUO'S ALIENATED MAN AND THE TIMES

INTRODUCTION

Although Shi Tuo 師陀 was one of the most active authors on the literary scene during the 1930's and 1940's, his contribution to modern Chinese fiction has generally been neglected. For the Western reader it is difficult to understand why an author who was as well-published and recognized as Shi Tuo has remained overlooked for as long as he has. One possible explanation for such an oversight would be that Shi Tuo has suffered a fate which befell many of the authors just arriving on the literary scene during the late 1930's: the talent of such authors failed to gain widespread recognition until the stormy 1940's and following Liberation in 1949 many of these authors never published again.

With the exception of an occasional book review in the Literary Supplement of the Da Gong Bao 大公報 (newspaper) of Tianjin and Shanghai, there exists virtually no Chinese literary criticism on Shi Tuo. In the West, only C.T. Hsia, Edward Gunn, and Zbigniew Slupski have contributed any scholarship on this Shanghai author. The Polish sinologist Slupski's article "The World of Shih T'o" ( Asian and African Studies 9, 1973), is the most ambitious Western study done on the author. In this article Slupski outlines Shi Tuo's general career, then he discusses in some detail the only two novels which the author ever produced, Ma Lan (馬蘭, 1948) and

Marriage ( Jiehun 結婚 , 1947). Although Slupski's judgements are not always totally acceptable, his study does deserve recognition for having saved Shi Tuo's name and contribution to modern Chinese narrative from oblivion.

Just as there is a dearth of study done on this writer's fiction, what little is known about Shi Tuo's biography is also very fragmented. Shi Tuo is the pseudonym for Wang Changjian 王長簡 , who was born in Henan province in 1908.<sup>1</sup> As a young man growing up in the countryside Shi Tuo received very little formal education. In 1931 he traveled to Peking, where he established himself as a writer of 'rural fiction' by publishing short stories and reminiscences which used the countryside of his old Henan home as a backdrop. These early stories of Wang Changjian's were published under his original pen name of Lu Fen 蘆焚 (a pseudonym which he used until 1946). For some unexplained reason several other authors from this period also adopted this pen name. So confusing became the whole literary scene with numerous works being produced by different pens but all under the same name, that Wang Changjian decided to alter his nom de plume from Lu Fen to Shi Tuo. In an open letter to the other "Lu Fen's" he discussed the grounds for such a change. Basically, he was displeased that his own works were being confused with a reporter for the suspected traitorous newspaper Zhonghua Ribao 中華日報 , who was also publishing under the name of Lu Fen. The second motivation behind his adopting a new pen name was in reaction to some critics having labelled him "arrogant" after having received the 1936 Da Gong

Bao literature award for his short story "The Valley" ("Gu" 谷).<sup>2</sup> In his open letter he sarcastically states that if critics insist on calling him arrogant he may as well do something to justify such a labelling, so he mockingly changed his pen name.<sup>3</sup>

Before and during the war with the Japanese, Shi Tuo compiled various collections of short stories. At the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War he migrated to Shanghai, where in hopes of perhaps cashing in on an expanding theatre market, he shifted his attention to becoming a playwright. In a sense, Shi Tuo was not a genuine playwright, for he chose to adapt and translate plays rather than create from scratch. His first big hit was The Big Circus ( Da Maxi Tuan 大馬戲團 , 1948) which was adapted from the Russian playwright Andreyev's play, He Who Gets Slapped. The second play adapted by Shi Tuo and Ke Ling 柯 聖 was Gorky's The Lower Depths ( Yedian 夜店 , 1946). During his stay in Shanghai he also managed to produce two novels Ma Lan and Marriage, both of which were published soon after the war.

While in the years prior to Liberation Shi Tuo did publish two novels, the reading public had generally come to know him not as a novelist nor as a playwright but as an author of short fiction. The short story was the earliest genre in which Shi Tuo created and dominates his career as a whole. The first chapter of this thesis will focus on the evolution of Shi Tuo's early prose (1931-1938) and some of the forces which influenced his development as a writer. In later chapters this thesis will



discuss three volumes of Shi Tuo short stories: The Valley ( 谷 , 1936); The Shanghai Epistles ( Shanghai Shouzha 上海手札 , 1941); and Memories of the Orchard City ( Guoyuancheng Ji 果园城记 , 1946) and will try to establish that Shi Tuo's writing makes certain humanistic and philosophical statements which demonstrate his subtle yet insistent sense of the alienating impact of the times. A close inspection of the author's works suggests this scheme and the stories to be discussed show the development of Shi Tuo's unique literary style and artistic consciousness.

Over the course of the last century the concept of alienation has come to gather a number of definitions and applications. Karl Marx broke the ground for the modern concept of alienation, which he saw as arising from the relationship between a worker and his labour in an industrialized society.<sup>4</sup> Other more contemporary definitions of alienation do exist, such as that of the psychologist R.D. Laing who has said that "the condition of alienation, of being asleep, of being unconscious, of being out of one's mind, is the condition of normal man."<sup>5</sup> The definition of alienation which will serve as the foundation for our study of Shi Tuo's fiction does not fall into either of these categories, but is that of the psychologist Eric Fromm:

By alienation is meant a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the center of his own world, as the creator of his own acts--but his acts and their consequences have become his masters. . . . The alienated person is out of touch with himself as he is out of touch with any other person. He, like the others, is experienced as things are experienced: with the senses and with common sense, but at the same time without being related to oneself and to the

world outside productively.<sup>6</sup>

What is key to note about our definition is that it goes beyond a superficial description of external symptoms and characterizes alienation as a "mode of experience." In this thesis, then, we will examine Shi Tuo's technique, form, and themes in order to show how the author reflects the social and political origins of this mode of experience, as well as the nature of alienated man in relation to himself and mankind.

In 1936, Shi Tuo was awarded the Da Gong Bao literary award for his short story "The Valley" ("Gu" 谷, 1936). After receiving this prestigious award Shi Tuo's reputation began to grow, so much so that in the years 1937 and 1938 he published no less than four collections of short prose pieces: Memories of Limen ( Limen Shiji 里門拾記, 1937); The Declining Sun ( Luore Guang 落日光, 1937); The Wild Birds Anthology ( Yeniao Ji 野鳥集, 1937); The Rivers and Lakes Anthology ( Jianghu Ji 江湖集, 1938 ). The arrangement and content of these four volumes may best be described by the words of Slupski, who commented on Shi Tuo's fiction by saying that "his short prose pieces have no fixed form and the line drawn between short story, essay, and mere report tends to disappear."<sup>7</sup>

Many of the short stories included in these collections were previously unpublished works. Thus, although the The Rivers and Lakes Anthology did not arrive on the literary scene until 1938, many of its stories had been created long before the publication of Shi Tuo's first collection The Valley. The first

chapter of this thesis will discuss three such stories: "Cheng Yaoxian" (程耀先, 1935); "The Pilgrim" ("Xingjiao Ren" 行脚人, 1934); and "Night in the Valley" ("Gu zhi Ye" 谷之夜, 1935). These stories represent Shi Tuo's early rural style and show him as developing a brand of prose which reflected his own unique world-view. Aside from discussing the technical and thematic merits of these early works we will also trace the impact of two of China's greatest writers, Shen Congwen 沈從文 and Lu Xun 魯迅 on Shi Tuo's early narrative style.

The Valley represents Shi Tuo's first published collection of short stories. Appearing during a period when China was suffering under foreign oppression, this collection of stories shows influences of the National Defense Movement in literature. Unlike other authors of this period, however, Shi Tuo was not content to create stereotyped anti-Japanese fiction. Shi Tuo used foreign oppression and Japanese encroachment as a backdrop, but rather than focusing on the physical atrocities committed by invading foreign powers he tried to convey a sense of the alienation and psychological scars inflicted by the turbulence of the times.

During the course of the Sino-Japanese War Shi Tuo moved to Shanghai and in The Shanghai Epistles he once again seeks to reveal the impact of such politically unstable times on China. Unlike in The Valley, however, the author's focus of attention is not on rural China but on Shanghai's petit-bourgeois class. Shi Tuo uses the technique of mosaic composition to paint a

pessimistic picture of Shanghai struggling to survive the Sino-Japanese War and the physical and psychological impact which these politically unstable times had on all Shanghai's citizens. Shi Tuo's The Shanghai Epistles portrays a society where the individual is no longer seen as having any sort of relationship with his fellow man, but competing with him in a deathly struggle to survive.

Memories of the Orchard City is Shi Tuo's final collection of short fiction. In this volume Shi Tuo uses the technique of the 'short story cycle' to reflect the problems of a traditional society confronted by change. From an artistic standpoint, Memories of the Orchard City stands at the summit of Shi Tuo's literary career, for it presents his cumulative vision of the powerful social, cultural, and political impact which the events of the years 1911-1931 had on China. In these stories we not only note a re-assertion of certain themes which concerned the younger author, but also a consummate re-working of earlier themes into a narrative of greater scope and complexity.

In sum, this thesis will consider works which seem to best represent the development of Shi Tuo's literary vision. Our analysis of stories from various collections will reveal how in the realm of structure and stylistics Shi Tuo's literary technique evolved over time in order to better portray various aspects of the political and social turmoil of the 1930's and 1940's, and to better convey his subtle yet insistent sense of the impact which these years had on their inhabitants.

## CHAPTER 1

In attempting to establish the various stages of Shi Tuo's literary career, the paucity of study done on the author necessitates that we examine a number of diverse sources; even then many details about the author remain obscure. In an article published as a supplement to his 1948 novel Ma Lan, titled "To Messrs. Lu Fen" ("Zhi Lu Fen Xianshengmen" 致蘆焚先生們), Shi Tuo commented that he began using the pseudonym Lu Fen in 1931. As this was his original nom de plume we may assume that he launched his literary career around that year. At that time, Shen Congwen had placed him, along with many other young writers, such as Li Ni 麗尼, He Qifang 何其芳, and Li Guangtian 李廣田, under the guidance of the Literary Supplement to the Da Gong Bao 大公報 (newspaper) of Tianjin, which he then edited.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, aside from assessing the impact of Shen Congwen and Lu Xun on Shi Tuo's early prose, we will also discuss three stories representing Shi Tuo's developing narrative style.

To reduce Shen Congwen's long and distinguished literary career to a sentence or two is to do the author a huge injustice; nonetheless, in the annals of modern Chinese fiction he will be best remembered as an author who stressed his rural origins:

I am a countryman. The statement is neither pompous nor

self-effacing. The countryman is one whose personality is deeply rooted in the country. He has his own sense of love, hatred, sorrow and happiness. As opposed to the city man, the countryman is stubborn, and conservative, lacking guile but not alertness. His love for the soil is consummate. He is serious about everything, so much so that he appears idiotic.<sup>2</sup>

Shen began contributing prose to newspapers under the pseudonym of Xiu Yunyun 休芸芸 in 1923.<sup>3</sup> In those early publications he tried to convey the multitude of sights and sounds experienced in his wanderings about China. While these stories were highly successful in their ability to evoke mental images, Shen was at his best when he wrote of that which was closest to him: the rural dweller. He wrote of his novelette The Border Town ( Biancheng 邊城 , 1932):

[in it] I want to express a form of life which is fine, healthy, and natural, and not against human nature. My intention is not to take the reader on a tour of Daoyuan [the border town]. I want to take a few ordinary people who live in a small town in the Yu river area in order to show the reader how they live in their share of sorrow and happiness when involved in a human affair, thus giving an accurate interpretation of the word love. . . .<sup>4</sup>

Shi Tuo demonstrated a "predilection for the rural subject matter"<sup>5</sup> reminiscent of Shen Congwen, yet his writings did not always express a form of life which was fine, healthy and natural. In the opening paragraph of "The Giant," ("Juren" 巨人 , 1936) Shi Tuo remarks: "I really dislike my home town, yet I have fond memories of that great plain."<sup>6</sup>

Many stories from Shi Tuo's early period paint negative and sarcastic images of small town life, while others are completely devoid of any mocking commentary and are striking for the sentimental and reminiscing tone which they take on.

Basically, Shi Tuo seems to have had a mixed view of life in the countryside and his stories certainly reflect this emotional vacillation. Thus, while his opening comments in "The Giant" reveals him as having no great affection for his native parts, the story still contains hints of his nostalgia for rural life. The story centres on an old storyteller who returns to his native village after a twenty year absence. Upon returning, the villager becomes melancholy and depressed, realizing that in having been away for so long he has become a stranger in his own home town. Finding the situation unbearable, he moves from the village to a nearby farm. Here he leads a life of simple pleasures with only his work and a few barnyard animals to keep him company. The story concludes with Shi Tuo celebrating this simple and unencumbered existence:

He [the storyteller] stood within the sea of time, the sea of mankind; months and years passed, people died and he stood alone. He was a youth forever, letting his neighbors go scratch and fight over trivial matters.?

Aside from "The Giant," there are a number of other prose pieces which reveal the thematic impact of Shen Congwen's literature on Shi Tuo, for example, "A Piece of Land" ("Yi Pian Tu," Da Gong Bao Dec. 13, 1936).

Perhaps the most noteworthy characteristic which these two authors share is an embellished and poetic writing style which both employ in many of their stories. Shen Congwen created some of his best prose when he attempted to convey in words the beauty and mystery of the natural world. It was this aspect of Shen's genius, this ability to paint a landscape with words that

earned him the title of shiren (詩人, poet). At times in his career Shi Tuo was able to match the brilliant lyrical prose produced by Shen. At this stage of his career, however, Shi Tuo's lyrical abilities had not yet fully matured and can be described as being inconsistent. Many of his prose pieces from this period contain stylistic defects reminiscent of the artistic flaws which often plagued the young Shen Congwen.

Despite his sensibility to a wide range of experiences Shen's early fiction was marred by an undisciplined writing style which was prone to "superfluous detail and essay-like disclosures."<sup>8</sup> From a story entitled "Longzhu" (龍朱) and translated in an English anthology of his fiction, we note how Shen's early prose technique was often too inexperienced to deal with his fertile imagination:

Among the Miao's, the White Ear tribe was famous for its handsome youth. It looked as though the parents of that district had all participated in the task of carving a statue of the God Apollo, and so handed down to their sons a model of beauty. Longzhu, the son of the chieftain was seventeen years old, and he was the most handsome of all the handsome sons of the tribe. As beautiful and strong as lion and as gentle as a lamb, he was the archetype for man; he was authority, strength, and light. Because of his beauty he deserved all these similes. As with beauty he was gifted also with moral virtue, which far surpassed the share of ordinary men.<sup>9</sup>

The above passage is a typical example of Shen's early prose. As a young writer, Shen's fascination with the customs and rites of aboriginal tribes encountered in his wanderings was outmatched only by his desire to somehow incorporate his experiences into works of prose. In short stories, such as "Longzhu" and "Under the Moonlight" ("Yue Xia de Xiaoqing")



月下的情景, 1932) Shen's experiences find a form for expression, but his inexperienced pen fails to capture the original power of the experience which so moved him. In spite of these early difficulties, added experience and a greater degree of understanding of the formal properties of the modern short story eradicated many of Shen's early stylistic problems, and in time he was to emerge as one of the most distinguished writers of the late 1920's and the 1930's.

While Shen's first attempts at prose were judged to be "verbose and cumbersome,"<sup>10</sup> Shi Tuo's were criticized for being "artificial, wordy, and fatiguing."<sup>11</sup> A major technical defect of Shi Tuo's prose from the 1931 to 1938 period was his often overzealous devotion to lyrically describing even the most mundane of events or scenery. In delineating objects of nature like the sun, moon or the earth, Shi Tuo frequently relied on banal generic adjectives, such as, "the earth is a 'mother', who 'takes fright', 'holds her breath', 'slumbers with her red-brown bosom uncovered', and so forth."<sup>12</sup> In passages such as these, Shi Tuo's descriptive technique exhibits degrees of variation in content and grammar, but the parallels drawn, for example, between the sun and some other celestial entity are so overdrawn that they become tiresome:

Village elders say that the sun god resides in the far away and distant sea. Nobody knows just how beautiful and brilliant its shine really is. It is from here, however--even if she only knew this from her dreams and from myths--that the sun, riding in a golden chariot began its daily orbit. The gleam of its arrows blazed a path, flew over tall mountains, vast plains, rivers and lakes. They made a hissing sound as they swept the heavens, . . . .<sup>13</sup>

In this story called "The Pastoral Song" ("Shou Ge" 牧歌, 1936) Shi Tuo's lyrical style and pastoral vision are inseparable. That is to say, the author indulges in such ardent and exaggerated expressions of feelings to convey his idealized vision of a rural people's uncompromising reverence for the natural world. In the final analysis, however, such over-adorned description fails internally to achieve what Shi Tuo set it out to do. Aside from being awkward and loquacious, the analogies drawn are so artificial and ornate that they cannot leave a strong impression. They become exaggerated romantic decoration and non-functional backdrop to the action of the story. Basically, at this stage of his career it would appear that while Shi Tuo may have had Shen Congwen's lyrical eye his prose abilities had not yet fully matured. Yet despite having to endure a period of development before he was able to take full control of this type of narrative defect, other stories from this period reveal his potential for creating works which express his own unique world-view. These stories will be discussed in a future section.

Aside from assessing the impact of Shen Congwen on Shi Tuo's early prose technique, Zbigniew Slupski has also tried to point out the influences of another great Chinese author, Lu Xun. Unfortunately, because the Polish sinologist's study is concerned more with providing a thematic overview of Shi Tuo's works, he fails to discuss in detail many of the common narrative features which the two authors share.

Lu Xun (pen name for Zhou Shuren 周樹人) was a

medical student in Japan when he suddenly chose writing as a profession after seeing a news slide of the humiliation of his countrymen during the Russian-Japanese War of 1904-1905. In the preface of his first collection of short stories called Call to Arms (Nahan 呐喊, 1923) Lu Xun recalls this incident:

One day I saw a film showing some Chinese, one of whom was bound, while many others stood around him. They were all strong fellows yet they appeared completely apathetic. According to the commentary, the one with his hands bound was a spy working for the Russians, who was to have his head cut off by the Japanese military as a warning to others, while the Chinese beside him had come to join the spectacle.

Before the term was over I had left for Tokyo, because after this film I felt that medical science was not so important after all. The people of a backward nation, however strong and healthy they may be can only serve to be made examples of, or to witness such futile spectacles; and it is not necessarily deplorable no matter how many of them die of illness. The most important thing, therefore, was to change their spirit, and since at the time I felt that literature was the best means to this end, I was determined to promote a literary movement.<sup>14</sup>

It was because of the above incident that Lu Xun abandoned a medical career for a literary one, believing that the best way he could serve his country was as a spiritual physician.

