

Reflections on the Legacy of Tian Han: "Proletarian Modernism" and Its Traditional Roots¹

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A major twentieth-century writer with a complex background and a controversial legacy, Tian Han left behind sixty-three modern spoken dramas, twenty-seven traditional operas (including Peking-, Hunan-, and Henan-style operas), two Western-style operas (*geju*), twelve movie scripts, more than 1,000 poems in both modern and classical styles, and a substantial body of literary criticism. He translated plays by Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde, Kikuchi Kan, and many others. Most important, as far as the Chinese public is concerned, in 1935 Tian Han wrote the lyrics to "March of the Volunteers" (*Yiyongjun jinxing qu*), which would eventually become the national anthem of the People's Republic of China (PRC). According to popular lore,² in 1949, when Liang Sicheng and others nominated the "March" to be the national anthem, some expressed discomfort, saying that the original line of "The Chinese nation has now reached its most severe crisis in the struggle for survival" would not work with the founding of the PRC, which promised to usher in an era of tranquility. Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, however, overruled them, believing that the original lyrics most accurately reflected recent history, which should be remembered in the present peace and prosperity (Tian Han 1949: 138). "The March" became "the provisional

¹ I want to thank Judith Green for inviting me to the "Orientalism and Modernism" conference at Cambridge University in June 2004, for which the first and shorter version of this essay was written. I am grateful to external reviewers' efforts to help me rethink some issues and to Eric Hayot for his encouragement and suggestions for revision. To Kirk A. Denton I owe my deep appreciation for his expertise in editing and his knowledge of modern Chinese literature.

² Although the account that follows is based on Tian Han's text, internet materials and other popular books retell a similar story to promote a collective memory of a nationalist spirit in the War of Resistance Against Japan.

national anthem" (*dai guoge*). During the Cultural Revolution, Tian Han was denounced as "an enemy of the people," and "East Is Red" (*Dong fang hong*) eclipsed "The March," the music of which was played on some official occasions, as the unofficial national anthem. In 1978, a committee revised the lyrics to "The March," which was declared the national anthem. In 1982, the revised lyrics were replaced by Tian Han's original lyrics, and "The March" was finally established as the official national anthem. This was done in part to celebrate Tian Han as a "model patriotic intellectual," but the revival of Tian's lyrics also communicated the popular sentiment that China had made it through the national crisis of the Cultural Revolution, during which Tian Han was persecuted to death.

Like many of his contemporaries, Tian Han paid with his life in a Maoist era that was supposed to create a carefree society of goodness, harmony, and justice. During the post-Mao celebration of his life, the image of Tian Han was again exploited by the state as part of its platform of ushering in a "new" era: the reversal of the verdict on Tian Han validated the Deng regime, which had condemned the "horror" of the Maoist era. His name was also appropriated by the post-Deng regime to build a "Grand Theater of Tian Han," situated behind a "Tian Han Square," in the city of Changsha, his hometown. The monumental square would become a "Tiananmen Square" in Changsha, functioning as a public space for mass parades and national celebrations, a tourist attraction, a real-estate backdrop, and an entertainment center designed to bolster Changsha's economic take-off in the twenty-first century.³

Despite his visibility in popular culture, Tian Han's place in the literary and cultural history of the twentieth century has been marginal, especially in the West. Scholars in China have explained the paucity of Tian Han studies in a variety of ways. The heterogeneity of his oeuvre, its diverse media, and its multiple influences (East and West, traditional and modern) has also made it extremely difficult to fashion a complete picture of his work. To understand Tian Han, one must first appreciate the

³ This news was first published in *Changsha wanbao* (Changsha evening news) August 2, 2003) and later posted at <http://www.0731fdc.com>.

position he has occupied in literary and dramatic history: he was not only a "grand leader" in traditional opera, but also a pioneering "giant artist" in the development of modern spoken drama, from the "pluralist liberal period" (*duoyuan ziyou shiqi*) in the 1920s and the leftist movement in the 1930s to the period of "seeking the spirit of nationalism and democracy" (*zhangyang minzu yu minzhu jingshen de shiqi*) in the 1940s (Tian Han *quanji bianji weiyuanhui* 2000: 2-3). Maoist critics rejected Tian Han's Western modernist leanings, such as the "art-for-art's-sake" creed in his early career, and they looked askance at his suspect social connections and personal history in the Republican period. Post-Mao critics deemed his later work, with its apparent leftist tendencies, too political to warrant serious academic scholarship. Foreign scholars have dismissed Tian Han as a focus of study because of his leadership in the leftist drama movement and the official positions he held in the PRC cultural bureaucracy. He never garnered the kind of attention granted Shen Congwen, for example, who for political reasons retired from the literary scene after 1949. By contrast, Tian Han was extremely active in the post-1949 cultural world: editing drama journals, anthologies, prefaces, and memoirs; writing endorsements, theater reviews, and drama criticism; and giving drama-festival speeches. But his role in theater history as a whole has been glossed over because his postrevolutionary activities were taken to be mere reflections of the party control of literature and art.

In recent years, however, Chinese scholars have begun to revisit the leftist literary movement and see it not as mere CCP propaganda, but to recognize its political orientation as important aspects of world literary trends in the 1920s and 1930s. (Lin Weimin (2005), for example, has credited Li Dazhao, Qu Qiubai, Jiang Guangci, Shen Yanbing, and others for being pioneers in the promotion of "proletarian art," an essential element of global socialist art.) However, Tian Han's efforts in the proletarian cultural movement are rarely acknowledged, except to the extent that they provided an example of someone who veered to the left in 1930

⁴ I am not so much interested in Tian Han being the first, or nearly the first, to introduce proletarian literature as I am in pointing out the frequent neglects of Tian Han's place in literary history.

⁵ For the twenty-volume *Complete Works*, see Tian Han 2000. An earlier collection of his writing is Tian Han 1983. For a collection of critical studies on his work from the Republican to the PRC, see *Tian Han zhuan ji* 1980.

⁶ Xiaomei Chen, forthcoming. For a study of Southern Drama Society, see Dong Jian 1989.

⁷ I do not examine the Japanese literary influences because they have been treated extensively in the Chinese-language scholarship. The scope of this topic demands a separate essay.

under the influence of the CCP. Scholars often mention Tian Han's lyrics for the national anthem but only to exemplify the nationalist spirit and the leftist literary movement that enjoyed "mainstream" status during the 1930s and later into the war period. As this essay illustrates, however, Tian Han published his views on "proletarian art" as early as 1920, the same year that Li Dazhao first promoted the concept.⁴ Most important, Tian believed—again, much earlier than most of his contemporaries—that proletarian art needed to be synthesized with Western feminist principles to benefit proletarian women in China and the rest of the world. Tian Han's sensitivity to the complex issues of class, gender, and nation confirms his place as a unique and pioneering interpreter of proletarian modernism in Chinese literary history.