Call to Arms is one of the most celebrated collections of stories ever published in China. In a story called "Kong Yiji" (孔乙己), Lu Xun probed for the first time many of the social ills plaguing Republican China. The story is sketched by an adult narrator reminiscing about his early days as a lackey at a local eating-house called Prosperity Tavern. The clientele of the Prosperity Tavern are mostly members of the "short-jacketed" (working) class. The tavern's atmosphere is usually quite somber, except for when a patron nicknamed Kong Yiji arrives. In contrast with the regular clientele, Kong wears a

tattered scholars' gown and is the only long-gowned customer who associates with the tavern's common folk. Despite being clad in the traditional garb of the intellectual class and interlacing his speech with maxims quoted from the classics, Kong has never even managed to obtain the lowest of all official ranks, the xiucaai (秀才). In spite of his academic failures, Kong doggedly views himself as a member of the scholarly class and when he puts on his quasi-intellectual airs the other tavern patrons delight in mocking him. Having never passed the civil exam, Kong is forced to eke out a living as a scribe and even here he gets into trouble by stealing his employers' books to finance his fondness for drink. Kong's stealing usually just results in a public thrashing. One day, however, he makes the mistake of trying to steal from the home of a high-ranking official. After catching Kong in the act, this official orders his henchmen to break Kong's legs. Rendered a virtual cripple, Kong's mobility is severely limited. After a long absence, Kong returns to the tavern one day by dragging himself along the ground on a piece of rush matting. Despite his pitiful state the Prosperity Tavern's owner ridicules him as harshly as ever. Kong's eyes plead with him to desist, but it is to no avail. Disheartened beyond words, Kong drags himself away from the tavern and is never heard from again.

Kong's pathos lies in his blind acceptance of the ruling classes norms (where, for example, success and failure was measured by one's abilities on the civil exam) and his unrealistic clinging to aristocratic ways. In brief, Lu Xun's

message stands between his compassionate portrayal of Kong and his description of the cruelty and callousness which the other tavern patrons show to Kong's sorry plight.

Having outlined this story of Lu Xun's we shall now turn our attention to Shi Tuo's "Several Tiring Conversations" ("Juan Tan Ji" 倦談集, 1935) and discuss a technical feature common to both works.

As Slupski has accurately pointed out, both Lu Xun and Shi Tuo wrote stories depicting characters' apathy and indifference in the face of horror. In "Several Tiring Conversations," Shi Tuo portrays villagers' reaction to the executions carried out in their small community by the local puppet government. The background and details of these executions are never directly portrayed; rather, one learns of village reaction to such events via snatches of "conversation" which form the plot of the story. The conversations are quite varied: one involves the executioner and two of his admirers; a second involves a young girl imploring the executioner for the details as to how he carries out his appointed task; and one final one is between two Western ministers discussing their reaction to Chinese life.

In "Kong Yiji," Lu Xun repudiates the cruelty and hypocrisy of small town life by sketching Kong's tragic demise against the backdrop of the Prosperity Tavern and its patrons' cold and callous nature. In analyzing "Several Tiring Conversations," this technique of Lu Xun comes immediately to mind. Each conversation recorded in this story of Shi Tuo's further illuminates the villagers' apathy and perverse interest

to the gruesome events being carried out around them. Furthermore, besides this fundamental approach to subject matter, both authors employ a similar narrative agent to mediate their tales.

Lu Xun heightens Kong Yiji's pathos by making use of an almost emotionless narrator. During the course of recounting events which occurred to him ten years ago Lu Xun's narrator points out that Kong was, in part, the author of his own failure. Despite the accuracy of such an observation one cannot help but be disturbed by the behavior of Kong's fellow patrons who take such a perverse delight in taunting him. This want of compassion on the part of these people significantly heightens one's sympathies for Kong. Moreover, what heightens one's sympathies even further is that this adult narrator shows absolutely no more involvement or compassion for Kong's demise now than he did ten years ago as a mere youth. Actually, the only reason why the adult narrator remembers Kong at all is because he provided the otherwise cheerless tavern with a light moment or two. In brief, even more disturbing than the cruelty which the characters of the narrator's reminiscences show towards Kong is that this adult narrator still suffers from a total lack of insight and sympathy to Kong's fall. This lack of emotion and vision creates a greater degree of emotional distance between reader and narrator, and intensifies even further one's sympathies for Kong.

In "Several Tiring Conversations," Shi Tuo creates a structure similar to "Kong Yiji," in that as the story develops

one becomes further and further disturbed by the actions and attitudes of the dramatis personae. Furthermore, even more disturbing than the apathy and perverse interest which the characters show for the executions carried out in their village are the words of the narrator himself:

Everyday a few people are tied up and sent to say good-bye to the world. We've all pretty much gotten use to this and it really isn't much of a big deal. . . .

It's seemingly strange, but in this little town there really isn't anything strange about it at all. They [the townspeople] say, "This? Why this sort of thing has been going on since the earliest of times, but now people have turned it into a hobby; it's really all quite the same."<sup>15</sup>

Such unfeeling commentary is, of course, ironic. It distances one emotionally from the narrator and intensifies our empathy and anguish for the events and the characters' reaction to them. In both "Kong Yiji" and "Several Tiring Conversations," the authors have heightened reader response by using a narrator who is as unmoved by the events he describes as the characters themselves.

Aside from the similar narrative agent in both stories, Lu Xun and Shi Tuo also share a number of motifs. Perhaps we can see evidence of this technical similarity most concretely in Shi Tuo's "Sickness" ("Bing" 病, 1937) and Lu Xun's "Medicine" ("Yao" 藥, 1919).

In the closing section of Lu Xun's work, one reads of two mothers standing by adjacent graves, each mourning their respective son's death. One of the youths has been executed as a revolutionary by the Manchu government, the other suffered from a case of consumption and died when a last-ditch "cure" of

eating a dumpling soaked, ironically, in the fresh blood of the executed revolutionary fails to save him. In her mourning the mother of the revolutionary notices a wreath of flowers on her son's grave and takes it as a sign of his disturbed soul. Seeing a raven on a nearby branch the mother blurts out to it: "If you are really here and can hear me then let this raven fly over the top of your grave before my eyes."<sup>16</sup> The raven remains on the bough of the tree, however, "perched immobile as iron."<sup>17</sup> After resting a few seconds it caws out loudly, "stretches its wings, braces itself to take off, then flies like an arrow toward the far horizon."<sup>18</sup>

While the symbol of Lu Xun's raven has been debated extensively, "in both Chinese and Western traditions the raven has mainly represented tragedy, death, fright, and the unknown."<sup>19</sup> Viewed from this perspective, the raven's sudden flight like an arrow to the horizon may be interpreted as Lu Xun's vision of the vast hardship and tragedy which befalls activists seeking political change. In essence, it is an ambiguous symbol, representing at once a strong revolutionary spirit which dares to explore new political horizons, yet one whose ultimate accomplishments and tragedies lies in the vast unknown.

Shi Tuo's short prose piece "Sickness" has three distinct sections. Written some thirteen years after "Medicine," all three sections are the reminiscences of a narrator who is at home sick in bed. In the first section the author recalls a period of childhood illness and in the third section he revives



memories of some of the mischief he and his brother would get into during Chinese holidays. In tone, these two sections recall many of Lu Xun's youthful reminiscences, such as "The Village Opera" ("Canzhong Xiju" 村中戲劇, 1923) or others from his collection Wild Grass ( Yecao 野草, 1926). Unlike the first and third sections, however, the section called "The Raven" ("Wu" 烏) is a remembrance of an event which involves characters other than the narrator himself and is a complete prose unit in itself. Briefly, the story tells of a young man returning home to his wife and child after a one year absence. During this year in which he was separated from his kin, the young husband had hoped to earn a good deal of money. Unfortunately, his personal sacrifices have all been for naught, for he returns home in no better financial shape than when he had departed the year earlier. Forced by financial circumstances to travel at night rather than take lodgings, he falls victim to the elements and freezes to death not too far outside his village. In the end, the deceased's wife, child, and other friends gather at his grave to perform burial rites. Completing the ceremonies the villagers depart, leaving only the wife and child to weep alone. As the mother and child stand too grieved to move, a raven lands on the grave in front of them and glances at them in a "transcending manner."

In Shi Tuo's "The Raven," the narrator's description of the bird's actions is a good deal more succinct than Lu Xun's; nonetheless, it does provide the key for interpreting the raven's significance. The four characters used to describe the

the manner in which the bird glanced at the grieving mother and child: chao ran wu wai ( 超然物外 ) <sup>20</sup> reveals the hidden meaning of the raven. Shi Tuo's raven is an ambiguous symbol, as the traditional connotations of the raven representing tragedy, death and the unknown are recast in a less portentous mode. Just as Lu Xun used the raven as a symbol of his uncertain vision of what the future held for China's political iconoclasts, Shi Tuo incorporates the same motif to represent his uncertain view of death. Death, when seen from the position of the raven--a certain image of the deceased young husband--is not necessarily something to be feared or grieved. In point of fact, the four characters which are used to describe the raven's movements may be translated as "to be above all material desires." As a reincarnated image of the young husband, the raven's contentment with death is not to be considered unusual, for life proved to be nothing more than a series of good intentions failed. The failure of these good intentions not only created great physical hardships, but emotional ones as well; freezing to death being just the most extreme example of man falling victim to life's toils. Thus, although his death may be regarded as tragic by the living it may not necessarily be viewed so by the deceased, who perhaps achieved some sort of spiritual peace through it. Shi Tuo's message would seem to be that in an often cruel world, death is often the only relief from life's hardships. This would explain why, as the mother and child bitterly weep over the death of their kin, the raven looks on in a spiritually contented manner.

Thematically, this section of Shi Tuo's "Sickness" reveals him as having a much more pessimistic--almost nihilistic--view of life than Lu Xun. The point we wish to establish, however, is that while the raven is often an un auspicious symbol of death, Shi Tuo has adopted it in much the same manner as Lu Xun to become a paradoxical symbol of the unknown future, a full comprehension of which lies beyond the individual's ken.

Although Shi Tuo and Lu Xun share a number of technical features, they did have very different views about the social value of their writings. Lu Xun was a spiritual physician. In many of his works he probed the "diseases" troubling an increasingly backwards China. The pathos of many of these stories lies in his depiction of characters defeated in their struggle with the traditional social and political forces of Chinese feudal life.

Shi Tuo's stories do not have the moral seriousness of Lu Xun's, they do not indict Chinese life as being hypocritical and cruel. In contrast to Lu Xun's remarks in the Introduction to Call to Arms, Shi Tuo once remarked that he was :

. . . . an insignificant person. . . . if I am able to live I, shall be doing something or other silently, I shall follow my path silently, think silently about myself and other people, and then die silently; there will be nothing remarkable about it. Nor do I hope to be understood, for I know that he who longs with his whole heart to be understood by others usually brings disaster on himself.<sup>21</sup>

In a word, this statement shows Shi Tuo as doubting the social value of his literature and "as to whether human action could ever rid society of all that makes it cruel."<sup>22</sup> Shi Tuo's stories imbue the reader with a heavy pessimism. His

characters struggle, but it is a doomed struggle. This is a theme which will be elaborated on in later sections of this thesis.

In sum, for Shi Tuo the years 1931-1938 represent a period of experimentation and development in literary technique. Many of the stories created in this period show links to Shen Congwen and Lu Xun in either theme, language or motif. Such influences represent artistic milestones which Shi Tuo transcended in his development as a writer. In the final analysis, Shi Tuo will not be remembered as a mere imitator of Shen Congwen or Lu Xun, but as a writer who exceeded the limitations of such a style and went on to create his own unique brand of fiction. In this period, Shi Tuo's potential for creating prose which expresses his own unique world-view is clearly seen in stories, such as "Cheng Yaoxian," "The Pilgrim," and "Night in the Valley."

The first story to be discussed is simply called "Cheng Yaoxian" (程耀先, 1935). In this work, the narrator, during the course of a return visit to his home town, encounters a certain Cheng Yaoxian. This Cheng is a bit of a local enigma. Not being a native of this village, but rather someone who simply wandered into town, many details about his past are shrouded in mystery. During the course of a lengthy visit, the narrator becomes intrigued with the character of Cheng and the question of how someone of his obvious education could be content to remain in such a small town. As his sojourn wears on the narrator is gradually able to assimilate a few fragments of

Cheng's unusual life history. It is unfortunate, however, that their developing friendship comes to a sudden end one day when Cheng unaffectedly announces that he is leaving for other parts:

"You're going to leave?" The abruptness of this news shocked me. More than likely he detected my message, wherein he haltingly replied, in a half-explaining, half-lamenting tone, "Even I feel that to continue on like this would be all too meaningless, it would be better to move on."<sup>23</sup>

As announced, Cheng leaves the very next morning and henceforth it is only through his periodic letters from various parts of China that the narrator comes to learn of his whereabouts. The tone of these letters is as varied as their postmarks, ranging from the frivolous to the suicidal. In time, these letters from afar arrive more and more sporadically until they stop completely. In the closing paragraphs of the work the narrator remarks that it has been years since he heard from Cheng and asks in an elegiac tone: "Where are you Mr. Cheng?"<sup>24</sup>

Earlier we mentioned that the young Shi Tuo adopted prominent Lu Xun motifs and discussed the raven as a case in point. The story "Cheng Yaoxian" fails to impress one with any technical or artistic virtuosity on the part of the author, yet it remains noteworthy in that it presents a unique Shi Tuo motif common to this and many other stories: the wanderer. Shi Tuo's wanderer is a character, who, like Cheng, goes roaming from city to city, town to town, through mountains and small villages for reasons that are often never made explicitly clear.

According to the narrator's limited information, Cheng is the son of an upper-class landowning family. Being from a prominent class, Cheng has the opportunity to receive a good

education. After he graduates from college, Cheng returns to his native parts where he assumes the position of teacher. It was at this stage of his life that he goes, as the narrator, reports, "a little crazy."<sup>25</sup> Overnight, he sells practically all his worldly possessions to become the organizer of a revolutionary school. Deemed harmless by local elders, Cheng and the rest of his youthful followers are left undisturbed until the revolutionary wave is judged to be a national threat. Due to this rapid change in political climate Cheng is forced to flee. He travels through Shanghai and no sooner arrives in Wuhan when the anti-revolutionary wave forces him to flee once again. In the subsequent months he wanders aimlessly in the wilds of the mountains until by chance one day he stumbles across the narrator's uncle, who leads him to their village. Cheng was fortunate to be able to escape from the hands of those who sought to exterminate suspected Communists such as himself, but the future held for him a fate almost as tragic as death:

Life [for Cheng] revealed itself as being even gloomier. As the world was becoming crazier, young activists were being threatened and slain. Cheng bore wounds both new and old. Naturally, if you add on the fact of his age and that he had already lost the vigor of his youth . . . . .  
 . . . . and I come to understand that when people [like him] reach the point of being totally broken they hope to be able to have a temporary period in which they can restore their strenght, pick-up the pieces of their lives, regain their will, and then once again dedicate themselves to the battlefield.<sup>26</sup>

Having fallen victim to this clash between the old and the new, Cheng arrived in the village in search of a mental and physical solace. In retrospect, although Cheng was to eventually regain his physical strength he was never able to

recapture his mental vigor. Having survived the extermination of Communists, Cheng wandered from place to place. He often stumbled into a village, such as the narrator's, where he felt comfortable with the people and the immediate environment. Nonetheless, no matter how seemingly tranquil such a life was it failed to restore a sense of purpose or direction to his life --"To continue on like this would be all too meaningless"--and because of this he ultimately had to take to the road again. Thus, while Cheng was seemingly content with his lot, he was in fact alienated from himself and the others around him. His feelings of anguish and confusion are symptomatic of man in a society in which the individual is at a total loss to find any point of reference as to his own existence and where he reaches the point of questioning his own worth as a human being. Mr. Cheng's intellectual bearing in the external world rested in his zealous devotion to propagating the revolutionary cause. Sudden changes in the Chinese political climate forced Cheng to abandon his family and native parts, and destroyed his intellectual bearing in the external world as well. Thrown into a state of ~~total~~ disorientation, Cheng sought to regain a certain stability in these tumultuous times and so he wanders, haphazardly searching for that which will once again give him certainty and a renewed sense of purpose in what he perceives is a menacing universe. Basically, Cheng searches for what he hopes and believes is his authentic self hidden under the banalities of small town life. As the various postmarks on his letters would suggest, this renewed sense of purpose and direction eluded him

no matter where he traveled. In sum, although Cheng was fortunate to have survived the wave of terror which forced him to begin his flight, he was to bear the psychological damage which such times inflicted for the rest of his life, as he wandered aimlessly around China searching for that elusive "something" to give his life meaning again. In the remaining sections of this chapter we will discuss how Shi Tuo uses this wandering motif to make certain philosophical statements.

Shi Tuo also incorporates the just described wandering motif in another story titled, "Night in the Valley" ("Gu zhi Ye" 谷之夜, 1935). In this piece, the actions of the unnamed dramatized narrator and characters are described against the plain backdrop of a remote rural valley at sunset. As the story opens, the narrator and his traveling companion (an orderly) are slowly winding their way up a mountain path on horseback. Traveling along this makeshift trail they come across a shepherd's hut, and with dusk rapidly approaching they opt to take lodgings at this shepherd's primitive home. After having a few moments to get acquainted, the herdsman drops his rather abrasive manner and proves himself to be a very cordial host. Having entertained his two guests with dinner the shepherd offers a tale as a way of rounding off their evening. The story which he recites concerns an adopted local lad who spent most of his youth tending his uncle's sheep in a nearby valley. He is a fine shepherd, leading a seemingly happy life until one day he abruptly announces to his uncle that he is leaving. The uncle, realizing that he has no real power over



this already full-grown man, has no other choice but to respect his wishes. At the time of his departure, various villagers speculate as to what prompts him to leave so suddenly. Some of these folk thought that he was leaving to go join the army, others thought that he was running away with a girl from the next valley. But, alas, all such speculation remains nothing more than just that, for the shepherd in closing his tale remarks that the young man has never been heard from again. Having concluded his story the old man lights his pipe and sits silently next to the already sleeping orderly, and so "Night in the Valley" concludes.

In this story Shi Tuo expands the wandering motif in a different direction. In both "Cheng Yaoxian" and "Night in the Valley," the focus of attention is on a character who one day suddenly decides to pack-up and--like many of Shi Tuo's characters--is never heard from again. In the latter story, however, the author uses the wandering motif to make certain philosophical statements about man's knowledge, rather than as an expression of a character's disoriented state alone. The unknown fate of the young shepherd oppresses the characters with its vision of how fate's fickle movements discount any knowledge we have of our immediate environment and those who reside in it. Like Cheng, the young shepherd was a well-known individual in his community, but one day this figure of flesh and blood suddenly vanishes from sight and is never heard from again, almost as if our having known him was a dream or illusion. Aside from the implication that man's knowledge is limited and

transitory, the backdrop of this work, a remote uninhabited valley, virtually engulfing the figures of the narrator and his companion, paints a disturbing vision of man helplessly floundering in nature:

Under the darkness of the evening light, the silent mountain ridge seemed to be engaged in some form of ancient meditation. Where will this path which seems to be getting longer and longer the more we travel it take us? Moving along in desolate mountains such as these, I had long ago turned everything over [as to where they traveled] to my horse.<sup>27</sup>

This cumulative vision of man's, life, ambitions, experiences and knowledge representing but a small speck in a boundless and timeless universe is reinforced by the words of the narrator as he remarks on the rather abrupt manner in which the old herdsman ended his tale: " . . . [The story] was told--ended--the way we observe and frequently meet--without any conclusion."<sup>28</sup>

In the final story to be considered from this collection, Shi Tuo once again makes use of the wandering motif to reaffirm his vision of the limitations of man's life and knowledge when standing in the face of infinite nature.

The short story "The Pilgrim" ("Xingjiao Ren", 1935) is broken up into two pieces. In the first section called "Twilight" ("Huanghun" 黄昏) the narrator devotes a great deal of space to describing the weathered features of a wanderer, who is casually roaming about a remote hillside. This well-traveled wanderer slowly makes his way along a ridge and pauses briefly to sit down and survey the scenery below and around him. In the course of making this rest stop, he

encounters a herdsman's daughter and inquires of her as to where he might find accommodations for the evening. The young girl slyly points out a direction and departs. In the second section called "The Lodge" ("Sushe" 宿舍), the traveler follows the young girl's directions and comes across a small hut. The occupants are none other than the shepherd girl, her spirited grandfather, and their dog. Though the elderly man and his granddaughter make an effort to share their few creature comforts with their guest, the traveler maintains a sullen pose throughout, content to listen to the bantering and kidding between his two hosts. During the course of the evening it becomes quite obvious that the young girl is agitated over her brother's failure to return home from a journey into town. As days have apparently past since his expected return, the grandfather has already succumbed to the notion that the young man has abandoned them for other parts. The young girl, however, remains unshaken in her belief that he will return. The story ends on a gloomy note with the young shepherd girl standing outside her hut, pining for her brother's return:

After checking the sheep stall she stood outside by herself on the road. Suddenly the moon started to rise out of the end of a far away mountain stream. The shadows of the trees and the hut were cast upon the cliffs, the road, and on the gleaming water. . . . The sun's bright red gleam seemed to be burning the many mountains and valleys. She looked out into the distance at the small footpaths--footpaths which connected a countless number of mountain peaks--being engulfed by the moon's rays. She stood silently for a long time, then, she breathed a deep sigh and slowly walked back into the little hut.<sup>29</sup>

As is the case with the previous story, the concluding passage of "The Pilgrim" engages one's emotions as we imagine

the young girl's loneliness as she stands alone unable to comprehend how someone she has known for her entire life has suddenly evaporated into thin air. In discussing "Night in the Valley," we noted how the author effectively employed the motif of the wanderer to reflect his personal vision of the ephemeral nature of man's knowledge. In "The Pilgrim," Shi Tuo not only questions the limitations of man's knowledge, but demonstrates how a sudden realization of the limitations of one's knowledge can crush a character's entire world-view.

By virtue of having been raised in totally rural surroundings, the young shepherd girl's sphere of experiences and observations have been severely limited to the material world within the boundaries of her immediate environment. As far as she and the other residents of this valley are concerned, the "world" corresponds precisely with the boundaries of their village. What exists beyond these boundaries is extremely unclear and has rarely been contemplated: "In this valley which is separated from the rest of the world, . . . people simply lived from one year to the next, . . . ." <sup>30</sup> The emotional anguish suffered by the young girl stems from her inability to reason out the experience of her brother's running away from her inherited world-view. The girl's unconscious conception of her native surroundings as the "world" is not only shattered, but even more frightening, this shattering leaves her incapable of comprehending a newly expanded world which is suddenly seen as being as vast as the sky itself.

This glum picture of the emotional and mental imbalance

created for man by an experience which transcends the limitations of a knowledge which has been shaped by and extends no further than one's immediate environment is enhanced structurally by the author as well. In "Cheng Yaoxian" and "Night in the Valley," the events and observations related to the reader are bound by the personal experiences of the dramatized narrator himself. In narratives of this type, the raconteur is only capable of reporting information which is available to himself. In "The Pilgrim," however, the author creates an undramatized third-person observer to relate the events of the prose piece. This third-person observer relates the story from what may be described as a omniscient point of view. His narration is characterized by his shifting from the external world to the inner selves of a number of characters and freedom in commenting upon the actions and thoughts of the characters and relate information which would otherwise be unavailable to the reader. As the story develops, however, Shi Tuo's narrator, while demonstrating all the characteristics of an omniscient narrator, is revealed as being deliberately not all-knowing. Basically, Shi Tuo's creation of a quasi-omniscient narrator, whose knowledge of these characters, their background, and desires is limited, is aesthetically motivated. Just as the young girl's knowledge is seriously restricted by the narrow bounds of her immediate environment, Shi Tuo's narrator's knowledge extends no further, no deeper than the few bare facts laid out in the story itself. In the final analysis because of such a limited knowledge the narrator can only

speculate about the characters's motivations and fate:

At this point it wouldn't hurt to do some speculating. Perhaps this family was not always as cold and cheerless as this. But perhaps because everyone else had died, that left only the three of them--the grandfather, brother, and sister--to live this forever poor but honest existence. Maybe the young girl was mad because her elder brother who went into town had promised to buy her a kerchief and he had not yet returned! Maybe it was because her ring fell into the stream last night when she was washing the dishes; or maybe it was because last evening a marten made off with some her chicks, . . .<sup>31</sup>

By incorporating a narrator with such limited abilities into his narrative Shi Tuo has demonstrated great artistic sensitivity, for such a technique enhances his vision of man's limited knowledge.

This harmony of theme and technique is further demonstrated by the promising maturity of the author's lyrical style. Earlier we noted how many stories from Shi Tuo's early period were marred by a lyrical descriptive style which was often wordy and artificial. In "The Pilgrim" and "Night in the Valley," however, Shi Tuo's young pen gains full control of what had been a rather tedious lyrical style. The inclusion of such passages, which often seem to be just for literary lustre now have the more important function of linking the delineation of an object with the mood of a character. In both "Night in the Valley" and "The Pilgrim," particulars of time and place, as well as details about the characters such as name and origin are never established. In both cases the stories are merely described as taking place in a remote rural valley at sunset. Shi Tuo's deliberate failure to put such realistic elements within the body of these two prose pieces draws attention to the

few descriptive elements that remain, and more importantly, leaves the impression that the described situation is in a world which is universal and timeless. Furthermore, these few remaining passages also demonstrate Shi Tuo's ability in moulding what was once a lyrical style that gets carried away with itself to better express his own individual themes. In the following passages superfluous analogies, such as the sun being a god or the earth a mother, have been expelled. What one discovers in its place are examples of the traditional Chinese literary fusion of qing ( 情 , emotion) and jing ( 景 , scenery):

The wanderer was smoking and casually glancing around at the scenery. The woodpeckers. . . were still knocking. . . . It was only because it was this late that they were noiser than usual. The valley also seemed more desolate. . . . The wanderer once again glanced back at the mountain peaks which he had already traveled over. The sun's rays had already been blocked out by the cliffs. The colors hazed together and were difficult to distinguish from one another

Although it was late this fellow was in no hurry whatsoever. He continued to sit on this boulder and he began examining his shoes. This pair of shoes was as honest as could be. They had walked many a mile, stepped on many a stone and still they remained comfortable on his feet.<sup>32</sup>

Just as Shi Tuo creates a narrator with deliberately limited abilities to enhance the theme of "The Pilgrim," he often uses simple physical description to paint a composite landscape in which the infinite reaches of nature are suggested by distant mountains and limitless expanse of sky. Such descriptive passages reflect the inner moods of characters and enhances Shi Tuo's vision of man being rendered insignificant by the vastness of nature.

In sum, these three stories demonstrate the ability of Shi

Tuo's pen to create works which express his own unique world-view. In "Cheng Yaoxian" Shi Tuo uses the wandering motif to show how Mr. Cheng was a victim of the times and the devastating impact which these politically unstable times had on his psychology. In "The Pilgrim" and "Night in the Valley," the author develops the wandering motif in a different direction to focus on man's role in nature. Tragically, the wanderer and other characters of these stories seem to be unable to find any real escape or gain any insight into life from the rural surroundings of nature. In fact, by setting his characters against the backdrop of a remote mountain valley he carves a deep impression of the limitations of man's knowledge and life when viewed from infinite and boundless nature. The alienation experienced by the characters of these stories is overwhelmingly permanent: a realization of man's insignificance in the cosmic scheme of things.



## CHAPTER 2

Although by the mid 1930's Shi Tuo had written a large number of prose pieces, few had ever been published. It was not until 1936 that Shi Tuo had the opportunity to publish his first collection, The Valley. When seen from his career as a whole this collection marks an important stage in the author's literary development, as the stories to be discussed show the author breaking away from his rural style to create works which incorporated themes of national resistance.

The Valley arrived on the literary scene during a period of great civil turmoil. Politically, the 1930's were marked by the extension of internal strife between the Nationalist government and the Communist Party, as well as a period which saw the Japanese encroach upon and seek to dismember China with a methodical persistence. During these years many artists, having been swept up in a wave of patriotism, sought to create works with anti-Japanese themes. Unfortunately, although many writers sought to reflect a love of country in their works, the results were far from being artistic successes. Shi Tuo's uniqueness lies in his ability to incorporate a sense of this age of political instability as a backdrop to many of his stories. However, unlike many of his contemporaries, he chose not to centre his attention on describing the physical atrocities committed by invading foreign powers, but on the

alienation and psychological scars inflicted by the turbulence of the times.

Because of the close relationship between the political unrest which marred the 1930's and authors who sought to create works reflecting it, it would be impossible to discuss Shi Tuo or any other writer of this period without some accounting of the huge shadow of history which they worked under. Since the turn of the 20th century the Japanese had been seeking to gain a foothold on the Chinese mainland. They first gained control of Korea, Formosa, the Pescadores and the Liaodong Peninsula as a result of their victory in the first Sino-Japanese War of 1895. In September of 1931, the Japanese finally established that foothold by launching a surprise attack on Shenyang(Mukden). In subsequent years, the Japanese took advantage of Chiang Kai-shek's policy of non-resistance towards their aggression; conquering Shanghai in 1932, Jehol and Chahar in 1933, and Eastern Hebei in 1935.<sup>1</sup>

Japan's seizure of China's northeast created a surge of patriotism and protest rarely seen since the early days of the May Fourth Movement. As demands that action be taken against the Japanese reached hysterical levels members of the intellectual community began to voice a cultural side to this protest. In brief, they called for a unity among artists to aid in warding off further Japanese encroachment and to save the nation from extinction. As a result of such exhortations various organizations were to be set up by people from the cultural sphere. The most influential of these associations was

the Shanghai Cultural Workers Association for Saving the Nation (Shanghai Wenhuajie Jiuguohui 上海文化界救國會) formed on Dec. 28, 1935.<sup>2</sup> Thus, at this critical point in China's history a united front was forming in both the political and cultural worlds. This common desire to do battle with the Japanese created a fusion of political and cultural causes and begot National Defense Literature.

In an article entitled "The Establishment of National Defense Literature" ("Guo Fang Wenxue de Jianli" 國防文學的建立) the literary critic Hu Luo 胡洛 remarked that the purpose of such a literature was to "expose the rotten character of the traitor, expose the cruelty of imperialism, the decay of national capital, the poverty of the farmers and the retarded development of the cities."<sup>3</sup> Early essays such as this sparked what was to become a heated and often personal debate as to precisely what constituted a work of National Defense Literature. For the purposes of this thesis it should suffice to say that although the promoters of National Defense Literature had specific theoretical differences, they all at least agreed with the writer Guo Moro's 郭沫若 words that National Defense Literature was a literature that "does not stand for selling out the nation."<sup>4</sup>

Works such as Xiao Jun's 蕭軍 The Story of Green Leaves ( Lu Ye de Gushi 綠葉的故事, 1936) and Yu Jing's 于伶 The Descendants of China's Traitors ( Hanjian de Zusun 漢奸的子孫, 1937) were produced as a direct outcome of the National Defense Movement. The former is a collection of

essays and poems which speak of the author's pity for northeastern Chinese driven from their villages by the Japanese. The latter is a novel attacking the Chiang Kai-shek policy of non-resistance to Japanese aggression. The antecedents of National Defense Literature, however, can be traced back to the early 1930's. The handful of writers who pioneered this early national resistance style were mostly from northeast China. As one might expect, their works spoke of the plight of their people at the hands of the Japanese and other imperialist powers.

One of these writers was Ke Qin 葛琴, who at the invitation of the great female novelist Ding Ling 丁玲 wrote a short novel called Total Retreat ( Zong Tuibu 總退步, 1932).<sup>5</sup> Ke Qin's novel was based upon her personal experiences as a hospital worker treating injured members of the 19th route army fighting the Japanese.

Perhaps the most renowned novel of this early period was Xiao Jun's Village in August ( Ba Yue de Xiangcu, 八月 的鄉村 ) which was completed in October 1934 and first published in early 1935. The work has a number of artificially developed, interweaving plots, but they exist only as a convenient backdrop for demonstrating the revolutionary ardor and persistence with which the guerrillas defeated the Japanese. The literary historian C.T. Hsia has noted Xiao Jun's contribution to socialist realism:

Just as Chiang Kuang-tz'u, Pa Chin, Ting Ling, and others had contributed to the plot and structure of Village in August, so Hsiao Chun bequeathed a legacy of formulas for

guerrilla fiction: . . .<sup>6</sup>

Despite such praise, a defect of this and many other works in the national defense style was an over-attention to theme. This led to artistic flaws: character portrayal and narrative development were bound by the narrative's themes. As a result, such fiction often reads as stale war-time propaganda. In this respect Shi Tuo far surpasses his colleagues in his ability to fashion work which succeeds in artistically conveying the grim realities confronting an internationally weakening China. The three stories to be discussed from The Valley paint a bleak picture of Chinese life suffering under the influences of aggression and imperialism. The might of Shi Tuo's pen is demonstrated in these three short prose pieces, for they show how his literary technique underwent certain changes to incorporate timely themes of national resistance. In making such a shift, however, Shi Tuo was intent upon portraying something more than a mere mechanical, ad hoc adoption of some patriotic theme. These stories demonstrate the writer's unique insight into the alienation and psychological scars which these turbulent times inflicted on all who survived them.

"The Mute Song" ("Ya Ge" 哑歌) is set in a small rural valley, in an area occupied by the Japanese. Unlike many anti-Japanese works of fiction, Shi Tuo chose not to focus on the grim physical hardship endured by the Chinese under Japanese rule; on the contrary, the inhabitants of this small settlement

have seemingly come to terms with the Japanese. These folk despise and express contempt for the Japanese behind their backs, yet stumble and stutter in fear at the mere sight of the Japanese-controlled militia. By the same token, though the Japanese rely upon brute force to subdue the villagers and often demand free food and liquor from tradesmen, they rarely resort to physical violence to obtain their ends, realizing, perhaps, that psychological intimidation is their most effective weapon. In terms of daily life this mutual understanding of positions projects a superficial order of the Chinese attending to their everyday chores and bending the knee when told to do so.

As the story opens an elderly man named Uncle Yu is seen taking a walk to the highest knoll in the village. The path is a familiar one to Uncle Yu as he walks it almost every evening at sunset. His purpose is to scan the surrounding hills in the hope of catching some glimpse of the village sons returning from the countryside, where they have gone to fight the Japanese as volunteer guerrillas. Precisely how long these young men have been engaging in anti-Japanese resistance is never explicitly stated; however, for Uncle Yu, the years are passing all too quickly. After reaching the top and seeing no sign of the young guerrillas' return, Uncle Yu decides to go home. Upon reaching the village, Uncle Yu finds his friends and kin in an extremely somber mood, because the advent of a holiday reminds them that yet another year of Japanese rule has passed. On this moonless evening of the Mid-Autumn Festival--a most unauspicious symbol--Uncle Yu and the other villagers spend this traditionally

festive occasion in silent contemplation, unable to quell their anxieties about the fate of the village sons.

During this solemn evening the ever fatalistic Uncle Yu severely admonishes his wife and another woman when he catches a glimpse of them praying for the young guerrillas' return: "Forget about it! If they come back, they'll return without your praying; if they don't, even praying won't help."<sup>7</sup> Uncle Yu's innermost thoughts, however, were not as harsh as his admonitions would seem to indicate because in his heart he was thinking "try, try, [praying] again."<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, even this slim hope that the divine will somehow intervene is shattered. In the midst of this dreary night, the villagers are rudely awakened to the drunken sounds of Japanese soldiers who are, ironically, celebrating a Chinese holiday:

Because the sons of the 大 XX 帝國 [ Japanese Imperialists] were completely drunk, they went roaming through the streets pounding on any broken down door they felt like and screaming incomprehensible phrases. Moving along they laughed and sang their droning [military] song.<sup>9</sup>

Technically, "The Mute Song" is narrated from an objective third-person point of view. Shi Tuo's narrator is not a dramatized character but functions only as the mediator of the tale. By providing physical descriptions and surveys of characters thoughts, he insures that the reader possesses all the material necessary for a full comprehension of the fictive state of affairs. Aside from performing the function of representation, Shi Tuo steers his narrator away from expressing his subjective attitudes and value judgements. Since the narrator rarely attempts to influence reader response by any

direct commentary, other narrative features need to be examined in order to discern how the author's message is conveyed.

In "The Mute Song," Shi Tuo's theme is expressed by the Japanese military song functioning as a recurring motif. The motif is introduced when the narrator describes Uncle Yu's disappointment after he climbs to the top of the small knoll and he fails to see any sign of the young guerrilla's return:

The sun was lazily setting on the outskirts of the village. The leaves on the trees were already changing from their original yellow and green to a dark chocolate brown--one more year had past. . . .

The sound of that song was still around. The sound of that strange and incomprehensible droning song still continually pierced their hearts . . . The great military song of the Japanese imperialists, . . . .<sup>10</sup>

As the story develops the Japanese military song comes to gather a dual significance: representing the grip which the Japanese have over the local villagers and a symbol of this rural people's loathing and desire to overthrow their Japanese superiors. The narrator, describing past guerrilla activity of the village sons, remarks:

During the second holiday period these young fellows struck once again, killing some militiamen and slaughtering some [Japanese] "bandits". After that, they stumbled about the alleys drunk, shooting off their guns and singing our village's own song. They said they wanted to kill the bandits and and get rid of them once and for all. A couple of months later the [Japanese] "bandits" and the mayor [a collaborator] returned once again. They killed people and along with the killing came their droning [military] song.<sup>11</sup>

As this section of narrative clearly demonstrates, the guerrillas' ability to defeat the foreign oppressors controlling their village grants them the privilege to sing their own local



ditty--a symbol of their freedom. The return of the Japanese and their military song shackles once again the villagers' independence and, thus, their local ballad must be, as the title implies, muted.