Tian Han's story closely follows a pattern I have described with regard to the marginal position of modern Chinese drama, which was doomed by an approach to literature that drew an irreconcilable distinction between purely artistic practice and ideological activity (Xiaomei Chen 2002). The recent publication of the *Complete Works of Tian Han* marks progress in moving beyond this dichotomy and constitutes a major contribution to Tian Han studies.⁵ Nevertheless, a comprehensive and thorough study of Tian Han's works has yet to appear in the West. I have analyzed elsewhere the cultural and intellectual group identities Tian Han forged before and during his Nanguo she (Southern Drama Society) period in the 1920s; and I have argued that rather than ascribe Tian's "turn left" in 1930 to the influence of CCP ideology, it would be more accurate to say that long before and during his Southern Drama Society days, he had himself helped construct a leftist discourse through his dramatic writings.⁶ 7-8

To buttress my argument, I look at the diverse foreign influences on Tian Han in his earlier career, (before his *Nanguo* period) that is, the Russian, English, French, German, and American writers who mattered to him.⁷ I argue that a rich foundation in the work of these foreign figures helped form Tian Han's identity as an independent artist with a strong sense of

moral and social duty to his people. "Western, decadent, and bourgeois," and especially "modernist" were labels he applied to himself, and these influences turned out to lay a foundation for his artistic works and his political activities. Indeed, moving from the study of global trends toward that of socialist ideology and leftist literature, as he did in the early 1920s during his sojourn in Japan, Tian Han formed his multicultural and multi-ideological identities as a proletarian modernist, combining his thought as a socialist internationalist and as a feminist nationalist, as reflected both in his critical writings and in his plays and operas. Paradoxically, his fascination with Western writers gave him a greater appreciation of traditional Chinese operatic theater, with a view to using it to articulate the core of his leftist perspective. Such an appreciation proved crucial after the Anti-Rightist movement of 1957, when Tian Han's willingness to adapt material from a variety of cultural sources allowed him to continue producing plays despite the political difficulties involved. His two best operas—*Xie Yaohuan* and *Guan Hanqing*⁸—testify to the usefulness of such an aesthetic flexibility, and to the possibilities that such flexibility can offer in producing texts that speak, in both form and content, with multiple voices and in multiple registers. Indeed, Tian Han could not have achieved his ultimate status as an aesthetic traditionalist in his opera reform without having traveled afar from the various spaces of the "West," by which he remained constantly inspired without losing his critical edge. In the larger scheme of things, Tian Han's proletarian drama was shaped, somewhat ironically, by his encounter with modernism,⁹ which in turn provided a further impetus to continue to create an aesthetic theater in the forms of traditional opera and modern spoken drama. It is this distinctive inclusiveness of proletarian theater with Western modernism and traditional opera that set Tian Han apart from other cultural and literary leaders such as Lu Xun, whose satirical critiques of traditional opera predated Mao Zedong's call to eliminate feudal operas before and during the Cultural Revolution, when Lu Xun became a poster boy for cultural radicalism. It is high time to examine literary paradigms

⁸ For an insightful and informative study of Tian Han's *Guan Hanqing* and *Xie Yaohuan*, see Wagner (1990: 1–138), one of the most comprehensive studies of Tian Han in the English language. Wagner rightly points out that "with both pieces, Tian eventually returned to the mood if not the style of his plays of the late twenties" (98).

⁹ I thank Kirk A. Denton for helping me clarify this point.

different from that promoted by Lu Xun and the May Fourth mainstream, so that modern Chinese literature can be seen in all its diversity.

Gazing at the West from Japan: From Whitman's Liberalism to Tian Han's Global Proletarian Art

Like many of his generation of Chinese intellectuals who sought new ideas from afar, Tian Han studied and lived in Japan (from 1916 to 1922); he was following in the footsteps of Lu Xun, who had studied there from 1902 to 1909.¹⁰ As the Japanese Sinologist Ito Toramaru (1997) contends, Lu Xun's stay in Japan coincided with the adoption of new cultural identities among many Japanese intellectuals, because after victory in the Russo-Japanese war (1894–1895), they felt less threatened by colonization and more confident about Japan's identity as a strong nation. As a result, they were interested in pursuing friendships with artists and writers from other countries so that together they might attain to a universal form of art that could transcend national and state boundaries. Ito ascribes Lu Xun's famous abandonment of medicine for a career in literature not to some desire to improve the negative characteristics of his fellow Chinese, as Lu Xun himself describes in his "Preface to *Outcry*" (*Nahan zixu*), but to Lu Xun's having benefited from Japanese intellectuals' discovery of the "art-for-art's-sake" spirit (in the form of "universal art"), whereby they might transcend their national identity.¹¹ Ito holds that Lu Xun started a new trend of promoting literature and art as important vehicles for the conveyance of "civilization" or "modernization" from Japan. Since 1896, Chinese youth had traveled in large numbers to Japan to study technology, science, political science, and many other fields of knowledge, but not the arts. Lu Xun's experience in Japan, however, culminated in a passionate appreciation of the works of Byron, Nietzsche, and other nineteenth-century writers who represented the Western individualistic quest for "universal art" that went beyond all considerations of nation, state, ideology, and politics.

Arriving in Japan about ten years after Lu Xun, Tian Han seemed to

¹⁰ For scholarship on Tian Han's life and works in the Chinese language, see Dong Jian 1989 and 1996, Liu Ping 1998, Tian/Wu/Song 1998, Zhang Xianghua 1992, Zhou Ping 1999, and Zhang Yaojie 2003.

¹¹ Chinese- and English-language scholarship has extensively discussed the slide show incident. I introduce Ito Toramaru's comparison of Tian Han with Lu Xun to contextualize the importance of Tian Han in a similar search for a "universal art."

ardently follow Lu Xun's lead. He promoted another wave of cross-cultural exchanges between China and Japan by encouraging a mutual search for the universal spirit of literature and art, exemplified at the time by Western models. In this sense, Tian Han can be seen as an active Occidentalizer who fell in love with Western values at first sight, because they offered him what he felt was unavailable in his native culture. Rather than resist what might be called, in the present postcolonial debate, the West's "semicolonialist attempt to dominate the culture of the non-West," Tian Han, like many of his contemporaries, could not get enough of the West. He longed to turn what he had learned from it into a positive, powerful force against "evil societies," which, he felt, could be found in both China and the West.

Yet just as Lu Xun's initial years in Japan were burdened by his sense that he must deliver China from its humiliating tradition, so did Tian Han head for Japan with a sense of obligation about building a modern China able to command its destiny on an equal footing with foreign nations. Tian Han thus shared with his contemporaries a zeal for triumphing over the foreign power by taking from it what he believed to be its very best features, or, in other words, by "beating the devil at his own game." Moreover, coming from a poor family in Hunan and indebted to his mother and younger siblings for the sacrifices they made to provide him with an education, Tian Han was distressed by the hard-scrabble life of peasants, a life devoid of any opportunities. Sympathy for the have-nots of society propelled his search, on the one hand, for a solution among foreign countries and, on the other hand, for a remedy in traditional Chinese culture for his modern paradigm.

In his first two years in Japan, Tian Han was drawn to the study of economics and politics. In March 1917, at age nineteen, he published his first essay, analyzing the February Russian Revolution of 1917 (which had just forced Nicholas II's abdication) in terms of the increasing gap between rich and poor. Written in an elegant semiclassical language, Tian Han's essay rendered a detailed economic analysis of Russian society, surveying

the deep roots of injustice and inequality during the corrupt Romanov dynasty (1613–1917) to the sociopolitical consequences of Alexander II's emancipation of the serfs in 1861 (1917: 254–258). An erudite essay with an easy flow between West and East, Tian Han's work cites references ranging from Francis Bacon to Japanese news reports on the possible causes of the February Revolution and the dire poverty of the peasants. Most significant, Tian balances quotations from ancient Chinese thinkers, such as Guanzi and Mozi, with his own comments on such Western theories and practices as socialism, eliminating social inequality, and the population growth check proposed by the English economist Thomas Robert Malthus (1766–1834) (Tian Han 1917: 261). Dong Jian points out two important features of this essay: Tian Han's desire to combine the rich legacies of Chinese and Western thought, and his ability to compare the causes of the February Revolution with the failures of the Republican Revolution of 1911, therefore predicting for China another "grand social revolution" in the near future (Dong 1996: 81). I would push Dong's point further by arguing that these two features reflect an orientation that would characterize his entire career: he freely chose between Western thought and Chinese tradition in his pursuit of a proletarian theater most relevant to the common people.