During this early period of National Defense Literature many authors devoted page after page of description and commentary to the atrocities committed by the Japanese against the Chinese. Very few of these writers, however, were able to evoke the psychological horror of such an experience. Certainly the physical savagery and indignities endured by the Chinese were great, yet imagine the even greater horror of characters realizing that there was little hope of being rescued from the reign of Japanese repression, that they would die as the "slaves of a broken nation" ( wangguo nu, 亡國奴 ):

"Who would have ever imagined," said Uncle Yu shaking his head; a head which was becoming harder and harder to lift every day, "Who would have ever imagined that we'd die as the slaves of a broken nation."<sup>12</sup>

As the story concludes on the evening of the Mid-Autumn Festival, one can easily imagine the pain and heartache felt by the villagers upon awakening to hear the sounds of the Japanese military song. The song returns reminding them once more of their position as prisoners in their own village:

Uncle Yu was unable to sleep. . . . Tears poured down his face as he stood in the courtyard. . . .

The sky was already beginning to show the first signs of dawn. There was some wind. The moon was slowly fading away; its glimmer accompanying the distant sounds of the droning [Japanese military] song.<sup>13</sup>

In sum, Shi Tuo's recurring motif of the Japanese military

song successfully conveys his theme of how the experience of living under Japanese rule could create a mental anguish as great as any physical suffering. For the residents of this village the droning sound of the Japanese military song produces a sense of alienation which disrupts and disfigures the human spirit. An alienation suddenly created by the advent of historical circumstances over which they have no control. Such events estrange these folk from the freedom to live their traditional lives, as well as imbuing them with a feeling of powerlessness as to their abilities to control their own destinies.

In our brief discussion of the author's biography we mentioned how the 1936 Da Gong Bao literature award was conferred on Shi Tuo for his short story "The Valley"; a story that came to be published in the volume of the same name. When viewed from the Zeitgeist working on the Chinese literary scene during the 1930's, Shi Tuo's "The Valley" can be considered an artistic success because of its dual portrayal of the gross inequities suffered by the Chinese at the hands of foreign powers and how the times had disfigured the bonds joining fellow countrymen.

Briefly, the story has for its backdrop a joint Chinese-English operated mine located in a small rural valley. The main character, Huang Guojun 黃國俊, having recently graduated from teachers' college, is hired to teach at a school maintained by the mining company. Upon arrival, Huang's enthusiasm for teaching slowly wanes as he becomes disenchanted by the feeble

educational standards and attitudes of students and faculty alike. Finding the situation unbearable, he resigns. He has no sooner made arrangements to leave the valley when he is compelled to delay his departure upon hearing that a fellow teacher, Hong Kuangcheng 洪匡城, has been arrested. Along with a few others, Hong has been taken into custody for his alleged connection with a strike that has left work at the mine virtually at a standstill. Realizing the seriousness of the situation Huang and another colleague, Bai Guansan 白貴三, travel together to the police station in hope of obtaining news on the fate of their friend. Their hopes are extremely shortlived. In a private meeting with a high-ranking British representative of the mining company, Bai not only fails in his efforts to procure any knowledge about his colleague's arrest, but he also evokes the wrath of this official. In escorting Bai outside his office, this hot-tempered Englishman suddenly explodes into a fit of rage:

"You Chinese", the manager said as he once again raised his voice in anger, "You're a bunch of scoundrels. You're completely devoid of human compassion and you have absolutely no manners or respect for other people . . . you want to smash a rock with an egg, Ok, go right ahead and try it, there are rocks all around you! You open your mouths and yell about down with the imperialists, . . . Damn [Communists], what do they have to do with you anyway? Take your Hong for example, why that sonuvabitch earns his living from foreigners, what the hell is he doing with this party? . . . If you do not want to work that's fine. At New Year's don't eat rice, . . . go eat [the Communists'] prick." 14

Failing in this attempt, Bai proposes that they try and bribe the "chubby Englishman," figuring that 300 yuan placed in his

pocket could have a fruitful outcome. In the days which follow, and despite the helpful appearances of Bai, Huang develops suspicions regarding the sincerity of Bai's efforts to extricate his colleague. This sense of distrust grows stronger as more and more villagers are arrested, and suddenly climaxes when Huang learns that his friend has been executed despite their efforts. Hearing of the execution, Huang is crestfallen:

Hong was dead, . . . he [Huang] didn't really feel any sorrow for his old school chum's death nor did he feel any sympathy for his wife. All that was going around his head were the words: "My God what is this world all about."<sup>15</sup>

In the end, Huang discovers that his suspicions about Bai's integrity were completely warranted. It is revealed that rather than negotiating for his friend's release, Bai had actually been working as an undercover agent for the police, who apparently are also heavily influenced by the mining company. His cover blown, Bai is attacked by a small group of villagers, but he manages to escape. Returning to the safety of the police station, Bai files a report warning that the villagers, seeking revenge for their kin, were going to attack their post. Fearing the worst, police officials relay orders to their subordinates to arm themselves and to prepare for the ensuing siege.

Meanwhile, the attackers--a ragtag unarmed group of old men, women and children--were rallying themselves in the freezing outdoors. Feeling vengeful and unable to tolerate any further abuse, these villagers, lead by the "Charge" of Huang, begin their attack. This gallant troop of ragamuffins moves closer and closer to the object of their assault, until the

order to open fire is given to the force stationed inside the fortress. Within seconds of that order, the freshly fallen snow is stained with the blood of the scattering mob:

Tuon! Tuon! Tuon! Tuon!

People scattered, running and bumping confusedly into each other in the process. . . .

Volley after volley of shots were being fired from all sides. People forgot everything as they desperately ran for their lives, . . . .

. . . . Quite a few people took shelter behind a small nearby hut. The people who had the least courage were huddled together, their faces were as white as snow, their mouths were open sucking air in.<sup>16</sup>

Seeing their attackers retreat, an official blows his whistle calling for his men to cease-fire. Having withstood the impotent assault of the unarmed villagers, an eerie silence fills the police station. An elderly policeman stutters in horror at the brutality of the just committed act:

What had they just done? Not a single one of them knew, almost as if they had just awoken from a drunken stupor.

The elderly officer laid his gun down near the door and climbed up into his bunk. He was shaking uncontrollably, his eyelids were so heavy that he could barely keep them open. He didn't say a word and suddenly he was asleep. "Sir, sir," he muttered to himself in his sleep, "They haven't done anything! Do you think, ch . . . . sir. . . . "17

As the story closes, Huang, having survived the massacre at the police station, reflects in equal bewilderment:

He thought to himself. What had he just done? . . . . Finally, he remembered, wasn't he the one who yelled "Charge"? He felt responsible for this affair, yet he had somehow managed to return home safely. . . . "How is it possible that I didn't get hurt? . . . .

"Justice [he thought], where is the justice?"18

In narrative, point of view is the prime force motivating the selection, union and distribution of fictional elements. In

choosing point of view, the author is restricting his reader's observations to a particular level of awareness. Every angle of narration has its own inherent freedoms and limitations. A general analysis of all the various modes of narration reveals that omniscient narration grants its author the largest number of fictional freedoms. This all-knowing narrator is characterized by: God-like privilege of unhampered vision, penetration into the minds of the dramatis personae, free movement in time and space, and total knowledge of the past and present.<sup>19</sup> Yet to state that a story is told from an omniscient viewpoint is of very little significance unless one can describe how the qualities of that mode of narration relate to particular effects. Different narrators may share omniscience as a common denominator, yet they may differ greatly in other equally important respects. One such difference is in their degree of willingness to share their unlimited knowledge with the reader. Basically, lack of full communication on the part of the narrator may be accounted for in two possible ways:

. . . the quasi-mimetic approach, in terms of the narrator's own human limitations, and the purely aesthetic, in terms of the omniscient narrator's deliberately pursued aesthetic aims.<sup>20</sup>

Upon hearing of his colleague's execution, Huang's words of "My God, what is this world coming to," in effect, reflect the theme of the work: in these chaotic times the cruelty which people inflict upon one another is so senseless that it numbs the mind.

In the opening stages of The Valley Shi Tuo's omniscient

narrator introduces Mr. Huang and describes the story's setting. After providing this, he steps into the background and the reader sees the fictive events come to life just as Huang experiences them. Such a shift in point of view is aesthetically motivated. The close reflection of the action through the workings of Huang's mind virtually assures that the dilemma he faces will become more our own. As the narrative develops we become more and more aware of the determinants of Huang's actions, confusion, and errors of judgement as they evolve on the fictive stage. Furthermore, because in these sections the omniscient narrator does not interject any privileged information into the narrative, the reader, like Mr. Huang, can only see that which is immediately in front of him--as the ground is cut out from beneath him it is cut out from beneath the reader. By substituting a more dramatized built in rhetoric in place of overt commentary Shi Tuo enhances the literary effect of his work.

Periodic shifts back to the omniscient narrator's point of view, however, also have an important effect. Here, the reader, instead of sharing in Huang's dilemmas, stands outside of them and so views them more as an expression of a universal human condition. In not being confined to Huang's experiences alone the reader is given the chance to view Huang's situation and his reaction to it from a more objective position. In brief, this dual system of presentation accurately renders the author's vision of characters struggling to survive a world turned topsy-turvey. The reflection of the action via Huang's mind

presents an internal reflection of the times, while a switch to an omniscient point of view places the reader outside of Huang's experiences, where the reader sees the action from a universal perspective .

In sum, "The Valley" presents a disturbed vision of a China gone out of control. It is a pessimistic portrait of a world filled with collaborators and traitors, where Chinese blindly slaughter innocent countrymen. In this story the imperialists are no longer the sole enemies of China, the Chinese have become enemies of themselves.

The final story to be considered from this volume will be "The Story of the Rain" ("Luo Yu Pian" 落雨篇 ). Similar to the other works of this collection, "The Story of the Rain" successfully renders a clear image of the effects the politically unstable 1930's had on Chinese life as well as reveal the devastating blows such times dealt to the human spirit.

The principle characters of the story are an un-named guard and his prisoner only referred to as number five. As the story opens, the guard is mulling over the news that his wife is pregnant. Originally, the guard had planned to abandon his spouse (apparently chosen for him through an arranged marriage), but this pregnancy cancels any such plans. As the guard makes his rounds on a dark and dreary night he becomes further and further enraged at the thought of this "beast", as he comes to call her, giving birth to his child. During the course of his patrolling, the second major character of this tale is



introduced: prisoner number five. This otherwise nameless character has been so badly beaten that his body is described as resembling a huge pustule. It is implied that the prisoner has been taken into custody because of certain political affiliations [Communist], and "interrogated" daily in the hope of extracting information about his organization. Needless to say these questioning periods have taken their toll on the prisoner both physically and mentally. The intensity of the pain ravaging his body is so great that he is no longer able to lie down on his cell bed. Unable to sleep because of the pain, the prisoner paces his cell like some sort of rabid animal. Using his fingernails he has written the following poem on his cell wall:

This is not the end, it is the beginning.  
 Devil, please open your mouth.  
 This is a body you see lying in the gutter.  
 This is blood, it will write the final words of history.<sup>21</sup>

On this evening the prisoner is particularly unsettled and the guard tries to ease this pitiful creature's pain by throwing him a cigarette. The prisoner accepts and the guard realizing that his own predicament cannot compare with the sorry plight of this fellow human, is suddenly overcome by a wave of happiness:

The guard hurriedly walked to a place beneath a post. It was as if he had cleared a huge [burden], . . . . He had to take a a deep, deep, breath. Leaning against the post he lit a cigarette. He lifted his head and the light on the post looked down on his happy and smiling face. Folding his arms he slowly closed his eyes thinking once again of that soon to be born child!<sup>22</sup>

Before the prisoner has a chance to pick up the cigarette his interrogators arrive once again. The prisoner takes but one

look at their faces and realizes immediately that the end is at hand. The cigarette remains on the ground and he is escorted away. Within minutes of number five's departure, the guard also comes to realize the seriousness of the situation when he hears the sound of boots marching outside:

He thought of the cigarette which he had just thrown in to the prisoner and the possibility of it still lying on the ground smouldering gave him a shiver. It made his whole head spin. His dream of the child evaporated, . . . .

Oh, listen, the sound of guns! A life! He saw as a man met tongues of fire and grey smoke [from the ends of the rifles] and a body fell into a pool of water.<sup>23</sup>

Having outlined the work we shall now consider some of the technical features of this story. The parallel description of the impending birth of the guard's child and the sudden execution of prisoner number five produces Shi Tuo's dramatic vision of life's capricious nature and how a true understanding of man's nature lies beyond his ken.

Shi Tuo's description of the prisoner's psychology is revealed, in part, by the poems he scratches on the wall. This is a narrative technique whose traditions can be traced at least as far back as the early Ming dynasty novel The Water Margin ( Shuihu Zhuan 水湖傳 ).<sup>24</sup> These poems reflect the prisoner's nightmarish experiences in jail and reveal him as having a clear vision of the often incomprehensible nature of man's being. On the eve of his execution, the prisoner is returned to his cell after yet another interrogation session. Lying bruised and defeated the prisoner rests. Looking outdoors through a crack in his cell, he comes to most startling conclusion:

Through a small crack in his cell door he looked out at the vast open sky. The sky was confined to this small little frame. . . . It was sunset and he saw some ravens flying by, . . . The outside wall blocked his view, but it couldn't block his heart. The sight of those lonely birds sent him soaring out into the sky. He glanced around at the tense existence his fellow prisoners were leading. This is not the beginning, this is not the end; there is just a big road and now it seemed he was a little bit further down that road. But what was he doing! . . . .  
 . . . using his fingertips he scratched "World, please advance," on the cell wall.<sup>25</sup>

In watching the sunset from a small crack in his cell door, prisoner number five comes to the startling conclusion that he and all the other prisoners have had their lives devoured by their own ambitions. Originally, perhaps, prisoner number five could endure the nightmarish tortures acted out within the confines of the prison because he believed--as his poems suggest--that his sacrifice, the spilling of his own blood, could alter history. Ultimately, however, he realizes that within the confines of nature--the material world separate and distinct from human beings--his own sacrifice, and in fact all of man's achievements count for naught.

When viewed from the prisoner's cell, the human condition is mutability, life is illusory: for the pursuit of ambitions and ideals seem to give an order and meaning in an often chaotic world, although in fact, they only provide a temporary significance to our lives. The true tragedy of our existence is reflected by the guard's reaction to learning that prisoner number five had been sent to his death. The natural euphoria which the guard feels for his child, about to be born into a world "free from sin"<sup>26</sup> or any other wrong doing, is suddenly shattered by the sound of the firing squad's rifles. Upon

arriving in this world, Shi Tuo believed that man was a chaste, but doomed being. We are no sooner born than we begin our path to death--"This is not the beginning, this is not the end; there is only a big road and now it seemed he was a little bit further down that road." Man ultimately disappears from the face of the earth almost as if to prove the irrelevance of his role in the cosmic scheme of things. In sum, regardless of what insights, beliefs or experiences we have, they are but temporary illusions. In the end, nature remains unmoved, her cycle of life and death eventually conquers all, both prisoner and guard alike. Tragically, man's ultimate destiny lies beyond his control. All proof of his joys, ideologies, and sacrifices can be obliterated within the short time it takes for an executioner to complete his appointed task.

Shi Tuo's theme of how life's capricious nature discounts any knowledge we have about ourselves or our ultimate destiny is enhanced structurally as well. In "The Story of the Rain," the reader is thrown into the unfamiliar world of the story without the benefit of any background information normally considered indispensable for a full comprehension of the fictive state of affairs. We are denied the time and place of the work, as well as the names, history, traits, and habitual behavior of all the dramatis personae, and of the relationship between them. Aside from neglecting some of his expositional duties of defining time and place, this narrator also does not try to sharpen our vision as to the meaning or significance of the character's actions. By restricting the point of view to this narrator of limited

abilities Shi Tuo delegates his reader to the role of a helpless spectator. Unknown characters arrive on the stage and before one has a chance to gain any sort of insight into their lives they disappear again. As the reader has only the barest of facts laid out in front of him, he is hopelessly incapable of comprehending the forces which produce the story's dramatic turn of events. In the final analysis, the story's dramatic turn of events oppresses both characters and reader, for the reader, like the characters themselves, can only conclude that a full comprehension of life's capricious nature extends beyond man's ken.

In The Valley Shi Tuo's movement towards creating works which embodied the themes of national resistance to Japan and other foreign powers was influenced, no doubt, by the Communist's United Front policy. Many writers of this period took a very positive position and created works describing the injustices suffered by the Chinese and how the situation was amenable to action. Shi Tuo, however, chose not to celebrate the causes which the whole nation was soon to fight for. The stories discussed from The Valley did not try to raise national consciousness nor did they inspire the reader to combat the extreme indignities that China was suffering at the hands of foreign powers. In each of these three stories, Shi Tuo's only goal was to bring the reader face to face with the harsh realities of the times. In "The Mute Song," Shi Tuo uses the Japanese military song as a recurring motif symbolizing Japanese control over a small Chinese village. It imparts a disturbing

vision of the mental anguish which befell many northern Chinese following the invasion of Shenyang in September of 1931. "The Valley" reveals how the pressures of unstable political conditions compelled people to commit senseless and brutal acts upon each other; acts which alienated fellow countrymen from each other. The final story, "The Story of the Rain," also employs a political backdrop and evokes an equally disturbing picture of the horrible and gruesome acts which people were committing on each other. The story's message, however, extends far beyond the narrow bounds of the political realm to a more universal ground. Earlier stories, such as "Night in the Valley" and "The Pilgrim," showed Shi Tuo's pessimistic vision of man's insignificance in the cosmic scheme of things. In "The Story of the Rain," Shi Tuo reaffirms this vision by describing how the experience of having lived through these politically unstable times could foster an almost nihilistic philosophy of life's fickleness and how a true understanding of it lies beyond one's ken.

It is primarily due to the author's skill in effectively evoking and juxtaposing images of the physical and psychological pain experienced by the Chinese of this period that the reader is truly able to get an inside view (and therefore a more vivid view) of the effects of such politically unstable times on China.

### CHAPTER 3

As the 1940's dawned on China, Shi Tuo's name and reputation were already well established on the Chinese literary scene. By virtue of his Da Gong Bao award and sheer number of publications, Shi Tuo had managed to rise from the ranks of the obscure to become one of China's most recognized authors. Following the rapid issue of four collections of short prose pieces in 1937 and 1938, Shi Tuo's literary output in the ensuing years was to dip drastically. After the publication of a collection called The Looking At People Anthology ( Kan Ren Ji 看人集, 1939) there was a two year hiatus before any of Shi Tuo's works once again found their way into a collection. During this two year absence, Shi Tuo removed himself from the public eye, yet he remained active in literary circles. He was involved in a number of projects, such as the writing of his novel Ma Lan (which was written in 1941 but remained unpublished until 1948.<sup>1</sup>), as well as a number of minor projects which included the adaptation of two plays for the Chinese stage.