In his first few years in Japan, therefore, Tian Han's interests in social and political history paralleled his interest in foreign literature and art, and he became concerned with the issues of "how to write" and "what to write," which, as Ito Toramaru (1997: 7–10) tells it, preoccupied his Japanese peers in the first part of the twentieth century. In a career move that recalls that of Lu Xun, Tian Han abandoned political science—which his uncle had wished him to pursue when he first brought him to Japan—to focus on literature, reaping in the process the full benefit of being an English major in Japan, where he read widely in English and Japanese on foreign literary histories and current intellectual thought. Tian's Japanese school records, however, indicate that he was a poor student who received failing grades because of his frequent absences. He preferred going to the theater and

to movie houses, so much so that his fiancée supposedly felt slighted, and, later, he became nearsighted from having watched innumerable movies in dim light (Tian Han 1958–1959: 162). He was also quickly becoming an eager and adept reader in Japanese and English, mining newspapers, journals, poetry, drama, fiction, literary essays, world affairs articles, and tomes on foreign cultures for inspiration.

Tian Han's encounter with Western thought led to the publication in 1919 of a lengthy essay on Russian literary history up to his contemporary times. In the essay, he covers such literary trends as classicism, sentimentalism, romanticism, realism, and symbolism (Tian Han 1919a). He avoids interjecting any of his political and ideological views on Russian literature, in favor of discussing the literature's rich traditions and diverse writers; this approach accords with his own openness to the best literary styles from abroad while exploring for a new literary culture in China. Most significant, as Zhang Yaojie has remarked, the essay provided Chinese readers with one of the first introductions—albeit an immature one—to the Russian October Revolution. Li Dazhao was doing the same at this juncture, but Tian Han's writing differs in that he treats fundamental ideas of "Russian Leninism, American liberalism and German socialist nationalism" as if they were similar political and intellectual programs (Zhang Yaojie 2003: 25).

In 1921, Tian Han became the first to translate and publish the entire text of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* into vernacular Chinese; this was followed, in 1923, by his translation of *Romeo and Juliet*. The long list of foreign writers who influenced Tian Han's literary thinking includes Marx, Lenin, Tolstoy, Goethe, Shelley, Hugo, Strindberg, Heinrich Heine, Hoffmann, Schiller, Ibsen, Chekhov, Dostoyevsky, Synge, Poe, Paul Verlaine, Baudelaire, Yeats, Turgenev, Gogol, and Stanislavsky. The list also consists of lesser-known artists such as Maurice Maeterlinck, the Flemish playwright who helped popularize the nineteenth-century French symbolist drama with his play *Blue Bird*, and Arthur Schnitzler, the Austrian impressionist playwright recognized as the first writer in the German-speaking world to introduce

sexual motifs on stage, and acclaimed for writing psychological drama that exposed bourgeois life in turn-of-the-century Vienna.

Reading Tian Han in light of the current debates in literary studies on postcolonialism, Orientalism, modernism, and feminist criticism shows him to be an extremely confident intellectual, passionately pursuing his idealistic vision of literature and art without fretting about colonialist and imperialist domination. Our present search for an equal power relationship between the dominated Rest and the domineering West would have been irrelevant to Tian Han, whose purpose in conveying Western literary texts and their international and humanitarian spirit to the Chinese people was to make them better able to build a modern, youthful China.

So moved was Tian Han by Walt Whitman's optimistic "Americanism" that he published a long essay in *Youthful China* (Shaonian Zhongguo) to celebrate the American poet's spirit of "democracy" on the occasion of his 100th birthday. Dong Jian (1996: 106–107) has correctly noted that Tian Han's endorsement of Whitman's "democratic spirit" (*minzhu zhuyi*) came only four months after the famous introduction of the Western concepts of democracy and science by Chen Duxiu in January 1919. Erudite as it is, however, Dong Jian's study neglects an important aspect of Tian Han's response to Whitman: Tian does not overlook the European colonialist stance against other nations and, by implication, the risk to China if it ignored the history of Western imperialism. Indeed, his essay begins with an overview of Western imperialist history in order to highlight the power of poetry to overcome that history. He cites the British writer Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), who had claimed that the British could lose their "Indian Empire" but could never survive without Shakespeare: its ever growing struggle against British rule guaranteed that it was only a matter of time before the British would lose India, but 350 years after his death, Shakespeare still eclipsed, and would always eclipse, all other dramatists and did credit to England.

Similarly, Tian maintained, Americans, as new colonialists competing

with the old, would never be without Whitman, even when America was on the verge of losing one of its colonies, the Philippines. The past glory and present victory of America were not to be measured in its natural resources and material wealth. Rather, Tian Han believed, America's short history was replete with "great and pure" historical figures whose spirit could benefit millions of people in the world. Although the British had dominated the old world thanks to their strong navy and their spirit of "liberalism" (*ziyou zhuyi*), the Americans could attribute their current leadership of the industrial world to "abundant capital" and a spirit of "democracy." Those "who delighted in the prospect of democratic idealism should therefore propose a toast to consecrate a democratic future! They cannot but be grateful to America, to those admirable Americans it has brought forth, and the song of freedom they have composed" (Tian Han 1919b: 292-293).

Tian Han seems to provide an answer to our current postcolonial debates by addressing the binary oppositions between the colonialist West and the oppressed East. Acknowledging an equivalence between what Edward Said depicts as the unequal power relationship between the West and East, as manifested in the West's political and cultural domination of the East, Tian Han nevertheless separates Shakespeare—and by extension, writers of other Western artistic traditions—from any association with colonialism, freeing him to support Western humanitarian, individualistic, and democratic values. That the British themselves claimed they could not survive without Shakespeare—but could exist without India—demonstrated that some British writers had already rejected their own colonialism. This would not negate that teaching Shakespeare was once regarded as an important part of the British colonial mission in making better colonial subjects, but Tian Han's focus on Thomas Carlyle demonstrates that it is possible to think about a universal-nationalist literature outside the "box" of colonialism.¹² The universal arts that appealed to peoples all over the world thus became for Tian Han the powerfully effective means for

¹² I thank Eric Hayot for providing me with this idea.

vanquishing authoritarian regimes in the West and in the East. In this way, Tian Han gave Chinese writers back the power of their voice and agency; or to be more precise, for him nothing stood in the way of the Chinese borrowing from the liberal Western canon.

Furthermore, Tian also seems to predict the postcolonial impasse that would come of lumping together many diverse cultures and histories under the single rubric of the "West." He teased out the crucial difference between the old British "West" and the new American democratic "West," signaling his approval of the latter's progressive legacies—as illustrated in Whitman's poetry—both in terms of their contributions to American politics (Whitman was bitterly against slavery) and to a balanced view of the relationship of art to political history. Tian Han's own writings demonstrate an equilibrium between an aesthetic interest in literary forms and his commitment to redressing social wrongs through literature and art, whether they stemmed from Western or Chinese traditions.