This relatively long publishing drought for Shi Tuo ended in 1941, when his sixth volume of stories called, The Shanghai Epistles ( Shanghai Shouzha 上海手札 ), came to press. According to the author's afterword, the thirteen pieces which comprise this collection were primarily composed between 1939 and 1940. Politically, this is a period best remembered for

China desperately trying to defend itself against Japanese encroachment. Thematically, I propose that in The Shanghai Epistles, Shi Tuo was seeking to create a work reminiscent of The Valley, i.e., a work which revealed the physical and psychological impact of the Sino-Japanese War on China's inhabitants. Unlike in past stories, however, Shi Tuo's focus of attention was not on rural China, but on Shanghai's petit-bourgeois class. In order to render this cumulative portrait of how Shanghai's well-off classes fared during this period of expanded Japanese aggression, Shi Tuo adopted an epistolary style.

Aside from the epistle style, all the individual prose pieces of The Shanghai Epistles share a second unifying feature: a first-person narrator who often appears in a dramatized role. This dramatized narrator establishes himself in the first five epistles. When viewed from the work as a whole these five epistles can be regarded as a complete prose unit, for they comprise a cycle in which the dramatized narrator and his companion return to Shanghai from the countryside.

The opening epistle called "Tired Travels" ("Juan You" 倦游), deliberates rather extensively on the peculiar sights and sounds of the remote valley the two main characters--the narrator and his traveling companion only referred to as Mr. P--are vacationing in. Besides highlighting their daily activities, the tale ends on a rather gloomy note when upon going into town to retrieve their mail, Mr. P discovers that fighting has broken out in northern China (The Marco Polo Bridge



'Incident). Having learned of this startling development, the narrator and Mr. P immediately decide to go back to Shanghai, for they were afraid that if they did not return they would become "cut off from the world":

We had a resolve, a most important objective: to use all possible methods to return to Shanghai. You'll probably find this ridiculous but we actually felt that if we didn't return to Shanghai, it would be as if we had cut ourselves off from the world.<sup>2</sup>

In the opening paragraphs of "Tired Travels" there are a large number of references made to some of the cultural and social disparities which disassociates the narrator and his traveling companion from what he describes as the "primitive" local residents. The most serious of these rifts, however, extended beyond the bounds of the social realm to an intellectual one. In this first letter, the narrator details how one of his favorite pastimes is his enjoyment of the mountain scenery from the comfort of a porch adjoining their temple residence. Still, as their sojourn wears on, their initial awe of and elevated sentiment for these rural surroundings (and one mountain in particular), wanes:

The first impression this mountain gave us was exactly the same as all visitors here, its steepness shocked us; we gradually changed our opinions though. First we discovered that the mountain was lacking trees; after this we realized that it lacked earth. Finally, we discovered that it did not fit in [with the rest of the scenery]. Its steepness was isolated. Except for the mountain's sharp sloping there was nothing else that made it stand out. In general, we felt that it was as if it had suddenly appeared on the horizon, it had no historical colour, it was not in harmony with our spirits, . . .<sup>3</sup>

For the narrator, the temple's surrounding topography serves as a symbol of this small mountain village's isolation

from the rest of the world. When examined from a social and cultural viewpoint, the people of this remote temple area have always lived their lives in accordance with the thinking and the traditions handed down from one generation to the next. Aside from the unchanging social and cultural aspects of their lives, the Weltansicht of these 20th century characters is also identical to that of their forefathers. That is to say, the concept of a world existing independently from and contrasting to their own has rarely been contemplated. These people's conception of the world is identical with that of the young shepherd girl of "Night in the Valley. "That is to say, these people also view their immediate environment as the "world": "These lovable ancients, I'm referring to these primitive mountain people, their world is probably limited to a few narrow stretches of land between mountains, . . . ." Mr. P's returning from town bearing the news of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident shocks the narrator, while reaffirming his belief about this region's detachment from the everyday world. What distresses the narrator is the fact that if Mr. P had not made the trip into town, they would have remained unaware that fighting had broken out in the north.

The true tragedy of this isolated existence is dramatically revealed in subsequent vignettes which narrate our two characters' return passage to Shanghai. During the course of their journey, the narrator and Mr. P come across hordes of people fleeing from the northern countryside as the possibility of Japanese aggression looms larger. The panic of these people

hastening to get themselves and their few worldly possessions onto an already overcrowded train creates for him a sense of distress almost as intense as when he first heard the news of the fighting breaking out:

Some of these cars were from Nanjing, some of them were from Shanghai, . . . because the situation was growing tenser they were being used to drive their passengers longer distances. Regardless of the situation, rich people always like to vie for first position, and in fleeing they quite obviously were not willing to fall behind either. Aside from this you could occasionally run into one or two people moving along slowly with their carrying poles. From this you could seemingly gain a hint: people do everything for life. If in the future there is something which they can't fathom, then that's fate. No matter how fate manipulates people they can only act according to it; besides, they have already done everything for life. Have you ever heard of a phenomenon more painful than this?<sup>5</sup>

The chaos of such politically unstable times knows neither age nor social class, as the poor as well as the more affluent are affected:

These members of the petit-bourgeois, these often looked down upon, well-dressed, well-fed empty little heads were now sitting inside the hotel with their eyebrows all knitted up. They were no longer able to be content with their lots. They had no choice but to think of their future.<sup>6</sup>

The chaotic sight and sound of these rural dwellers and their relatively fewer petit-bourgeois counterparts is an omen of the plight which will befall both the villagers left behind by the narrator in the mountain temple area and his petit-bourgeois and intellectual friends still comfortably residing in Shanghai. In the case of the former, the villagers are seemingly isolated from the harsh realities of the real world by virtue of their rural environment. In his Zur Psychologie des Bauerntums ( The Psychology of the Peasantry ) the psychologist

L'Houte states:

It has often been said that the peasant is incapable of thinking in historical terms. It is the same thing with things political and geographical. For the typical peasant, . . . there is nothing but his farm with which he is entirely familiar . . . .

Politics, the constitution, the nation, and even humanity are strange to him, not very authentic. He possesses . . . an extremely narrow horizon.

Applying L'Houte's observations, we conclude, that by failing to comprehend the implications of a political happening such as the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, the residents of Shi Tuo's mountain village will suffer a devastating shock and sense of disorientation when the horrors of Japanese encroachment become a reality in their hamlet. This disorientation occurs because these people with their inherited world-views are hopelessly incapable of comprehending the complex political events which are suddenly shaping their lives.

Though the petit-bourgeois originate from completely different social and educational backgrounds, Shi Tuo clearly equates this urban group with the poorer peasant class. That is to say, Shi Tuo saw the petit-bourgeois as being equally unprepared to have to reassess the course of their lives because of rapid changes in the Chinese political climate. In sum, tunnel vision is a characteristic of their world-view as well. In their particular case, however, it is not their isolated environs which distances them, at least psychologically, from the mainstream of Chinese life, but their healthy financial standing instead. This is a point which is further elaborated on in later epistles when the narrator arrives back in Shanghai

and he turns his attention to delineating in more detail the effects of these tumultuous times on Shanghai's petit-bourgeois class.

The circumstances which Shi Tuo's refugees crowding the train station find themselves in calls to mind a situation which Lu Xun describes in the Introduction of Nahan. In this section Lu Xun poses the question of: should the people standing outside of an escape-proof iron box let a group of people sleeping peacefully inside the box die in their sleep or does one try to awaken them with screams of futile warning? Briefly, Shi Tuo's refugees are highly reminiscent of the people in Lu Xun's iron box: the cries of war, like the futile screams of those standing outside the iron box, arouse the rural dwellers from a peaceful sleep and they only find themselves in a situation from which there is no escape. In making such a comparison, however, one must also note that Call to Arms stands as Lu Xun's hypothesis in action. The cries of this spritual physician are purposeful and imply that the human condition is amenable to action. Unlike Lu Xun, Shi Tuo's cries of war are totally devoid of any hope or purpose. They are but a shrill voice representing doom and tragedy.

At the conclusion of the fifth epistle the narrator and Mr. P have arrived back in Shanghai. Whereas the remaining epistles have the unity of backdrop and character of the first cycle, the later sections do not develop through time as had been the case with the first five letters. Rather, it is the author's intention to juxtapose the comfort of Shanghai's petit-

bourgeois class with what Harold Issac's in the Introduction to Straw Sandals described as:

. . . [Shanghai's] great mass of helot-like poor that kept flocking in from the ravaged countryside, providing an endless supply of the laborers, human beasts of burden, prostitutes, and utterly helpless people who left some 5,000 babies on the street of the city every year.<sup>a</sup>

Such a juxtaposition shows how dehumanizing life has become in these troubled times: for the helots it is the obvious degradation, for the petit-bourgeois it is a slow, but rude awakening to the harsh realities of the times.

In an epistle called "Return to One's Home" ("Chao Fu" 巢復) one learns how upper-class white-collar workers manage to spend their idle hours now that they've been forced to flee their jobs and homes for the safety of Shanghai. Having the benefit of some accumulated savings these families are able to rent a small apartment, purchase essential sundries, and generally remain content to wait out the war. The members of such families while away their days by walking the streets and alleys of Shanghai. Rising early in the morning they leave their homes for a cup of tea or a bowl of noodles, searching for any sort of diversion which might temporarily alleviate the boredom which they so desperately seek to escape. As the war lingers on these Mr. Xu's 徐, Zhou's 周, and Zhang's 張 (as Shi Tuo calls them) have no alternative but to tighten their belts. Some of these Mr. Xu's are fortunate in that when their own personal finances have been depleted they are able to send their families to live with relatives in the countryside. Such plans, nevertheless, are not always easily accepted by their

more sophisticated wives:

Take for example Mr. Xu's wife, she was already use to living in Shanghai. She was not particularly fond of the ccountryside: the rooms had no floors and no matter what you wanted to buy it was difficult. Moreover, once you passed over the threshold there was nothing but wilderness. As far as she was concerned the distant mountains and the small stream cut back of one hundred years ago and today, one hundred years, later were exactly the same.<sup>9</sup>

Several of these Mr. Xu's don't have the benefit of such an alternative and are left with no other choice but to pawn clothes and to steal in order for their kin to survive. For these people formerly employed in semi-executive positions, the grim realities of the war manifest themselves quickly as their finances become more and more ccnstrained. There is a distinct aura of tragedy created as one becomes aware of how these characters are reduced to thievery and in some cases suicide in their quest to do battle with the times. Still, any sympathy for the plight of these more well-to-do white-collar famalies is undermined by the narrator's own words in the final paragraph of this epistle:

Aside from this, there are people who don't belong to this class [Messrs. Xu, Zhou, and Zhang's]. Originally they were workers, maids or peddlers on street corners. In the first half year of the war we could see them everywhere along the side of the roads and in back alleys. In Shanghai begging is a profession and these people, having lost their jobs, had absolutely nothing. On a December morning they cover themselves with their only possession, a ratty blanket that they snatched out from under artillery fire, and sleep on the sidewalk or in front of some door. In this Shanghai of 3,000,000 people--by this time it had already swollen to 4,500,000 people--in this prosperous Shanghai, the so-called "adventure's paradise", we heard the sounds of weeping day and night.<sup>10</sup>

In short, for this latter group survival has always involved more than just a temporary readjustment in life style,

it has become the essence of their daily existence. For this vast majority of Shanghai's population, having neither capital nor any relatives to fall back upon, the streets of this great metropolis are not a source of diversion but the backdrop against which a nightmarish existence is enacted. With regard to these pitiful creatures, life has been reduced to a simple survival of the fittest. These people wander the back alleys of Shanghai for as long as their mysterious fates allow, eventually disappearing completely from sight.

In letters six to twelve Shi Tuo tries to describe the effects which such politically unstable times had on Shanghai by splitting his epistles between those which delineate how the miseries of the war slowly came to effect Shanghai's more privileged classes and those which describe the helot-like existence of the masses. In an epistle entitled "Abandoned Children" ("Yizi" 遺子), the narrator discusses how in war-time Shanghai, hordes of children lying forsaken in the street was not to be considered an unusual sight. They were abandoned by parents who because of dire economic straits had relinquished all hope that they were capable of raising their own children. Not knowing what else to do these unfortunate people abandon their own flesh and blood on Shanghai's streets, hoping that some humanitarian might take pity on them. Unfortunately, however, the narrator reminds us that under the tension of war-time Shanghai, humanitarians are difficult to find. It seems the rich are so involved in gold speculation and the hording of rice that they literally fail to hear the wailing of these



children at their feet. Abandoned and rejected by all, these children are left to fend for themselves, until one day, they simply disappear in the garbage lining the Shanghai streets:

Nobody knows what fate awaits these children. They themselves don't know . . . Everyday, starving, they go rummaging about garbage cans in search of bones or a rotten piece of fruit and from this they grow ill. . . . They run a fever for a few days and afterwards they die in a heap of garbage or by the side of the road. Nobody goes over to inquire about them; when they die people just sweep them away like garbage.<sup>11</sup>

Some of Shi Tuo's petit-bourgeois characters are temporarily distanced from the grim realities of the war because of a healthy financial situation, while others are able to ignore the horrors around them because they are blinded by a sort of economic paranoia. In later epistles Shi Tuo sketches portraits of intellectuals from this class and reveals them as being similarly disassociated from the plight of Shanghai's masses. Their disassociation, however, is not directly linked with their sound financial standing or economic paranoia, but due instead to an ivory tower mentality.

The most noteworthy feature of an epistle called "Shanghai" ( 上海 ) is the manner in which Shi Tuo juxtaposes the narrator's initial reaction to Shanghai's generally chaotic situation with the description of their arrival at the home of a friend of theirs Mr. Liu 刘 . Mr. Liu is an academic-professional type whose home is located in one of the few remaining safe areas of Shanghai. After arriving there, the narrator and Mr. P discover that their friend is not only incapable of providing them with any real information as to where, for example, they might find accommodations, but, ironically, he must

go and make a phone call in order to ascertain "Shanghai's conditions" (Shanghai de qingxing 上海的情况).<sup>12</sup> Thus, in this episode rather than relying on a parallel description to establish the disparities in the lives and attitudes of war-time China's upper-classes versus the masses, Shi Tuo illuminates Mr. Liu's total unawareness to the crises engulfing this city by his ironic gesture of making a phone call to inquire of "Shanghai's conditions."

In many of the remaining epistles the chasm separating the various strata of Shanghai society are further explored. In "Discussion" ("Zuotan" 座談), the narrator's description of his author friend Mr. Wei's well-appointed library, shelved with Shakespeare and Moliere is perhaps more reminiscent of London or Cambridge than Shanghai:

We were sitting in Mr. Wei's library. Sitting amongst Shakespeare, Moliere, . . . There were two couches that looked like small boats you could paddle, a writing desk, a revolving chair, and a small desk. . . . Though, of course, the most important thing were still the bookcases. They were tall, imposing; it was almost as if they had specially been placed there to be revered.<sup>13</sup>

On this day the narrator and a few other intellectuals are lamenting the recent departure of Mr. P from Shanghai. In his closing remarks the narrator once again touches upon the theme of just how isolated Shanghai's intellectuals, like Mr. Liu, were from the realities of war-time China:

We can assume that Mr. Wei and Mr. P were going to the train station to buy tickets. The western street they were walking on had very few other people on it, as the war was not very far from this area. . . . They were walking slowly. . . . talking about Stendhal, Gide, Marlow. . . . [When they finally arrived at the train station] It was as crowded as a bank about to go under. It was not that

Stendhal and Gide had delayed them, but rather some people had risked being bombed and had already been waiting for two days.<sup>14</sup>

In a word, Shi Tuo saw intellectual types such as Mr. Liu and Mr. Wei as being as psychologically removed from the suffering of their fellow Shanghai residents as the areas they lived in were physically removed from the crises terrorizing Shanghai.

A structural examination of this section of The Shanghai Epistles reveals a number of interesting and innovative techniques. The literary theorist Wayne C. Booth in The Rhetoric of Fiction points out that reader response can be influenced by a number of devices: chronological displacements of privileged information, reliable and unreliable commentary, concealment, and so forth. In the second section of The Shanghai Epistles (letters 6-12) Shi Tuo manipulates reader response with a different control strategy than he used in the first cycle. As previously stated, the first five letters represent a cycle tracing the narrator and Mr. P's return journey to Shanghai from the countryside. Aside from the first-person narrator creating an aura of authenticity for the events to be related, he may also be described as an introspective-problematic narrator; a narrator who reveals his inner emotions and dilemmas. Because this spokesman for Shi Tuo continually considers his own internal state, the narrator never manages to stand far away from the events, thus imparting an intimacy to the situation he describes. The purpose of these letters is to detail how the news of the outbreak of the war throws the

narrator into a state of disequilibrium and the impact which such harrowing times has on his psychology. In brief, by focusing on the narrator's mental processes over the period of five temporally linked letters the reader becomes sensitized to the narrator's perceptions and the motivation behind his actions.

For example, after leaving the mountain temple area the narrator and Mr. P become obsessed with trying to return to Shanghai as soon as possible and at all costs. In the second epistle these two characters end up in a small coast town where they intend to catch a boat for Shanghai. Unfortunately, their departure is temporarily delayed and they are forced to spend some time in what the narrator refers to as "this foul little fishing village."<sup>15</sup> While for the narrator and Mr. P their return journey to Shanghai has become almost a matter of life and death, the rest of this tiny hamlet goes about its business almost as usual:

A breeze from over the river cooled the evening. At last we had arrived in a port city. The glow of an early May or June moon was beaming down. . . . There were no boats coming into the harbor nor were there any boats departing. As there was no cargo to be moved, the porters with their pipes were sitting on the wharf, casually glancing out towards the bay. . . . Under the starlit sky both man and river were engaged in quiet conversation. There were a pair of nuns dressed in black and a couple of prostitutes--the latter were snuggled so close together that they looked like younger and older sister. They were chatting with the proprietress of a dry goods store, cracking jokes and frequently bursting into laughter (From this scene one could easily imagine how the women of years ago waited for their lovers or husbands to return from sea.) There was none of the confusion or disturbing sounds that one usually hears on the docks. Once and a while there came a whistling sound from off the river, after which things seemed even more desolate than before.<sup>16</sup>

Though Shi Tuo's narrator's describes the activities of these common folk as leaving him with a "feeling of intranquility,"<sup>17</sup> his description is actually a very agreeable one. His portrait of the docks, its people, workers, and their easy ways is in complete harmony with his description of their peaceful environs. Thus, because of this contradiction between what the narrator says and what he actually shows, the reader, rather than sharing in the narrator's frustration and anguish in being forced to lay over in this "foul little seaside village," actually becomes further distanced from him. What strikes the reader as being out of harmony is not the locals and their peaceful ways but the narrator's agitation and anxiety over his "mission" to return to Shanghai. This section, then, not only raises questions about the narrator's perceptions, but about the reliability of his narration in general.

After their arrival in Shanghai, the narrator's role as a dramatized character becomes less prominent and he turns his attention to relating short sketches centred in Shanghai. In letters six to twelve, characters and events are no longer seen from the eyes of an experiencing, "problematic" narrator, but from a "certain" narrator. The difference in literary effect between a problematic narrator and a certain narrator is that in letters six to twelve there is very little of the introspective, self-analysis which characterized the narrator's role in the first cycle. In the second half of this narrative Shi Tuo does not try to endow his raconteur's experiences with the same life that they originally had.

Earlier, Shi Tuo's close notation of the dramatized narrator's mind over the period of five or six temporarily linked letters immerses the reader into the narrator's consciousness, where he learns the determinants of his actions, errors and confusion as they come to life on the fictive stage. Such a technique heightens reader involvement and his sympathies for the protagonist. In letters six to twelve, however, Shi Tuo wants to generalize the significance of the work and he quite obviously could not do that if the narrative remained completely focused on the narrator's dramatized experiences only. In order to accomplish this Shi Tuo switches to a certain narrator, who rarely, if ever, appears in a dramatized role and who prefers to tell of characters and events which are not necessarily connected with him. Such a switch turns the focus of this section from the narrator to an intensified observation of Shanghai life, and as a result distances the reader from the narrator and the events he describes. Furthermore, because the events are now described from a single, non-introspective point of view the reader--unlike in letters one to five--does not have the opportunity to judge the reliability of the narrator's narration. This control strategy obliges the reader to blindly accept the narrator's narration as being reliable and see the described events exactly as he does, i.e., in a pessimistic way.

In the final epistle Shi Tuo uses another interesting strategy to ensure that the reader shares his pessimism. In this section one might have expected the narrator to present a final vignette describing Shanghai life. What he does instead

is introduce a series of newspaper clippings. These clippings report events similar to those already discussed in earlier letters. In introducing these clippings it is almost as if it was the narrator's desire to document that the experiences related in foregoing epistles were no more remarkable or uncommon than the mundane events recorded in Shanghai's tabloids. The grim events discussed in these columns, in a sense, authenticate the universality of the narrator's experiences, thus reaffirming the reader's sense of pessimism, leaving little doubt as to how Shi Tuo saw such times.

In previous works of Shi Tuo such as "The Mute Song," the wave of alienation which overpowers characters like Uncle Yu is seen as not being common to him alone. His inner turmoil in having fallen victim to Japanese aggression, and his mourning over the fate of the village sons is symptomatic of the despair which permeates the entire village. In The Shanghai Epistles, Shi Tuo sketches his characters engulfed in precisely the same situation--that is, Chinese falling victim to Japanese aggression--but the spirit to resist the foreign invaders, the thin thread of optimism which underlies an otherwise bleak picture in stories like "The Valley" and "The Mute Song," ceases to exist in The Shanghai Epistles. In this collection all people are seen as enemies of one another. The alienation felt by characters in this later work is one in which the individual becomes conscious of a rift between his responsibilities to himself as man--the individual, and his more abstract obligations to the community as man--citizen of Shanghai. In

times of peace most men are usually capable of carefully balancing these separate and conflicting parts of their life. In times of turmoil, however, man often finds himself unable to hold these two roles in their original equilibrium. As the chaos which seems to surround the individual no matter where he turns heightens, so his struggle to survive also intensifies. Each day presents new obstacles which the individual must combat if he is to endure. When this life and death struggle reaches a climax, an alienation prevails that forces man to sever all his ties with the community and his fellow man. As the times worsen, this alienation expands to swallow-up members of all social strata and in time man finds himself in a milieu devoid of any human compassion. In the Shanghai Epistles, Shi Tuo portrays a society which has in this way lost its lifeblood. It is a society where individuals no longer display any concern for the welfare and needs of their fellow citizen. The individual is no longer seen as having any sort of relationship with his fellow man: rather he is competing with him in a struggle to survive.

Another technical feature which needs to be discussed is Shi Tuo's use of the epistle format. As opposed to the more conventional novel, a narrative which employs an epistolary style grants its author greater fictional freedoms. By using such a format he may show, for example, his raconteur in a series of incidents where he becomes acquainted with and is able to freely relate the foibles and frailties of characters encountered against a particular backdrop without any strict



regard for the conventionally logical cause-effect relationships or for the normally accepted demands of time and place. By using the epistle style Shi Tuo is able to portray a wide variety of characters and their experiences by shifting his narrative from one scene to the next without raising negative reader response as to the plausibility of such a sudden shift. Thus, The Shanghai Epistles demonstrates a plot, yet it is not a plot in the sense of a planned string of interrelated events progressing because of the reciprocal action of one force upon another. This becomes most apparent in the second cycle of The Shanghai Epistles where each epistle keys in on a particular event or character with very little if any effort made to join that particular sequence of events with what preceded it or with what follows it. In this respect The Shanghai Epistles might be categorized as a 'narrative of incident'. This is a critical term applied to any extended prose narrative "in which action and more or less unrelated episodes dominate and plot and character are subordinate."<sup>18</sup> In such works of prose, plot structure is usually very loose; episodes may share the same themes and follow one another chronologically, but they are otherwise independent of each other.

Shi Tuo's combination of the epistle style and switch to a predominantly undramatized, non-introspective narrator in the second cycle shifts the nature, process and consequences of the war from the scale of a private life to a much larger more comprehensive one. This technique turns the reader's attention away from character to some other narrative value, in this case

theme: a sense of capturing "the times." Basically, the letters of this section create a mosaic of the social and political turmoil faced in everyday Shanghai life. Each letter furthers one's understanding of how the urban folk of this great metropolis fared during an increasingly tumultuous period in China's history.

In the final analysis, Shi Tuo's design in compiling such a volume was not just for the sake of a mordant portrayal of Shanghai's petit-bourgeois class. His ultimate objective is to demonstrate that although some of the characters are able to temporarily maintain a world which is culturally and financially independent, and others feel that because they live in an isolated rural area that they are divorced from the political plight of northern China, eventually all of China's people are confronted by the grim realities of Japanese aggression. In one of the final letters called "The Benediction" ("Zhufu" 祝福), the narrator discusses how as the war continues, no one, irrespective of their educational, monetary, or social background remains unscathed by the physical or the psychological hardships war creates. In this episode the narrator bumps into an old acquaintance who has recently been released from prison after having served a few years sentence. After a short exchange of pleasantries this friend of the narrator inquires as to why he looks so haggard:

"For the last few years it seems as if you've weathered a bit of a storm."

To use the term 'storm' is perhaps a bit too strong. It might be better to say that we've all changed a bit, while at the same time we've not. We couldn't avoid such a change no matter what our attitude to life was, as many of our

friends died right in front our eyes or were driven into exile or had recanted their past. We had loved these people. At one time we lived in great old China and it is difficult to assess how living in this great sea effected us. In the course of all history five years is as short as a wink; in China it was an unbearably long time for its people to endure.<sup>19</sup>

In our earlier consideration of "The Valley" our discussion focused on the violent political upheaval sweeping rural China. In that discussion we noted the wave of horror and alienation felt by characters when confronted with the discovery that many Chinese collaborators, traitors, and so forth, had become enemies of their own countrymen. The experiences which the narrator of the Shanghai Epistles discusses have left him with an equally disturbed vision. In the former collection, however, the victims of these turbulent times such as Uncle Yu seemed potentially good. In the latter, this optimism no longer exists: all people are seen as enemies of each other. In brief, the enemy confronting the people of this great metropolis is no longer the Japanese, but rather "the times" and the powerful impact which they have in shaping people's lives. These troubled years in Shanghai's history not only created severe economic hardship, more frighteningly, they produced within people a blindness and an immunity to the suffering of those around them. For the narrator, the experience of having been a witness to the mania a pctu of war-time Shanghai leaves him with a pessimistic vision of how life had been reduced to no more than a day to day affair:

People of Shanghai you know quite well that you don't care about tomorrow. If today you are short of money or rice, tonight before 2 A.M. you still will have gone to a hotel to smoke opium. You'll smoke as much as possible. You'll

inhale so much, afterall what does tommorow have to do with you anyway? It is completely incapable of ever raising your hopes again, . . . 20

For the upper classes, their struggle is to maintain a high economic and intellectual standard of living for as long as possible. For the lower classes, each dawn presents but another challenge in their ability to endure. This daily combat for survival produces for all a vision that life is fickel and ephemeral; something which may extend no further than the next sunset.

#### CHAPTER 4

Shi Tuo's concern for delineating the physical and psychological impact of the times clearly carried over to Memories of the Orchard City. Shi Tuo's goal in this final collection is to bring together previously published and unpublished short stories which relate a variety of individual themes, and arrange them in such a way that collectively they paint a total portrait of life in early Republican China. In order to accomplish this Shi Tuo adopted a unique form: the cyclical short story. My analysis will reveal that Memories of the Orchard City ( hereafter, Orchard City ) is not a haphazard collection of disparate stories. The unity of Orchard City is a unity of a 'short story cycle', both in the sense of a connected series and in the sense of recurring development in a set of narratives.

My analysis of Shi Tuo's Orchard City as an example of cyclical fiction has for its foundation the theories set forth by Forrest L. Ingram in his Representative Short Story Cycles of the 20th Century.<sup>1</sup> According to Mr. Ingram, a short story cycle is "a book of short stories so linked to each other by their author that the reader's successive experience on various levels of the pattern of the whole significantly modifies his experience of each of its constituent parts."<sup>2</sup> There are three ways by which a set of stories may be linked: they may be

compiled by an editor, an editor-author or by a single author. The linked stories themselves may be composed, arranged, or completed. In a composed cycle the author creates and arranges his stories according to a master plan which he had already conceived of prior to having written the first story. An arranged cycle is a group of stories which the author or editor-author has brought together to illuminate or comment upon one another by juxtaposition or association. The scheme for such an arrangement is varied: repetition of a single theme, recurrence of a single character, a group of characters, and so on. The third type of cycle is a group of linked stories which is neither structurally composed nor merely arranged. These works may have begun as independent stories, yet in the process of writing them the author became conscious of unifying strands woven into the action of the story.

In determining the short story cycle of Shi Tuo's Orchard City we must isolate internal patterns of recurrence and development. That is to say, we must be able to group individual narrative elements, such as character, motif or symbol, and demonstrate how they share a common thematic ground. As these elements recur the themes which they share deepens. The means by which the themes, symbols, and patterns of the short story cycle is completed is via a 'round-off' section. In this section the author attempts to draw together some of the major recurring elements that have been developing throughout the course of the work in order to make a final statement. Basically, this section serves the same function as an epilogue.

In his Introduction to the Orchard City dated May 4th 1946, Shi Tuo traces the origins of the stories as well as his motivation behind compiling such a collection:

I intentionally wrote up this little city to represent all of China's small cities. In my mind it has life, temperament, intelligence, opinions, emotions, and its own life span--just like a real human being.<sup>3</sup>

In order to compile a collection which represented all of China's small cities Shi Tuo used a structure similar to the epistolary style of The Shanghai Epistles. In both cases the author depicts his narrator going from place to place, class to class, and involving himself in a number of varied experiences without any strict regard for conventionally logical cause-effect relationships or for the normally accepted demands of time and necessity. Rather than having a planned series of interrelated actions progressing because of the neat interplay of one force upon another, Shi Tuo uses the technique of mosaic composition. In such a broad and varied scenic presentation, stories are usually independent of one other, yet they are all narrated against a single backdrop--the Orchard City. His strategy is to move the reader through a varied series of actions involving a broad and representative cast of characters. From such a construction we may conclude that Shi Tuo is less concerned with presenting a coherent or chronological sequence of observations and experiences as he is with capturing a mood or psychological setting.

When examined from Ingram's theory of the short story cycle we find that the stories of this collection represent an

arranged cycle: a group of stories which the author has brought together to illuminate or comment upon one another by juxtaposition or association. Moreover, these prose pieces can be schematized into three short story groupings, and there is a unified progression of ideas as we travel through these cycles of stories describing Orchard City life. The first grouping tries to convey a sense of what day-to-day Orchard City life was like by focusing, for instance, on characters in the midst of their daily routines. In the second group of stories Shi Tuo shows his characters in a climax of emotion, as undergoing an epiphany, which dramatically reveals some of the problems of their isolated Orchard City existence. In the third grouping Shi Tuo shows how the powerful political forces of the times and the unfathomable forces of fate combined to create a chaos which not only disturbed individual lives, but imbued all men with a universal feeling of helplessness as to their abilities to control their own lives. Collectively this multitude of scenes and characters convey a sense of the life of a given milieu and by extension transmit the mood of contemporary life in general.

Stories such as "The Mailman" ("Youchai" 邮差先生) and "The Lamp" ("Deng" 灯) are examples of the first short story grouping. In the former, Shi Tuo's narrator captures the local mailman in the midst of his daily routine. His narrator-observer reveals this respected local figure as being diligent in his duties, but not so much so that he doesn't find a moment or two to chat with a friend or to joke with a glib young villager: "Mailman do you have any mail for me?" "Your letter,"



the mailman laughed, "why your letter hasn't arrived yet. At the moment it is still on the road taking a little nap."<sup>4</sup> Throughout the story there are other examples which further illuminate the postman's simple and honest nature. As the story draws to a close the postman is seen traveling further along his route. Gazing up at the sky he is so moved by the weather that he feels inclined to break into a song; he would, that is, if it were not for the dignity of his advanced age and mustache--he is, after all, the postman. Pleased that he was able to control this whim, the mailman praises himself and continues along his route content to think to himself: "The weather of this little city is just fine."<sup>5</sup>

In the second story Shi Tuo's narrator traces the movements of another Orchard City resident as he makes his way down a dark alley barking his wares: the kerosene seller. This street hawker is described as being so familiar with the lamps he fills and the alleys he travels that he can navigate and restock his patron's lamps on even the gloomiest of nights without spilling a drop. As he moves further up the alley his voice grows clearer and stronger. He pauses only long enough to fill a lamp or to sell some other of his wares, then he once again moves until his barking voice slowly fades into the night.

At first glance it would seem that in stories like "The Mailman" and "The Lamp," Shi Tuo was celebrating an idealized vision of a natural way of life: of peace, innocence, community, and simple virtue. While in stories such as these one senses Shi Tuo's esteem for the vital role which the postman and

kerosene seller play in their community, his portrait is a paradoxical one. In a previous chapter we noted how many of Shi Tuo's early rural tales painted negative and sarcastic images of small town life, while others were completely devoid of any mocking commentary and were striking for the sentimental and reminiscing tone which they took on. In this grouping of Orchard City stories we find precisely the same paradoxical treatment of subject matter. That is to say, while these stories seem to be celebrating a simple and unencumbered way of life, they also reveal, for example, the narrow intellectual horizons nurtured by such a rural existence. In delivering two letters from Gansu and Yunnan, the postman becomes perplexed and even slightly vexed in trying to pinpoint such "faraway" places with his underdeveloped imagination:

. . . he couldn't help but sigh to himself, "This letter is from really far away." He had never thought of a place further away than this. In fact, he was a little muddled as to where Gansu and Yunnan actually were. He wondered as to why these places were situated so far away, so far away that one never had the opportunity to taste any food from there.<sup>6</sup>

Shi Tuo's portrayal of the kerosene seller's daily routine is equally disturbing. This character's tasks are so ritualized that, glancing neither to the left nor to the right, he can perform them in the darkness of a crumbling alley with robot-like efficiency. In sum, "The Postman" and "The Lamp" reaffirm Shi Tuo's paradoxical vision of rural life. These stories reveal Shi Tuo's emotional vacillation concerning the pastoral lure of the Orchard City's simple, regulated life and the stagnating effects which such an isolated existence has on the

individual. In the minds of the postman and the kerosene seller this tension, of course, does not exist. Therefore, they are able to plod onwards, oblivious of any real goal or purpose to their life other than getting through the day. It is only in the second short story grouping that Shi Tuo sketches Orchard City residents discovering the hollowness of their rural life.

The stories "Peach" ("Taohong" 桃紅) and "He Wenlong's Manuscript" ("He Wenlong de Wengao" 賀文龍的文稿) are examples of the Orchard City's second short story grouping. "Peach" sketches a young local girl who as a sterotypical filial daughter serves her aging mother. The story opens with the narrator's tranquil, almost soothing description of how a late afternoon is spent at the Meng 孟 household. The daughter is seated in her traditional spot just outside their home sewing clothes for her dowry and enjoying the last warming rays of a setting sun, while her mother slumbers through her ritual post-luncheon nap. The tranquility of such a seemingly blissful domestic scene slowly dissipates as the narrator moves from his position of mere observer to reveal the mechanics of the young girl's mind. This shift exposes how ideas of the futility and worthlessness of sewing yet another article of clothing for a dowry which will never be used pick at her brain. As the narrator traces the Meng girl's slow climb to realization a peak of emotional tension is reached in a dramatized exchange between the Meng girl and a street vendor who tries to sell her even more sewing goods for her overstuffed dowry. It is precisely at this point in the story, when she

examines this vendor's goods yet one more time that she has a revelation,<sup>1</sup> that denotes a sudden awareness of time having slipped by and that she would never marry:

But how can we explain the inner emotions of a 29 year old young lady? All at once, just when she was in the process of trying to figure out where this [damask] might go best, she was suddenly overcome by a wave of disappointment, a wave of pessimism. Nobody could have predicted this , . . .

"I don't want anything," she replied. She didn't want anything. She had already sewn two trunks full of clothes. She had already stitched wedding clothes for girls as old as she was, as well as for girls from the generation after hers. Furthermore, she had already sewn her mother's funeral clothes, what else was there left for her to sew?"

Following her revelation the Meng girl sends the peddler away. Retiring to her room the girl's grief turns from tears to one of silent anguish as she stares out her window into oblivion.

In the second representative story from this grouping the protagonist experiences a similar revelation. This is the story of He Wenlong, a middle-aged man who was forced to abandon the dreams of his youth to become an ordinary school teacher. Dissatisfied with his career and "seeing that all else was without hope, he placed all his expectations into one calling; he hoped that some day he might be able to become a writer."<sup>2</sup> Despite such ambitions, the responsibilities of being a teacher, then teacher-husband, and eventually teacher-husband-father, allow him no time to devote to his writing. One day, years after he had abandoned the notion of becoming a writer he accidentally stumbles across an aborted manuscript. He re-reads the opening paragraph of a story which describes a weary eagle coming to rest on a tree in a vast wasteland. As this noble

bird searches above and below him, he sees no sign of life except for packs of lesser animals, such as rodents and other vermin who are able to survive in an area as desolate as this. As He Wenlong re-examines this section he recalls the optimism with which that description was composed:

What he was thinking about were the conditions under which this manuscript was written many years ago. [He concluded that] Without a doubt, hope, intelligence, patience, and will--all these human virtues--are much more difficult to mature than sin, yet at the same time these identical virtues are more easily corrupted and concealed than sin. If he [He] was worthy of being called an eagle, then this eagle's last hope was gone. A wave of sorrow suddenly overcame him, . . . .<sup>9</sup>

An important structural difference of this grouping of stories is the narrator's shift from a mere witness who barely, if ever, reveals a character's psychology to one who penetrates the mental processes of his dramatis personae. In these two stories character psychology is uncovered via revelation. The type of intense revelation expressed by the young Meng girl and He Wenlong calls to mind a revelation first experienced by the character Cranly in Stephen Hero, and which in Joycean terms have come to be called 'epiphanies'.<sup>10</sup> An epiphany is literally a manifestation of some divine being. The term, however, has also come to gain widespread usage in a secular sense as well. As a critical term used by Joyce and as applied to Shi Tuo it comes to designate an event in which the essential nature of something, be that a situation, person or object is perceived in a quick flash. It is a sudden intuitive grasp of reality whereby something customarily viewed as simple and commonplace is seen in a new light.