Tian Han admired Whitman not only as a poet but also as a patriotic poet, one who "looked upon the material growth of the United States as a blessing to all mankind" while being "acutely aware of his country's shortcomings," as Gay Wilson Allen has pointed out (1955: vii). Tian Han felt great sympathy for Whitman—who "was never complacent about present conditions," because "his ideal nation was always to be attained in the future" (Allen 1955: xv)—and he admired Whitman's quintessentially American spirit, because he was "a great commoner" (*yipin da baixing*), "a son of Adam," and an "American of the new world," living and writing without fear, whatever the traditions and obstacles facing him" (Tian Han 1919b: 295). He was a "new American," standing with his head held high and singing on behalf of "a youthful country," its "unplowed territories," its "free and equal race," and its "citizens without a history" (297–298). History would remember Whitman, Tian Han believed, for having predicted the First World War, to which America contributed two million soldiers and four or five billion dollars for the sake of humanity and democracy. His

prophecy of earlier decades in which he foresaw the coming fruition of his ideal of "Americanism" made his poetry popular during and after the war. His poetry, moreover, spread seeds of the American spirit among the peoples of the world, and these peoples celebrated Whitman as a "good gray poet," a "patriotic poet," and a "prophetic poet" (298-299). This interpretation was another way in which Whitman accorded with Tian Han's vision of the artist as one whose great political acumen is equaled only by the emotional intensity of his work.

At the end of his essay, Tian Han takes pains to send a message to his readers in China and Japan: wondering whether Whitman's "ship of democracy" would eventually sail to the other shore of East Asia, he insists that this ship take onboard "the gentlemen of the young China," who should in turn help steer the ship on its righteous course home, fortified with "good vision" and "good skills" (302). This would be a difficult task, Tian Han assured his readers, because as Whitman himself acknowledged, his American liberalism would come only at a high price, through "struggles, martyrs, heroes, epic wars," all intended to win justice for the peoples the world over, not just for Americans (303). Writing of a cosmopolitan America whose industrial power was reflected in huge hotels, "perfect constitution," and "strong ships," Whitman drew attention to a lamentable class conflict between rich and poor. For Whitman, the real "cosmopolitan" place would be one without slaves and masters, where "equality" could be experienced in everyday life, where one could depend on real friends, and where healthy fathers and mothers could have their own homes and neighborhood (304).

Tian Han also succeeded in "fusing" in the figure of Whitman, who was aided by the nineteenth-century American belief that God had procured a "Providential destiny" for the young Puritan nation (Allen 1955: xiv), the "cosmic poet and the nationalist poet." In concluding his essay, Tian calls upon his friends in "the young China" to start by learning from Whitman's "Americanism" how to nurture a "Chinese spirit" (Chung-Hwaism, or

¹³ Tian Han used both the romanized "Chung-Hwaism" and the Chinese term *zhongguo jingshen* (Chinese spirit).

Zhongguo jingshen)¹³ of "peace, equality, freedom and universal love"; second, he urges them to practice Whitman's spirit of harmony between the flesh and the soul and therefore to reject the "old China," which had separated the two; and third, he advises them to develop free-verse poetry, again in imitation of Whitman, in order to promote the growth of art and literature for the common people (311). To summarize, from his reading of Whitman, Tian Han drew a dynamic democratic spirit of Americanism combined with an anti-imperialist, anticapitalistic disposition aimed at fostering a proletarian modernism, which would bring about a modern, fulfilled life for peoples from all social classes, but especially for the poor and downtrodden.

Reframing "Modernisms": From the Poet's Laborer to Eden's Fruit and Salome's "Head"

I have so far examined Tian Han's interpretations of literary works growing out of the Russian and American revolutions. These two essays laid the foundation for his "proletarian modernism." In this second section, I focus on Tian Han's articulations of a "hard-core proletarian modernism" that emerged from his 1920 essays "The Poet and the Question of Labor" (Shiren yu laodong wenti, 1920a) and "After Tasting the Forbidden Fruit" (Chile zhiguo yihou de hua, 1920b) and that reached a more complex, mature stage with the essays he wrote from 1921 to 1923 (these latter essays covered a wide range of foreign writers from Charles Baudelaire to Oscar Wilde). Like similar writers of his time, Tian Han simultaneously processed a great variety of foreign materials from different historical periods, nations, and sometimes opposing cultural camps. He was so well versed in English and Japanese that he was able to digest a rich diet of foreign writings with amazing speed—and with a documented sloppiness.¹⁴ His writings of this period on subjects ranging from Russian authors and Whitman to a variety of modernist and classical writers present a historical and comprehensive, if disjointed, picture of what inspired Tian Han in his first encounters with

¹⁴ Dong Jian (1996: 82fn2) points out that Tian Han did not have a good memory and was often careless in his memoirs when recounting past events, such as the years and dates of his going abroad and returning home, of the writing and publication of his works, etc. Dong bases his biography of Tian Han on original publications and archives and at times corrects Tian Han's own mistakes.

foreign literary works.

What follows is a brief survey of the current scholarship on modernism and modern Chinese drama, which I believe will help situate Tian Han's proletarian modernism within its historical context. Generally speaking, the scholarship on the history of modern Chinese drama established the connection between the origin of modernist drama in China and the influences of Western artistic movements. For example, Chinese dramatists embraced Oscar Wilde's aesthetic drama, Maurice Maeterlinck's symbolist drama, and August Strindberg and Eugene O'Neill's expressionist dramas under the umbrella of "neoromanticism," because they demonstrated how to express "personal longings for both 'body' and 'soul hidden deeply inside oneself'" and do battle against an oppressive feudalistic society (Anon. 2005).

Critics, however, are divided as to what kind of modernism Chinese dramatists were exposed to in the 1910s and 1920s. Some have focused on symbolism as a representative trend among various modernist influences. In a specialized study on symbolism and modern Chinese literature, for instance, Wu Xiaodong (2000: 61) shows that Chen Duxiu, in a 1915 essay, was the first to introduce symbolism into the Chinese literary spectrum, via the dramas of Maeterlinck and Hoffmann—except that Chen Duxiu classified these symbolist works "wrongly" as "naturalist." Not until 1920, when Shen Yanbing published his essay "Symbolist Plays" (Biaoxian zhuyi de xiju) in *Short Story Monthly*, did symbolism finally arrive in China as a literary trend and movement (Wu 2000: 61). A few months later, Tian Han's 1920 essay "Neo-Romanticism and So On" (Xin langman zhuyi ji qita) nevertheless displayed the typical tendency of 1920s China to confuse symbolism with neoromanticism, without, however, missing the essence of symbolism: its use of intuition, suggestion, and symbol to "reveal what was hiding behind reality" (Wu 2000: 61).

The frequent use of the term "symbolism" in publications of the 1920s and its mistaken equation with "neoromanticism" should not be viewed

as mere instances of "literary misunderstandings," Wu believed; rather, they reflected Chinese intellectuals' conscientious explorations of the continuities and discontinuities between romanticism and neoromanticism, both of which were regarded as rebellions against the previous literary tradition (2000: 63). Symbolism thus "penetrated the very fabric of realism and romanticism" while forming "the special characteristics of modern Chinese literature." It culminated in the "shock waves" that accompanied the introduction of Baudelaire's "Satanism" (*emo zhuyi*) as the quintessential symbolist vehicle for pitting "a rebellious spirit" against Western mainstream traditions (Wu 2000: 62-64). As to literary creations of the time, Wu Xiaodong finds that Lu Xun's "The Dairy of a Madman" (*Kuangren riji*) and his poetry collection *Wild Grass* (*Yecao*) represent pioneering works of fiction and poetry that incorporate symbolist qualities; and that the dramas of Hong Shen, Tian Han, Tao Jingsun, and Chen Chuhuai explored symbolist techniques and, subsequently, led to such "symbolist" masterpieces as Cao Yu's *Peking Man* (*Beijing ren*) and *Thunderstorm* (*Leiyu*) (2000: 1). Wu (2000: 243) also cites Tian Han's earlier dramas *Violin and Rose* (*Fan'elin yu qiangwei*, 1920), *Holy Light* (*Lingguang*, 1921), *The Sound from an Old Pond* (*Gutan de shengyin*, 1928), and *Returning from the South* as embodying symbolist techniques in theater from the 1920s to the mid-1930s.

Whereas Wu regards symbolism and/or "neoromanticism" as new literary trends following in a natural progression from naturalism and realism, Dong Jian (1996: 119) views "neoromanticism" as another term for "modernism," a category that included symbolism and expressionism. Among the diverse strands of foreign literary influences, Tian Han tasted "three forbidden fruits": the American democratic spirit, Russian socialism, and Western romanticism and neoromanticism (Dong 1996: 106-122). The American democratic spirit inspired him with a new vision of individualism, Russian socialism instilled a passionate belief in "class struggle" on behalf of the oppressed proletariat, and modernism, Dong Jian argues, let him

perceive a world that was "more sincere" and "more real" than that of the romanticists, and thus better for exploring "the realm of the spiritual" (*ling de shijie*) (1996: 119–122). Dong Jian stops short of coining the phrase "proletarian modernism" to describe Tian Han's aesthetics, but, in my view, his explorations of Tian Han's liberalism, proletarianism, and modernism hints at this possible reading. However, Dong does not examine the crucial link that Tian Han forged between proletarian literature and feminist theories, a link that should be considered the centerpiece of Tian Han's proletarian modernism, as I demonstrate later.

Although Dong Jian focuses on Tian's appropriation of foreign concepts in the fight against the feudalist status quo in China, Zhang Yaojie's provocative—and yet lopsided—critique of Tian Han's literary career foregrounds the damaging result of Tian's chaotic and blind acceptance of foreign ideas, which he unfortunately combined with a feudalist loyalty to his Chinese "heavenly king" (*zhongjun*). To support his argument, Zhang first points to "a deadly flaw" (*zhiming shang*) in several generations of Chinese students who had studied in Japan, from Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Zhang Taiyan, Chen Duxiu, and Lu Xun to Guo Moruo, Tian Han, Cheng Fangwu, Hu Feng, and Zhou Yang, among others. Instead of undertaking "serious studies" such as law, economics, natural sciences, and social sciences in Japan—a country whose successful modernization derived from its comprehensive importations of advanced culture, science, technology, and social systems from the West—these overseas Chinese students indulged in imagining themselves in the glorious roles of patriots, revolutionaries, and saviors of a "weak Chinese nation" in the course of their search for "the absolute truth" (Zhang Yaojie 2003: 43). Consequently, they were destined to become entangled in endless political struggles, which eventually found their cruelest expression in the Cultural Revolution, when Tian Han himself became a victim of "his own creation."

In their encounter with foreign thought, Chinese intellectuals reverted, despite their iconoclasm, to the neo-Confucianist doctrine of "revering

heavenly principle so as to suppress individual desires" (*cun tianli mie ren yu*), and they submitted themselves to the traditional concept "those who work with their minds rule others" (*lao xin zhe zhi ren*) (Zhang Yaojie 2003: 43). In his essays on Whitman and the essays "The Poet and the Question of Labor" and "Neo-Romanticism and So on," for instance, Tian Han repeatedly emphasizes the concept of "seeking harmony between the soul and the flesh" (*ling rou tiaohé guān*). Even though Tian Han was the first Chinese artist to promote the concept of "class struggle" in modern China, Zhang Yaojie still believes that from its very beginning, Tian's concept expressed nothing short of a religious passion for establishing a "holy world" (*sheng yu*) in which the soul and the flesh would become one (2003: 46–48). Therefore, Tian Han's adoption of Baudelaire's "rebellious spirit" in the course of his quest for an exalted realm of existence led to his turning out more than a hundred plays, films, and refurbished operas in which his notions of national salvation, patriotic warfare, and endless political campaigns caused him to sacrifice the fate of "insignificant women" for the sake of preserving the patriarchal order (Zhang Yaojie 2003: 87). No one in the history of world literature, Zhang argues, can match Tian Han's productivity, nor the passion and persistence he displayed in advancing a single religious belief with a fervor that actually evoked the subject he was depicting.

Zhang Yaojie's sweeping accusations of Tian Han's "deadly flaw" reduce the latter's complex, rich legacy to that of a simple-minded religious crusader. Most damaging, Zhang condenses the persistent, complicated efforts of several generations of Chinese intellectuals to modernize their historical and cultural circumstances to the solitary triumph of neo-Confucianism. A debate with Zhang about his interpretation of modern literary and cultural history in China cannot be undertaken here; suffice it to say that Zhang's treatise reflects an approval of the Western economic system Tian Han and his contemporaries had attempted to resist. Zhang's faulting Tian Han and his peers for having failed to explore the science and

technology of "advanced" Western modernity seems to echo the post-Mao modernization program, in which economic development covered up the lack of a fundamental reform for the more democratic political system that Tian Han had so championed in 1920. The value of Tian Han's pro-socialist and pro-proletarian stance deserves special recognition in a twenty-first century in which globalization, colonization, and world economic growth partially based on exploitation of cheap Chinese labor have once again reduced whatever "equal opportunities" Chinese subalterns might have had to gain their share of material wealth. Yet it is not my intention to dismiss Zhang's treatise for having unwittingly presented an Orientalist view of the Chinese intellectual landscape. In keeping with my argument for Chinese Occidentalism (Chen 1995), in which Chinese intellectuals explore and make use of whatever aspect of the "West" that might best articulate their movements against the official policies at home, I interpret Zhang's examination of Tian Han's legacy as his own crying out for a more critical appraisal of the Chinese intellectual who might effectively break away from the official culture.

Zhang Yaojie's treatise (as well as that of Dong Jian) also fails to recognize the crucial link between Tian Han's response to feminism and his vision of the rebellious literature of proletarian socialism and modernism. From the start of his career, Tian Han associated the question of labor with the position of the poet. In "The Poet and the Question of Labor" (1920a), he views the poet and the laborer as creating, in various periods of history, two equally essential modes of wealth: the spiritual and the material. Focusing in particular on the British poet Edith Nesbit (1856–1924) and her 1908 poetry collection, *Ballads and Lyrics of a Socialist*, he maintains that an ingenious poet should exalt the pleasure and the nobility of work and, above all, expose the oppression of laborers in a capitalist society. Moreover, a great poet should not write just about the life and emotions of manual laborers but also about the life and emotions of intellectuals—and women intellectuals for that matter—who labor day and night to feed their hungry

¹⁵ Nesbit's struggle against poverty, a theme in her poetry, perhaps touched Tian Han. The youngest of six children of a prosperous and respected man, Nesbit took up writing to earn a living at age twenty-two after her husband, Hubert Bland, "succumbed to smallpox, and recovered from the danger of death only to learn that his [business] partner had defrauded him in his absence and that he was left penniless with a newly-born son added to the burden of his responsibilities" (Moore 1967: 94). Similarly, thanks to economic pressures, Tian Han had to leave Japan in 1922; he gave up his dream tour to the artistic world of Paris and arrived in Shanghai to earn a living as an editor and writer to support his wife and their infant son. The death of his wife in 1923, a talented woman with literary ambitions, further drove home the sacrifice of women in the face of poverty.

babies, as can be seen in Nesbit's poem "The Sick Journalist."¹⁵ A mature and healthy civilization, therefore, should provide a "holy world" where soul and flesh coalesce, and where intellectual workers such as journalists, painters, thinkers, and literary writers can be appreciated and rewarded (Tian Han 1920a: 110).