In order to fully comprehend the nature of these two characters' epiphanies we need to consider how the unbroken routines of Orchard City life repress a character's awareness of time and the basic problems of human existence. These two characters' epiphanies and the subsequent waves of despair which overcome them reveal Shi Tuo's vision of a problem facing the residents of the Orchard City--as well as all men: in being placed on this planet, how is man to endure? In order to survive it becomes necessary for man to perform cycles of time and energy consuming tasks. Eventually, man also learns to live and work within a certain social order and to follow the custom and traditions of this order. As these social habits are passed from father to son, the foundation for such an order are strengthened. Tradition is another force binding one generation to the next, and along with the former constitutes the primary basis of social continuity in human society. Tragically, however, man often becomes so involved in the routines of day-to-day living that he becomes blind to everything but the man-made world. The individual, of course, needs to engage in mundane tasks and to follow customs key to his survival and ability to live in harmony with his fellow man; nonetheless, he remains unfulfilled unless he can balance these demands by pursuing ambitions and hopes which lay at the roots of each person's life.<sup>11</sup> In brief, in everyday life the instinct for self-preservation compels man to walk in beaten paths, sometimes to an unwarranted degree. This stagnation is perfectly represented by the rural and conservative lives led in the

### Orchard City.

Because of low mobility and their physical isolation, Orchard City folk regard their native parts as the "world". The most important framework of which was the historical-social relations passed from one generation to the next. Born into such unchanging environs the individual was extremely conscious of his inherited social role, as well as his traditional obligations to family and kin. The social continuity of the Orchard City was determined by these environmental and hereditary factors. Such a continuity endures as long as people are born with the same inborn proclivities as their forefathers and there exists a degree of similarity in the physical environment in which subsequent generations live. Though such social continuity may bring to the community a sense of unity and solidarity, it may not be beneficial to the individual.

In the above two stories, Shi Tuo's characters are seen trapped in a static society where time moved so slowly that "this family [the Meng's] didn't even need a clock."<sup>12</sup> Their mental anguish is due to an unsatisfied instinct. An unsatisfied instinct is the result of the crushing of natural and legitimate aspirations; something which prevents self-expression, self-realization. In the case of the Meng girl, she is torn between filial duty to her aging mother and her desire to lead an independent life. Her internal conflict is represented symbolically by her having long ago completed her mother's funeral clothes (a suggestion that she was prepared for and perhaps subconsciously desired her mother's death) and her

endless devotion to sewing clothes for her dowry. He Wenlong, on the other hand, is torn between his desire to write and his exhausting obligations as teacher-husband-father. In sum, in this second story grouping man's aspirations are blocked because the individual is burdened by the toils and conventions of everyday life, which blinds them from managing a sober evaluation of themselves and the world around them. The epiphanies of these characters dramatically penetrate the tissues of their feelings and come to the roots of their existence. Unfortunately, however, the insight which these revelations provide are too powerful. Characters' sudden awareness of passing time oppresses them with a vision of what has been--and now will never be. Thus, rather than providing the courage to struggle onwards, these revelations seem only to cause a type of mental paralysis which drags them deeper into the channels of despair.

"The Stuffbox" ("Yanliao He" 顏料盒) and "Haughty" ("Aogu" 傲骨) are examples of the final short story grouping. The main character of the former is a local girl who attended a teacher's college outside the Orchard City. After her graduation, she returns to her home town to become a grammar school teacher:

After You Sanmei 油三妹 graduated, she obtained a position as a grammar school teacher in the Orchard City. Among the young girls [ of the Orchard City] she should have been an exception, she should have had happiness, as she was always full of laughter and because her heart was good, . . .

. 13

After assuming her position as a teacher, a year or so passes



during which time she leads a seemingly happy life--"Fate, however, had arranged her misfortune."<sup>14</sup> One evening, she attends a small social gathering for the school's faculty and finding the mood to be quite festive she leads her colleagues in drink and in song. Unfortunately, she gets so drunk that she gets seduced into spending the night with one of the male party-goers. From this evening on her life was never to be the same:

As soon as You Sanmei woke up the next morning she turned into the melancholy You Sanmei. In no time she became very thin, her rosy cheeks became sunken, her radiating eyes became vacant and gloomy, almost as if they had been cried dry. . . . But despite all this she gritted her teeth and didn't utter a word. After this affair she still attended school for a couple of months, then her mother began to notice her bodily changes, whereupon she took sick leave.<sup>15</sup>

In the ensuing months You Sanmei falls deeper into the depths of despair. Eventually, she becomes so depressed that she takes her own life by poisoning herself. In the final paragraph the narrator is overcome by emotion and inquires of his audience:

Why is it that youths such as this, these people who should have been happy, these people who gave mankind hope . . . . who added beauty to the world . . . . why is it that they suffer this sort of misfortune? . . . . A wave of pain and depression overcame us. <sup>16</sup>

In the second story the protagonist is not the victim of fate but of the times. "Haughty" is the story of an Orchard City youth who received his education outside his home town and one day returns home an advocate of "Western thinking." Tragically, Orchard City residents seeking reform such as this young man, were dealt blows reminiscent of the fate which befell the character Cheng of "Cheng Yaoxian." As discussed earlier, Cheng was a revolutionary who survived the extermination of

Communists, but bore the trauma of such a harrowing experience for the rest of his life. Similar to Cheng, the protagonist of "Haughty" travels home and discovers that he is caught in a battle between the "old" and the "new," for his return to the Orchard City advocating reform and Western ideas results only in his ideas being misunderstood and his principles maligned. Having failed at this attempt at reform, he retires to the life of a bitter and eccentric recluse. Protagonists of other stories from this grouping suffer a similar fate: a childhood friend of the narrator's is executed for his political connections [Communist], while other more well-to-do Orchard City citizens are left virtual shells of the men they once were following the Communist occupation in 1927. An aura of pessimism surrounds these stories because man--be he young or old, rich or poor--is no longer seen as having any real control over his own destiny. This is a point which will be further elaborated on in later sections of this chapter.

Having roughly outlined the three short story groupings we will now discuss the technical features of these stories. Common to all the prose pieces and forming part of a pattern lay various connective devices. As is the case with The Shanghai Epistles, a reminiscing narrator is the key structural element controlling the tone and angle of every story. He is the chief source of unity. Although the lives and stories set out for the audience between the pages of the Orchard City all occur in the same community, they often seem unconnected with one another. It is only via the narrator's mind that these rural folk are

seen as a true community.

In re-reading the introduction, however, one discovers a number of contradictory statements, which compels one to reassess the narrator's role. In the opening paragraphs of this section Shi Tuo the author remarks that the origins of this work can be traced to July 1936 and how on a return trip to Shanghai he decided to lay over at a friend's home situated in a small city. This respite lasted a considerable period of time. In a conversation with his friend's younger sister one day he told her that he was going to use their small town as the background for a book:

I told her I had a purpose for wishing to use their small town to write a book [goes on to describe his fascination with their small city]. . . .

This is the history of why I desired to write Memories of the Orchard City.<sup>17</sup>

But in the latter stages of this same introduction the author weakens support for any earlier conclusion which might have suggested that in compiling such a volume he was attempting to recreate a true experience:

The main character of this book is a small town which exists in my imagination. It is not Mr. Ma Shuao, nor is it the "I". I don't know this "I's" status, his personality, character nor a single word that he says. I don't know who he is or where he wants to go.<sup>18</sup>

This statement implies that the words of the "I" must be attributed not to Shi Tuo the man, nor to Shi Tuo the author, but rather to this fictional narrator. A further point of confusion occurs in attempting to discern how the "I" narrator who comes on the stage in the first chapter with words: "Now

please allow me to talk a bit about the affairs of the Orchard City,"<sup>19</sup> differs from the dramatized narrator stealthily identified as Mr. Ma. While it is true that all the characters, events, and scenery were ultimately filtered through and composed by Shi Tuo, it is still important to note how these various narrative voices contribute to the works overall structure. By using these various voices an atmosphere of individual lives flowing past one another, of having been known by any number of people is created. This sort of structure provides an illusion of lives touching yet nonetheless remaining distant, seemingly connected, yet not.

A second structural feature of these stories is the ubiquitous presence of the narrator. In making even the most superficial of readings one will be very quick to discover that the narrator is very conscious of his relationship with the reader. Particularly prominent are intrusions in the form of rhetorical questions, imaginary colloquies with the reader and periodic digressions in the story. Examples from two works should suffice in illustrating the nature of such intrusions:

Now perhaps you'd like to ask, "Could it be possible that this was the end of him? It was here that he wasted his one and only life?"

Please be a little patient and hang on for a moment, a moment is really all that is needed.<sup>20</sup>

It was in the second, third or fourth year of the Republic--I'm really not all that sure--anyway, you just try and imagine what those good old days were like.<sup>21</sup>

Other examples which illustrate a solidarity between this teller of tales and his reading audience is his frequent use of phrases, such as "You've probably heard stories like this

before" or "Let's pause here for a moment or two."

During the course of certain works Shi Tuo's narrator sometimes switches the story from a first-person "I" to a second-person "you". The strategy behind shifting from an "I" to a "you" is that it quickly absorbs the reader into the illusionary fictional present of the story:

There is only one post office in this town and one is really more than enough, as nobody has ever seen two people walk into it at the same time, . . .

If for some reason you haven't pasted any stamps on your letters and you forgotten to bring along any change, there really is no reason to get upset. You can boldly walk into the post office, . . .[and ask] "Do you have any stamps?" The postmaster will laugh and reply, "Why of course, of course, you won't need many, will you?" "I haven't brought along any money is that ok?" Then nodding his head once more the postmaster will reply "Certainly, sir. Did you bring the letters along? I'll paste them on for you." Whereupon he will grope around in a drawer, pull out the stamps and, in fact, personally lick and affix them for you.<sup>22</sup>

This technique of Shi Tuo's forces the reader to identify with the "you" and compels one to become more deeply involved with the fictional events than would have been possible with the use of a single narrative voice alone. Conversely, a shift from a "you" to an "I" has exactly the opposite effect; breaking the illusion of reality and in doing so drawing the reader away from any over involvement in the fictional events that happen to have the audience's attention.

Shi Tuo sometimes employs a pseudo-omniscient narrator--a technique seen earlier in "The Pilgrim"--to control reader response. As the implied author and organizer of these reminiscences, Shi Tuo's narrator is capable of knowing, seeing, and telling whatever he wishes in the story. His narrator

freely shifts from the external to the inner world of a number of characters, as well as the time and place of the work. In some stories, however, this otherwise omniscient narrator claims that he is incapable of commenting upon the meaning of the stories or come to any real conclusion as to what forces stand over characters like You Sanmei and determine their destiny. Instead, this narrator implores the reader to explain such puzzling phenomena to him. Obviously, because the reader is not acquainted with nor does he have more than the barest of facts laid out in front of him, he is even less capable than the narrator of fathoming why characters like You Sanmei and other scions of happy and prominent Orchard City families end up walking the streets of despair. In sum, by professing to know no answers himself, the narrator puts the dramatis personae even further out of reach, and the only conclusion that the reader is able to come to is that the comprehension of the character's fate, like irony itself, stands beyond the individual's ken.

The years 1911-1931 which serve as a backdrop to this collection, saw China undergo a period of great social and political upheaval. It was a round of years which also saw huge advances in modern Chinese intellectual development. The commencement of this development can be traced to the late 19th century when a series of military and diplomatic humiliations induced a few Chinese officials to explore, isolate, and reform many of the cultural and material problems facing an increasingly backwards China. Though this Hundred Days Reform,

as it came to be called, was short-lived, early 20th century intellectuals found themselves rallying under their original banner. As the anti-imperialist May Fourth (1919) Movement was developing in political circles, Chinese intellectuals were embarking upon a campaign directed against feudal culture. Though this new cultural movement was broad in its attack, it basically was a movement led by Western-thinking intellectuals seeking a complete revision of the intellectual standards and moral values of an outdated Confucian society. The advent of such a movement marked the beginning of an age of tension between the "new" culture and the older, more traditional concepts of Chinese society. Memories of the Orchard City seeks to capture a sense of this and the other tensions of the early Republican era by juxtaposing stories which portray everyday Orchard City life with those which delineate the impact of the powerful cultural, social, and political forces of the time on this traditional society. In this respect, Memories of the Orchard City shows the maturity of Shi Tuc's prose abilities, for he attempts to go beyond the individual themes of earlier works, such as the Japanese menace, to present his total portrait of traditional Chinese society in transition. In sum, this collection not only represents a re-assertion of certain fundamental themes which concerned the young author, but a consummate re-working of earlier themes into a narrative of greater scope and complexity.

In attempting to establish the theme of the work, one recalls the words of the literary historian Richard M. Eastman,

who in his Guide to the Novel wrote that "the fullest valuation of any novel great or small depends upon its sense of historic moment."<sup>12</sup> With these words in mind we conclude that a full appreciation of the Orchard City hinges upon Shi Tuo's fabrication and articulation of an integrated perception of how he saw man's existence in this point of China's history.

The first grouping of stories ("The Postman" and "The Lamp" ) illustrates most clearly Shi Tuo's vacillating vision of life in the Chinese countryside; a feature which was most evident in the stories of his early years(1931-1938). In the Orchard City, Shi Tuo once again celebrates the tranquility of traditional small town life while remaining critical of its power to trap the individual in an oppressive atmosphere which leaves him mediocre, as well as spiritually and mentally dead. Though the characters of stories like "The Postman" are seen as having world-views that are absurdly narrow and static, it is only in the second short story grouping that the author reveals how life in these rural parts crushed the individual's natural and legitimate aspirations. This theme of a rural life stifling the individual and shrinking his Weltansicht has its roots in stories like "Night in the Valley"; a story which portrays a young shepherd girl feeling the pangs of alienation in suddenly discovering the limitations of her shrunken world-view. In this second grouping the author captures his dramatis personae in a climax of emotion--as undergoing an epiphany--which permeates the tissues of their feelings and comes to the roots of their existence.



In part, the third grouping of stories calls to mind many of Shi Tuo's earlier works, such as "Cheng Yaoxian" and others found in The Valley and The Shanghai Epistles. In these stories character alienation stems from their having been trapped in a troubled period in China's history. It was a period when individuals felt helpless to political events over which they had no control, and which imbued them with a pessimistic feeling as to their ability to control their own destinies. Characters like the protagonist of "Haughty" had the clearest vision of the problems of the times and he tried to struggle against them, yet like the people of Lu Xun's iron box those who saw the most suffered the most. Nowhere is this total vision of a society gone slightly out of control more evident than in the round-off section, "The Three Small Personages" ("Sange Xiao Renwu" 三个小人物 ).

In this rounding off section, Shi Tuo tries to blend elements from all three short story groupings into one final story. His narrator traces the lives of three Orchard City youths from the dying years of the Qing to the early 1930's. The central characters are the elder son and daughter of a prominent official named Hu 胡 and the simple son of a local family whose father serves as the gatekeeper at the Hu's home. As the son of the gatekeeper one of Young Zhang's responsibilities was to accompany the Hu girl to and from school. As a sort of bonus for performing this chore, Young Zhang is allowed to attend classes with the two Hu children. Young Zhang was fortunate in that he was able to reap the

benefits of an education unavailable to most, yet it was not without its cost. Because of his inferior social position Young Zhang, or "nosedripper" as the Hu children come to call him, is also the scapegoat for the Hu son's crude jokes and his sisters's feminine scorn. Despite such daily abuse Young Zhang never protests their cruelty and the years pass unnoticed until a Communist insurrection forces Mrs. Hu and her children to flee to the countryside. Young Zhang, of course, does not join them in their escape. In fact, rather than fleeing, and despite his father's violent disapproval, he joins the ranks of local supporters sympathetic to the Communist cause. The Red insurrection in the Orchard City lasts only a few months but the damage done to the town and the Hu home in particular is devastating. Mrs. Hu's first act in returning from the countryside is to scold and beat Old Zhang; holding him personally responsible for the destruction created by the Reds and his son. The elder Zhang pleaded with her to believe that he had opposed his son's decision to join those "scoundrels" and that he had since disowned him, but his protestations fall upon deaf ears. For faithfully serving the Hu's, as his forefathers had already done for countless generations, Old Zhang's reward is to be ousted from his small gatekeeper's home. Virtually overnight this hard working and honest man loses his son, job, and home, and with nowhere else to go he retires to a local temple where he lives out his years as a pauper--a shell of the man he once was.

While the Hu's are able to survive such politically

unstable times, they were unable to escape life's ironies. As a young man the Hu son is able to use his family's wealth and influence to firmly establish himself as a powerful Orchard City resident. Hu is able to maintain such a position for about four years and then through a variety of misfortunes goes bankrupt. In a short period of time, this once powerful family is thrown into the depths of poverty. Hu tries to regain some of his family's lost status by frequently acting as a middleman between ransom-victims and captors. Though his status as a go-between for criminals fails to regain for him his family's lost social status, it does provide an income. Tragically, however, this rise from poverty is shattered when Hu is murdered in cold blood by a ransom-victim he tried to doublecross. After her son's violent death Mrs. Hu, who has already fallen from the ranks of the aristocracy to become a penniless old woman living in a horse barn, finds herself with absolutely no one to rely upon except her daughter.

As a student living outside the Orchard City, the young Hu girl had fallen madly in love with one of her instructors. As it turns out though, the girl becomes a naive victim of a trickster, for after spending just one night with her, the instructor abandons her and is never heard from again. Without any alternative, the Hu girl returns home to the Orchard City heartbroken and disgraced. After coming back she is forced by her brother's death and dire financial circumstances to become a prostitute. Growing up in the Orchard City the young Hu girl was admired by one and all for her family's powerful name and

aristocratic beauty. Now, her tarnished reputation is famous only among sailors and tradesmen. Ironically, on a street corner not far away from where she presently does "business" there is a photo shop which displays a picture of her taken as a youth.

You might ask, "Who is this beautiful Oriental girl [in the picture], could it possibly be Hu Fengying?"