Tian Han's brief mention of a close association between work, the poet, and women in "The Poet and the Question of Labor" grew into a major discussion in his ensuing essay on Christianity and feminism, "After Tasting the Forbidden Fruit" (1920b). In a careful reading of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* and the works of Ellen Key and other feminist pioneers, Tian Han portrays Eve as a feminist rebel against God's edict that women be forbidden to acquire knowledge and power. Comparing Eve with Ibsen's Nora in *A Doll's House*, Tian Han holds that Nora became Eve's "daughter" once she left her husband in her revolt against a male-dominated society. Published three years before Lu Xun's "What Happened to Nora after She Left Home," Tian Han goes further than Lu Xun in promoting the importance of economic rights and opportunities for women. After describing the bleak reality of exploited female workers in industrialized Japan, America, and Britain, Tian Han alleges that in the modern capitalist world, men and women of the proletarian class were equally ill used.

As a newly minted internationalist crusader for the proletarian class and for women, Tian Han believed that Chinese intellectuals were actually in a better position than their foreign peers to promote women's liberation. Rather than engage in separate battles against capitalists and patriarchs, Chinese intellectuals could make common cause with the proletarian class and the female members therein to bring about true equality between all social classes and between men and women. Already in 1920, Tian Han touched upon the essential issue of class politics in his version of feminist criticism, which, until a few years ago in the West and especially in America, had paid much more attention to the issues of gender and race than to the issues of class and economic status.

The women Tian Han created in his plays in the early 1920s prove that he clearly benefited from his balance of feminist and proletarian perspectives. Liu Cui, a strong-willed folksinger in *Violin and Rose*, sacrifices her own artistic dream in order to finance her lover to study music in Paris so that he could write "great music" for the "poor workers" to celebrate the founding of a "youthful China." Whereas *Violin and Rose* defines a performer's dream as expressing the sorrows of the oppressed peoples, *The Devil of the Piano* (Xueyaluo zhi gui, 1922) depicts three music-loving sisters and their awakening to the class differences between those who can afford a piano and those who sweat to produce the profits that enabled a rich family to purchase it. The feminist advocate Zhujun, the elder daughter of a capitalist, visits female workers in a textile factory, where she delivers lectures on promoting women's right to vote, only to realize that her feminist politics does not interest women who labored twelve-hour days in a suffocating and deafening environment, with no opportunity for education or medical care. Zhujun therefore persuades her two sisters to return the piano their father purchased as the result of exploiting workers and give up their bourgeois lifestyle. By the end of the play, Zhujun plans to rent a room in the working-class area and join women workers as "comrades" in their common struggle to fight for the happiness of a "new rising social class"—that of the proletariat (Tian Han 1922a: 140–141). Although she may sound naïve, an idealist Zhujun at least illustrates Tian Han's own desire to integrate with the subalterns and to write on their behalf in his own search for a Chinese theater popular among the masses.

Whereas *Violin and Rose* and *The Devil of the Piano* stage artistic and educated women who are increasingly aware of class differences and who seek to eliminate them, Tian Han's two others plays of the same period foreground poor workers and peasants as victims of an unequal society. *Before Lunch* (Wufan zhi qian, 1922), for example, presents another set of three sisters in a poverty-stricken worker's family. After the father "died for the worthy cause of the proletariat," the three sisters try to care for their ill

mother with their meager wages from a textile factory. When the second sister (along with her lover, a leader of the workers' movement) dies in a protest for higher wages, the elder sister awakens to the hypocrisy of the Christian church she adhered to. The church failed to protect her; worse still, the lady in charge of the church even demanded that the elder sister marry her son at the time of the family crisis. The play ends with the elder sister's accusing God of having taken away their father and torn the sisters apart, and of offering no help for their mother's illness. As the curtains close, the two surviving sisters dash out of the house for revenge, leaving behind a wailing mother, heartbroken by her daughters' suffering. In Tian Han's own account (1932), a Hunan warlord's murder of two leaders in a textile factory inspired him to write the play. The second sister's lover was based on a real-life leader, a friend of Tian Han. The conflict between the revolutionary second sister and the religious elder sister also reflects Tian's interest in the national debate between the pro- and antireligious groups that was taking place at that time in the pages of newspapers and magazines. The three nameless sisters also came from his personal contact with a family named Zhang from the suburbs of Changsha, where he first got to know several "modern women workers" in his childhood (Tian Han 1932: 454). Tian Han's pursuit of a proletarian modernism came both from his exposure to the intellectual movements abroad and at home and from his lived experience.

Although the characterizations in *Before Lunch* are naïve and one-dimensional, Tian Han's interests in class and gender politics began to mature with the play *The Night a Tiger Was Captured* (Huo hu zhi ye, 1922–1923), one of his most representative works of the period before 1930.¹⁶ Focusing on the familiar May Fourth denunciation of arranged marriages, the play stages one Lian Gu from a well-to-do family, who rejects her parents' choice of husband from a wealthy family. On the night when a tiger is captured, however, the victim injured by the tiger turns out to be a Huang Dasha, a poverty-stricken man passionately in love with Lian Gu.

¹⁶ For the Chinese text, see Tian Han 1922–1923. For an English translation, see Tian Han, *The Night a Tiger Was Captured*, tr. and intro., Randy Barbara Kaplan, *Asian Theatre Journal* 2, no. 1 (1994):1–34.

Thrust into the middle of a heated fight between the stubborn parents and a heart-broken Lian Gu, Huang Dasha commits suicide to end his misery. In this play, which is more nuanced than the two others just discussed, the passionate lovers reach out for each other despite, or because of, their class barrier.¹⁷ Despite Tian Han's repeated insistence after "turning left" that he had intended in the play to focus on the suffering of poor people, Dong Jian (1996: 208–209) points to the play's multifaceted style: although no one can deny the class conflict theme, *The Night a Tiger Was Captured* also expresses the "poetic sadness" of Huang Dasha at the threshold between life and death that is typical of the "neoromantic," or modernist, sentiments of Tian Han's early Southern Drama Society period. Tian Han, of course, dropped his modernist pursuit in his later plays but continued his efforts to dramatize gender and class politics, as seen in the film script for *Three Modern Women* (San ge moding nüxing, 1932), and the film and drama versions of *The Journey of Three Beautiful Women* (Li ren xing, 1946),¹⁸ which are beyond the scope of this study of Tian's intellectual journey in the 1920s. Nevertheless, Tian retained a poetic eloquence in his later plays, especially in his traditional operas; their singing passages and stage dialogue illustrated his erudition in classical poetry and his talents and passion as a poet in both modern and classical styles. No other dramatist in modern China has written as many—and as well-crafted—poems as Tian Han did.

It is in the context of Tian Han's explorations of feminist ideas, both in theory and in practice, that we can situate his next essay, published in 1921 on the occasion of Baudelaire's 100th birthday. Even though some Western and Japanese critics thought Baudelaire was morbid and decadent, his brand of modernism appealed to Tian Han because it revealed a new way of conceiving literature and art. Two years after discovering Whitman's "commoner's approach," Tian Han says in this essay that he believes he was leaning toward an "elitist approach" to literature, as a result of his recent studies of the works of Baudelaire, Poe, Paul Verlaine, and Oscar

¹⁷ Received as one of the best plays of the May Fourth period, the China Youth Art Theater performed *The Night a Tiger Was Captured* in 1980 to critical acclaim to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the left-wing literary movement and to celebrate the dramatic life of Tian Han after his post-Mao rehabilitation.

¹⁸ The years of Tian Han's two films here refer to the years in which their scripts were written, not the dates of their film release. Likewise, throughout this study, dates for plays refer to when they were written, not when they were first published.