She is a little different now than the earlier Hu Fengying: she is a little thinner and a little "older". . . . Anyway, no matter what, we couldn't help but get the general feeling that there was a kind of an aura of the whore about her, that is what I meant by a little older.<sup>24</sup>

The ultimate irony, however, occurs in the last pages of the work when Young Zhang, the Hu brother and sister's former scapegoat, catches a glimpse of her while walking down a street. It has been years since Young Zhang last returned to the Orchard City or seen her. He looks absolutely nothing like the "nosedripper" of his youth, having matured into a rather well-kempt young man dressed in a business suit. In passing by he realizes it is her but he does nothing to draw her attention:

He never imagined that this unforgettable maiden of the dreams of his youth could end up like this. He leaned over to listen [to her ditty], then he continued on walking into the depths of the alley. My story ends here. I won't write that this hero . . . saved this beauty after all these years of pain and suffering, as it didn't happen. Because, to live ten years in such an era is equal to living a hundred in our forefathers'.<sup>25</sup>

It is on this rather pessimistic note that Shi Tuo concludes his collection of tales.

"The Three Small Personages," stands as Shi Tuo's capsulized portrait of the destiny which befell one Orchard City family during a crucial juncture in China's history. The Hu

family's decline from the ranks of the aristocracy to the depths of poverty is reminiscent of the tragic blows dealt to Orchard City characters of earlier stories such as You Sanmei. When these youths first arrive on the fictive stage their futures are described as holding great promise, yet as adults each one of them ends up walking the streets of despair: the Hu son loses the family fortune, his sister becomes a prostitute, and You Sanmei dies a suicide victim. The ultimate misfortune which overtakes these characters oppresses the reader with a vision of man succumbing to the ubiquitous forces of fate and how the unfathomable mechanics of these forces discounts any knowledge we have of our environment and those who reside in it--a theme first seen in Shi Tuo's "Night in the Valley."

What adds to the pessimism of "The Three Small Personages" already bleak picture is that characters are no longer just doing battle with the forces of fate, but the forces of man as well. In this final story Shi Tuo shows how the peaceful and well-regulated Orchard City life portrayed in "The Postman" and "The Kerosene Seller" is suddenly thrown into a state of chaos by the political forces of the times. These powerful forces create a chaos which is so unsettling that it produces within people a feeling that "to live ten years in such an era is equal to living a hundred in our forefathers' time." The misery and tragedy which these forces create is clearly seen in the character of Old Zhang. Characters such as Old Zhang, like the rural refugees of The Shanghai Epistles lead the relatively uneventful lives of farmers and laborers. In this respect,

their existence differs very little from that of their forefathers. Yet virtually overnight their well-regulated lives are turned completely topsy-turvy by the advent of political events over which they have no control (e.g. the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, the civil war) and which destroyed any notions of the Orchard City's natural and social world as being recognizable and manageable. As the mechanics of these forces which are suddenly seen as standing over and shaping the individual's destiny cannot be comprehended from the character's inherited world-view, any relationship between the individual and experience ceases to exist. Man suddenly perceives himself as being alienated from his earlier self. Furthermore, as this relationship between an individual, event, and experience becomes a more abstract one, it also dissolves any concrete frame of reference that the individual had in the everyday world. Like the young shepherd girl of "Night in the Valley," the turbulent events surrounding the years 1911-1931 produce experiences which destroy the individual's world-view and primitive visions of the Orchard City as the "world." In sum, this final story imbues the reader with a heavy pessimism for characters are no longer seen as having any real control over their own destinies, but manipulated by the forces of fate and the times.

In attempting to capture a sense of Orchard City life during the early Republican period the author was seeking a balancing of quantities that have no way of being made

"rationally" into a whole. The juxtaposition of the three short story groupings illustrates most poignantly the tragedy of this impossibility. In attempting to show history in action, he needed to create a large and disparate group of characters, too disparate to be assimilated into conventionally normal notions of plot. The most significant strategy which Shi Tuo employs to control this problem is the cyclical short story.

By using an arranged cycle Shi Tuo creates a form of multiple perspective by which political events and social phenomenon are seen from different angles and which, by extension, provide a sense of the corporate life of an age, at once varied and unified. Besides using the short story cycle technique to convey a sense of people's subjection to major external forces, such as war, ideologies, and other domestic turmoil, Shi Tuo also uses it to make certain humanistic statements about man's existence in general. In previous stories, such as "Night in the Valley" and "The Pilgrim," we noted how Shi Tuo tried to describe the limitations of man's life and knowledge when viewed from nature. These stories show Shi Tuo exploring the mysteries of our existence and his awe for nature. In Memories of the Orchard City, we find Shi Tuo once again questioning life's inscrutable character. Furthermore, by juxtaposing stories from all three groupings throughout this collection he obliges his audience to form similar opinions about the oft incomprehensible nature of our existence. This is because as the reader travels from story to story, character to character, one's emotions, like the lives of the dramatis

personae themselves, is continually in flux. Hence, it becomes impossible for the reader to form any irrevocable picture of Orchard City life.

In Memories of the Orchard City, Shi Tuo's sketches an extremely pessimistic portrait of Orchard City life suffering under the havoc of the times. Underlying this picture, however, one cannot help but get the feeling that while Shi Tuo saw the times as cruel, he saw nature as being even crueler. In the first story of this collection Shi Tuo's wandering narrator debarks at the train station and one of the first sights he sees is the ancient Orchard City pagoda, which according to legend dropped from the sleeve of an immortal. Despite its historical appeal the narrator describes it as casting an ominous shadow over the Orchard City:

. . . . [The ancient pagoda] has seen a countless number of wars pass outside the city, and which only brought more difficulties and hardship to people's lives; . . . . It has seen the coffins of generation after generation of old friends go by on the big road, . . . . It has seen an endless number of sunrises. . . . But it still stands. . . . unscathed. <sup>15</sup>

Seen from this light the Orchard City pagoda stands as Shi Tuo's symbol for the cycle of nature.

Shi Tuo's interpretation of nature--the material world especially as surrounding man and existing independently of his activities--is that it knows nothing about man, his affairs, hopes or happiness, it is neutral to all of them, neither a friend nor a foe. Shi Tuo's symbol of the Orchard City pagoda points out most clearly the lesson that nothing endures forever. Sooner or later, all men are overcome by both time and the



shadow of death, which stalks man from his first breathing moment.

The Orchard City pagoda reflects the transitory nature of man's existence. No matter what fate befalls man and regardless of what his joys and achievements, pains and failures might be, nature remains imperturbable. Despite the pessimism of such an outlook, Shi Tuo never suggested that man was irrelevant or that life was devoid of all significance. He was not dismayed by the realization that death awaited all men and that it would negate all traces of his existence. Shi Tuo's message would seem to be that life is an enigmatic and fortuitous struggle. Man lives in a world whose mechanics and reality lie beyond any of the processes by which the human mind cognizes phenomenal objects. In such an existence the best man can do is accept the good, evil, and tragic as intrinsic elements in the overall scheme of things. Man may struggle and try to take action against the forces which seemingly stand over and shape his destiny, yet in the end death always wins out.

In the final analysis, the technique of the cyclical short story allows Shi Tuo to convey a sense of the corporate life of an age and to comment on the general human condition as well. By juxtaposing stories from all three short story groupings he is able to present his personal vision as to how he saw all of China's small cities and towns faring during the early Republican era. Basically, it would seem that Shi Tuo saw the turmoil of these years as permeating every pore of Chinese life. The pathos of these stories lies in Shi Tuo's depiction of

characters trapped between the "old" and the "new" and others battling against the unseizable, yet ubiquitous forces of fate. The message underlying these stories, however, is that while the chaos of the times imbues men with a feeling of helplessness as to his ability to control his own destiny, man, regardless of the times, has absolutely no control over his final destiny, death. In the end death the conqueror defeats all.

### CONCLUSION

Our preceding analysis has hopefully demonstrated Shi Tuo's unique and innovative literary consciousness. His prose is unique in that he sought to portray alienated man by focusing on the intellectual, social, and political origins of this mode of experience, as well as the nature of alienated man in relation to himself and his fellow man. In the realm of structure and stylistics his literary technique is innovative in that it evolved over time in order to better portray various aspects of the politically and socially turbulent 1930's as a "rational" whole.

After arriving on the literary scene in the early 1930's Shi Tuo's prose was heavily influenced by Lu Xun and Shen Congwen. Stories such as "The Pilgrim" (1934) and "Night in the Valley" (1935), however, show Shi Tuo's individual concern for creating works that described the "alienation experience" and which reflected his own unique world-view. In these prose pieces Shi Tuo presents his personal vision of the limitations of man's life and knowledge by focusing on characters discovering the transitory nature of their existence and the emotional and mental imbalance created by such an experience.

In 1936 Shi Tuo, like many other authors of the period, turned his attention to creating works which incorporated the themes of national resistance. Unlike his contemporaries,

however, Shi Tuo was not content to create stereotyped anti-Japanese fiction. Instead, he tried to use the chaos of the times as a backdrop for describing the political origins of the alienation experience. While "The Mute Song" and "The Valley" impart disturbing visions of the alienation and psychological scars inflicted by the times, the message underlying "The Story of the Rain" extends beyond the political realm to a more universal ground in developing a theme first conveyed in "Night in the Valley" and "The Pilgrim." In this story Shi Tuo reaffirms his vision of the transitory nature of our existence by describing how the experience of having lived through such politically turbulent times was to foster an almost nihilistic philosophy that life is fickle and a true understanding of it extends beyond one's ken.

Shi Tuo's concern for delineating the physical and psychological impact of the Sino-Japanese War was carried over to The Shanghai Epistles as well. In this collection Shi Tuo adopted an epistolary style in order to better capture a sense of how the chaos of the times permeated Shanghai life and created an alienation which forced the individual to sever all ties with the community and in some cases his own kin. In these stories Shi Tuo's Shanghai man is no longer seen as having any sort of relationship with his fellow man, but competing with him in deadly struggle to survive.

In his final collection of short prose, Memories of the Orchard City, Shi Tuo attempts to go beyond the individual themes of earlier works, such as National Defense, to create a

total portrait of the powerful social and political forces influencing early Republican China. In order to accomplish this Shi Tuo adopted yet another literary technique: the cyclical short story. The short story cycle technique allows Shi Tuo to create a mosaic which conveys a specific sense of how people were no longer just battling against the unapprehendable forces of fate, but the powerful social and political forces of the times as well. Aside from allowing the author to portray people's subjection to major external forces such as, wars, ideologies, and other domestic turmoil, the short story cycle technique also allows the author to comment on the human condition in general.

The theme which underlies this collection also has its origins in "Night in the Valley" and "The Pilgrim": stories which sought to delineate the limitations of man's knowledge when viewed from infinite nature. Shi Tuo's message is that the chaos of the times imbues man with a feeling of helplessness as to his ability to control his own destiny, yet in the end, man, regardless of how the times or fate manipulates him, cannot escape nature's cycle--death the conqueror defeats all. Thus, in this collection we note not only a re-assertion of certain themes which concerned the younger author, but a consummate re-working of earlier themes into a narrative of greater scope and complexity.

This thesis has endeavored to gain an insight into Shi Tuo's alienated man and how the author's literary technique underwent certain changes to better convey this mode of

experience. He is an author who has been generally overlooked by scholars. His fiction deserves recognition because it conveys a sense of the times and the specific impact which they have on the individual and because it also makes universal statements about the human condition. His fiction may be best characterized by the words of a biographer, who in commenting on his prose technique said that his stories have a quality of being able to "enchant" people and give them a "feeling which they just can't define."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, a no more fitting description of Shi Tuo's fiction could not be found anywhere. But, words, no matter how fitting, seem inadequate when attempting to articulate the strength of emotions evoked by Shi Tuo's fiction.

## NOTES

### Introduction

1. Beijing Yuyan Xueyuan, Zhongguo Wenxuejia Cidian (Beijing: Beijing Yuyan Xueyuan, 1975), p. 134.

2. J. Schyrs, 1500 Modern Chinese Novels and Plays (Beiping: Catholic University Press, 1948), p. 98.

3. Throughout this thesis we will use the pseudonym Shi Tuo when referring to Wang Changjian.

4. Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscript of 1844 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1967), p. 66.

5. R.D. Laing, Politics of Experience (New York: Ballantine Books, 1967), p. 28.

6. Eric Fromm, "The Same Society," in Alienation: The Cultural Climate of Our Time, ed. Gerald Sykes (New York: Gerald Brazillier, 1964), p. 67.

7. Zbigniew Slupski, "The World of Shih T'ao," Asian and African Studies 9 (1973): 12.

### Chapter 1

1. C.T. Hsia, A History of Modern Chinese Fiction (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 136.

2. Shen Congwen, "Xue Ti," Preface to Achi (Hong Kong: Wen Li Chubanshe, 1960), pp. 3-4.

3. Nieh Hua-ling, Shen Ts'ung-wen (Twayne Publishers, 1972), p. 47.
4. Ibid., p. 88.
5. Hsia, History, p. 401.
6. Lu Fen, Limen Shiji (Shanghai: Wenhua Shenghuo Chubanshe, 1937), p. 59.
7. Ibid., p. 70.
8. Hsia, History, p. 197.
9. Ibid., p. 198.
10. Su Xuelin, "Shen Congwen Lun," in Su Xuelin Xuanji, ed. Xin Lu Shuju (Taipei: Xin Lu Shuju, 1961), p. 133.
11. Wang Yao, Zhongguo Xin Wenxuejia Shi Gao, 2 vols. (Shanghai: Xin Wenyi Chubanshe, 1953), 1:245.
12. Slupski, "World," p. 14.
13. Lu Fen, Lucre Guang (Shanghai: Kaiming Shudian, 1937), p. 45.
14. William A. Lyell, Lu Hsun's Vision of Reality (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 74.
15. Lu Fen, Limen, p. 148.
16. Lu Xun, Nahan (Hong Kong: San Lian Shudian, 1958), p. 32.
17. Milena Dolezelova, "Lu Xun's Medicine," in Modern Chinese Literature in the May Fourth Movement, ed. Merle Goldman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 230.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Lu Fen, Jianghu Ji (Shanghai: Kai Ming Shudian, 1938),



p. 44.

21. Slupski, "World," p. 36.

22. Ibid., p. 37.

23. Lu Fen, Jianghu p. 44.

24. Ibid., p. 48.

25. Ibid., p. 40.

26. Ibid., p. 43.

27. Ibid., p. 79.

28. Ibid., p. 86.

29. Ibid., p. 105.

30. Ibid., pp. 104-105.

31. Ibid., p. 103.

32. Ibid., p. 97.

## Chapter 2

1. Franz Shurmann and Orville Schelle, Republican China: Nationalism, War, and the Rise of Communism 1911-1949 (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 178.

2. Amiterdranath Tagore, Literary Debates in Modern China 1918-1937 (Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1967), p. 168.

3. Hu Luc, "Guofang Wenxue de Jianli," in Hu Luo Yizuo (Shanghai: Li Ming Shudian, 1937), p. 5.

4. Guo Moru, "Guofang; Wuchi; Lianyu," in Guofang Wenxue Lunzhan (Tokyo: Xin Chao Chubanshe, 1966), p. 132.

5. Li Liming, Zhongguo Xiandai Liubai Zuoja Xiaozhuan (Hong Kong: Po Wen Shuju, 1977), p. 465.

6. Hsia, History, p. 275.

7. Lu Fen, Gu (Shanghai: Wenhua Shenghuo, 1936), p. 108.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., p. 109. In this story Shi Tuo adds a mouth radical 口 to the character 薩 (a character frequently used in transliteration) and combines it with a second character to describe the sound of the Japanese military song.

10. Ibid., p. 95.

11. Ibid., p. 101.

12. Ibid., p. 102-103.

13. Ibid., p. 109, 110.

14. Ibid., p. 63-64.

15. Ibid., pp. 80.

16. Ibid., pp. 91-92.

17. Ibid., p. 93.

18. Ibid., p. 94.

19. William Flint and Addison Hibbard, A Handbook to Literature (New York: Odyssey Press, 1960), p. 330.

20. Meir Sternberg, Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p. 264.

21. Lu Fen, Gu, p. 38.

22. Ibid., p. 41.

23. Ibid., p. 42.

24. See Pearl S. Buck, All Men Are Brothers (New York: John Day Company, 1933), p. 185.

25. Lu Fen, Gu, p. 39.

## Chapter 3

1. Slupski, "World," p. 12.
2. Lu Fen, Shanghai Shouzhai (Shanghai: Wenhua Shenghuc Chubanshe, 1941,), p. 8.
3. Ibid., p. 4.
4. Ibid., p. 3.
5. Ibid., p. 18.
6. Ibid., p. 20.
7. A. L' Hcute, Zur Psychologie des Bauerntums (Tubingen: J.C.F. Mohr, 1905), pp. 200, 203.
8. Harold Issacs, Introduction to Straw Sandals (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1974), p. xxxi.
9. Lu Fen, Shanghai , p. 37.
10. Ibid., p. 39.
11. Lu Fen, Shanghai , p. 82.
12. Ibid., p. 32.
13. Ibid., p. 45.
14. Ibid., p. 48.
15. Ibid., p. 8.
16. Ibid., p. 10-11.
17. Ibid., p. 8.
18. Flint, Handbook, p. 324.
19. Lu Fen, Shanghai, pp. 64-65.
20. Ibid., p. 127.

## Chapter 4

1. Unless otherwise footnoted our discussion of a 'short story cycle' is based upon the theories introduced by Forrest L. Ingram in the first chapter of his Representative Short Story Cycles of the Twentieth Century (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), pp. 13-26.

2. Ingram, Representative, p. 19.

3. Shi Tuo, Introduction to Guoyuancheng Ji, (Shanghai: Shanghai Chubanshe, 1946), p. 5.

4. Shi Tuo, Guoyuancheng Ji, p. 172.

5. Ibid.,

6. Ibid., p. 169.

7. Ibid., p. 65.

8. Ibid., p. 86.

9. Ibid., pp. 91-92.

10. See James Joyce, Stephen Hero, edited from the manuscript in the Harvard College library by Theodore Spencer (Binghamton, New York: Vail-Bailou, 1944), p. 211.

11. Fromm, "Sane Society," p. 82-83.

12. Ibid., pp. 61.

13. Ibid., p. 98.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., p. 102.

16. Ibid., p. 104.

17. Shi Tuo, Introduction to Guoyuancheng Ji, p. 1, 2.

18. Ibid., p. 5.

19. Shi Tuo, Guoyuancheng Ji, p. 1.

20. Ibid., p. 189.

21. Ibid., p. 191.

22. Ibid., p. 7, 8.

23. Richard M. Eastman, A Guide to the Novel (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing, 1965), p. 72.

24. Shi Tuo, Guoyuancheng Ji, p. 235.

25. Ibid., pp. 237-238.

26. Ibid., p. 5.

#### Conclusion

1. Huang Jundong, Xiandai Zhongguo Zuojia de Jianying (Hong Kong: Yeu Lian Chubanshe, 1937), p. 179.

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