Wilde; he was also aided in this development by contemporary Japanese scholars who taught him to view Western modernist writers in the light of a new vision of art that was true to the spirit of humanity. And the art-for-art's-sake approach, which was indeed "a precious spirit of rebellion" brought to bear against the status quo, lay at the very center of Baudelaire's symbolist poetry. Tian Han's own sense of Baudelaire in 1921, as informed by Japanese scholarship, coincided with that of Mary Anne Caws, who in 1994 wrote of Baudelaire that he had an "exacerbated personality whose creative imagination tended toward the idea of art for art's sake but whose politics often drew him the other way, toward the democratic art and life, against the sterility of the nonuseful. Even when he leaned toward the nonutility of art, he still was to believe that *good* art had always a moral" (1994: 75). Caws's comment on Baudelaire also pinpoints a quintessential feature of Tian Han's artistic work: the realization of a vision of theater that combined the best elements in artistic and democratic spirits, a theater that could be seen as neither purely "art for art's sake" nor exclusively progressive.

Ironically, when Tian Han, in the 1930 "Our Self-Criticism," criticized his "erroneous" borrowing of the West's modernist decadent arts, he also turned his back on his rereading of Baudelaire, which had emphasized the latter's political orientation, especially its iconoclastic stance against tradition. Most significantly, Tian Han negated his own plays of the early 1920s (when he paid attention to class and gender politics, as already discussed) by claiming that his earlier attempt at combining art and social concerns, expressed in "The Poet and the Question of Labor," failed in the sentimental plays of his Southern Drama Society days because the bourgeois influence had turned him away from depicting the common people (1930a: 185). During various political movements in the PRC period, Tian Han was to repeatedly "confess" to his 1920s modernist mistakes. In all his dramatic writings, however, he coupled his mission to probe social injustice with a high artistic standard. This persistent purpose is evident

in his best play, *Guan Hanqing*. Written in 1958, *Guan Hanqing* revealed a "great leap forward" in Tian Han's artistic achievements, despite the prevailing ideological constraints and the fact that he had not written a play since 1948.¹⁹ Western modernism continued to play an important role in Tian Han's aesthetics, even after Maoist literary criticism had rejected Tian's writing for its "unhealthy" Western influences.

Returning to the early 1920s, I believe that a thorough study of Tian Han's proletarian modernism must examine his debt to the artistic vision of Oscar Wilde. For Tian Han, Wilde's modernist play *Salome* (Shalemei, 1929) was significant not only for its portrayal of a rebel, but for the fact that the rebel is a woman. In contrast to the "split personality" proposed by George Woodcock in his classic 1949 reading of Wilde's *Salome* character as symbolizing the paradoxes of paganism/Christianity, aesthetic clown/creative critic, social rebel/social snob, and playboy/prophet (Kohl 1989: 4, 6), Tian Han nevertheless singles out Wilde's rebellious spirit, a scandalous spirit that spurred the aristocratic ruling class to ban the production of *Salome* in London, citing its provocative message "against Christianity" (1929a: 21). That same rebellious spirit is evident in Wilde's intent to convert to French citizenship when the play was staged in Paris (Tian Han 1929a: 21).

Fully aware of the elitist strain in *Salome*, however, Tian Han attempted to disarm the predictable criticism that his staging an art-for-art's-sake play would elicit by declaring, in his published announcement of *Salome*'s 1929 premiere in Shanghai, that his Southern Drama Society had taken seriously the advice of Mr. Tao Xingzhi to "go down to the masses" (*dao minjian qu*). In the current theater season, therefore, he would dedicate his new play, *Returning to the South* (Nangui, 1929), to Mr. Tao in honor of his work in rural China; by the same token, he would dedicate his *Dancing of Fire* (Huo zhi tiaowu, 1929) to Mr. Chen Dabai, to address Chen's anxieties about the difficulties faced by urban laborers (1929a: 20–21). By his own account, however, Tian Han had originally wanted to write *Dancing of Fire* as a one-act comedy to mock a jealous wife who suspects her husband of having an

¹⁹ Tian Han's last spoken drama before the PRC period was *The Story of Korea* (Chaoxian fengyun, written in 1948). He intended this play to be the first of a trilogy depicting the Sino-Japanese war of 1894–1895 over Korea. He never finished the trilogy, but his accomplishments in history plays, especially in revolutionary history plays such as those on Sun Yat-sen and other episodes of the Republican revolution, testify to his commitment to pursuing a modern theater reflective of its complex history and social reality.

affair because of his failure to bring home his wages, which he might have been spending on a mistress. The husband—who had just lost his job as a dock porter in Shanghai—accidentally knocks an oil lamp off a table during a fight with his wife, thereby burning down their hut, leaving both of them devastated. However, probing deeper into the roots of their problem, which is unemployment, Tian Han later revised the play into a three-act “social tragedy” (*shehui beiju*) (1930b: 431–432). Although Tian Han used his *Dancing of Fire* as a shield against Chen Dabai’s potential protest against his art-for-art’s tendency in staging *Salome*, it is also clear from his own account that a newspaper report of what originally seemed material for a “comedy of errors” triggered Tian’s desires to write *Dancing of Fire*, which was later given a more political twist, like *Salome*’s transformation from a mostly artistic theatrical event to a partially ideological statement.

Subsequently, in his response to Liang Shiqiu’s plea that he desist from staging *Salome*, which Liang considered a worthless piece of theater that evoked nothing but “fleshy desires,” Tian Han felt compelled to explain that he wanted very much to plant a “flower of evil” in the “bleak desert of Chinese theater” to wake up the sleeping audience and introduce a great artistic play that did not lack for social significance (1929b: 63–64). The many “misinterpretations” of Shakespeare’s plays and Goethe’s *Faust* are tokens of their greatness; the Southern Drama Society therefore felt “honored to devote itself to staging *Salome*” even though it had already been misinterpreted, Tian implies, by critics and fellow dramatists (Tian Han 1929b: 68, 71). Tian Han also needed to explain, repeatedly, that he felt lucky to have discovered Yu Shan and Chen Ningjiu, two actors perfect for the roles of *Salome* and John, respectively, without whom he would not have undertaken to translate and stage the play in the first place. The red, lustful lips of Yu Shan suggested to him a powerful “red signal” (*hongse xinhao*) that he associated with *Salome*’s passion for personal fulfillment, symbolized by her triumphant holding of John’s decapitated head in her hands at the end of the play (Tian Han 1930a: 174–175). There is nothing

that is "anti-epoch" (*fan shidai*) or "antimasses" (*bu dazhong*) in this scene, Tian claimed; on the contrary, the Young Syrian's love for Salome, Salome's love for John, and John's love for God represent a daring spirit of passion in defiance of death that "all the masses in love of freedom and equality" should imitate (1930a: 175-176). This "red signal" witnessed numerous transformations in Tian Han's depictions of rebellious and courageous women in his other plays, most noticeably, in his adaptation of *Carmen* (Kamen, 1930).

Seen in this light, Tian Han's own take on Wilde's *Salome* adds another chapter to what Helen Grace Zagona (1960: 21) terms the history of "the diverse metamorphoses" in the legend of Salome "in the light of their creators' individual temperaments and esthetics" in the Western artistic traditions. As Zagona summarizes, whereas the Christian era at times depicted Salome as an evil temptress, the Renaissance (e.g., Flemish, Italian, and German paintings) transformed this seductive dancer into "an ideal subject for depicting the beauty of the human form" with oriental allure "in dignified postures" (21). It was not until the nineteenth century, however, "with the publication of Heine's *Atta Troll*, that the figure of Salome was to regain her prominence in the world of art." The nineteenth century postromantic French writers found in Salome "a symbol of a philosophy of beauty entirely devoid of moral significance." From Heine to Wilde, Zagona assures us, "art was all that she was: coldly beautiful, cruel, unrelenting, existing gratuitously, with no need for justification, with no purpose but to be admired" (22). Tian Han obviously inherited and carried on many of the foregoing depictions of the historical significance of Salome, granting her, however, another urgency to express the flowing individuality of Chinese artists as well as their desires to remain committed to the collective course to "go down to the people."

Thus, Tian Han's Occidentalist writings helped him overcome the conventional divides between the aesthetic and political orientations of art, between the female and the male perspectives, between the demands

of the elite and the popular, between the modern and the traditional, and between the East and the West. In this sense, he creatively used foreign others in the service of the artistic and political agenda that were pertinent to his own historical time. In his theoretical writings and in his dramatic works, he helped construct the Maoist principle that literature and art should depict the life, deeds, and struggles of the proletariat. Tian was more than merely a victim of Maoist persecution, as he has sometimes been represented. His Occidentalism paradoxically and problematically became an integral part of the Maoist critiques against Western imperialism and the post-Maoist resurrection of Western capitalism at a historical juncture when globalization and modernization came to dominate much of the social, economic, and cultural spheres of contemporary China. Although in the treacherous PRC theater milieu Tian Han wrote only three spoken dramas (*Guan Hanqing*, *The Song of the Shisanling Reservoir* [Shisanling shuiku changxiang qu, 1958], and *Princess Wencheng* [Wen Cheng gongzu, 1959–1960]), his tremendous achievements in proletarian theater up to 1949 built a solid foundation for the later socialist stage. Tian's legacy can be found not only in themes, characterizations, and theater styles, but also in his leadership in literature and art after 1949, at least until 1966. My point here is that Tian Han's borrowing from Western modernist art, when combined with his persistent search for a proletarian theater, ironically fed into the Maoist practices of literature and art. In this we can see both the power and the limitations of Tian Han's legacy.

Recovering the "Traditional": A Foundation for Tian Han's Proletarian Theater

Before his interactions with foreign texts and concepts in the formation of his proletarian modernist theater, where did Tian Han stand in terms of his critical positions and artistic experiments? Before Whitman, Wilde, Milton, and the countless other foreign writers that inspired him, were any indigenous influences at work in the formation of his aesthetic views?

In this section, I look at the influence of traditional Chinese opera on Tian Han's aesthetic. Chinese opera, opposed by May Fourth iconoclasts as the essence of an outworn and unnatural art form, would ironically become the inspiration for some Western writers in their own creation of Western modernism. Unlike most of his contemporaries, such as Lu Xun, Tian Han had a much more positive assessment of the operatic traditions. Indeed, Tian Han expressed a passion for the artistic forms of the opera and spent the rest of his life reforming it for the modern era.²⁰ These diverse views of Chinese opera help us understand the complex relationship between traditions and modernities. We can learn much from Tian Han's contribution to the formation of the proletarian theater, which led to the extreme form of the proletarian model revolutionary theater during the Cultural Revolution. Although Tian's proletarian modernism and the Cultural Revolution model theater are quite apart in their theories and expressions, an inquiry into Tian Han's early vision of progressive opera will help us understand the complexity and legacy of Tian Han theater and its impact in the political history of contemporary China. By addressing these issues, I illustrate that Tian Han's early theoretical explorations into Western models and theatrical experiments cannot be fully appreciated without mapping out his operatic reforms, which laid the foundation for his borrowings of proletarian modernist drama from the West.

Prior to his direct exposure to socialist and Marxist thought after he went to Japan in 1916 and before he wrote *Violin and Rose* (his first spoken drama script) in 1920, Tian Han wrote two innovative operas, entitled *New Story of Educating Her Son* (Xin jiao zi, 1913), and *New Story of The Peach Blossom Fan* (Xin taohua shan, 1915), which reflect his earliest critical positions on gender, class, and national identities. Contrary to Tian Han's 1930 "self-criticism," I argue that Tian Han's journey from Chinese tradition to Western modernism paralleled a similar trajectory in the West, where Yeats's interest in Japanese Kabuki and Ezra Pound's "discovery" of classical Chinese poetry infused their own visions of modernist art with

²⁰ From 1928 to 1963, Tian wrote more than 100 reviews, essays, prefaces, and memoirs related to various forms of Chinese opera (Tian Han 2000: vol. 17). For a complete collection of his critical works on spoken drama, see Tian Han 2000: vols. 15 and 16.

fresh inspiration. Bertolt Brecht's borrowing from Mei Lanfang's expressive theater to fashion his own modernist theater (his "alienation effect") was to be followed by Tian Han's belated recognition of Mei Lanfang's influence on Western modernist theater and the future development of Chinese operatic reform (a point I discuss later). Indeed, the legacy of Tian Han cannot be understood without seeing it as having sprung from a three-pronged approach: proletarian literary movements, modernist aesthetics, and traditional Chinese opera.

✓ In the larger context of twentieth-century opera reform, Tian Han's initial efforts at writing reformed opera in the early 1910s paved the way for his later successes, such as the 1927 adaptation of Ouyang Yuqian's spoken drama of *Pan Jinlian* into an opera by his Southern Drama Society, which had staged some of his most creative "modernist" plays (Tian Han 1930a: 120). It also led to the popular success of his productions of "new Peking opera" (*xin pingju*), such as *Song of Fishermen in Jiangnan* (Jiangnan yuge, 1938), which depicts fishermen's battles against the Jurchens in the Southern Song dynasty and sought to encourage his contemporary audiences to defend "the grand city of Wuhan" against Japanese invaders (Tian 1939a: 525). Similarly, his critically acclaimed *xin pingju* entitled *New Story of Heroic Sons and Daughters* (Xin ernü yingxiong zhuan, 1939) set an old Ming dynasty story of national salvation in contemporary times; in the opera, Tian Han calls on his countrymen to join "the nationalist war against stubborn foreigner invaders to rebuild a unified China," as the ending theme song puts it (1939b: 460). Interestingly, Tian's concluding song in this new opera recalls the lyrical style of his "March of the Volunteer Army," with an identical passion to arouse the patriotic spirit of the masses. From his short operas of the 1910s to his elaborate *New Story of Heroic Sons and Daughters*—crafted in fifty-five acts and three series (*ji*)—these efforts represent a miniature history of opera reform in the Republican period.

Unfortunately, however, these efforts did not get even a passing reference in Mao Zedong's much-cited letter of January 9, 1944, in which

he congratulated Yan'an Beijing opera troupes (Yan'an pingju yuan) for having pioneered a "new beginning" of "old opera reform" "in the footsteps of Guo Moruo, who had done similar wonders to the reformed historical drama."²¹ Mao believed that this Yan'an opera performance had single-handedly "reversed" the history of the old opera occupied by aristocratic "masters, mistresses, and misses" into a new chapter with "history-making people on center stage." Such a sweeping verdict erased previous efforts in opera reform, such as that of Tian Han and Mei Lanfang, whose new operas were an important part of the wartime theater's anti-Japanese propaganda.²² Most significant, Mao's letter was cited often during the Cultural Revolution as a way to buttress the campaign against traditional opera, with which Tian Han was closely associated because of his operatic reforms of the 1950s and early 1960s, leading to Cultural Revolution "opera revolution" (*jingju geming*).²³ Tian Han was ironically accused of having sabotaged the "opera revolution" during the Cultural Revolution, a story I return to at the end of this essay. To understand the complex trajectory of opera reform in modern China, I argue, one has to revisit Tian Han's precocious achievement of the 1910s when he was already melding his personal sentiments with Chinese nationalism, anticolonialism, anti-imperialism, and socialist utopianism, as well as with formalistic innovations, the very innovations claimed during the Cultural Revolution to have been a product of the Maoist model theater alone.

Tian Han is one of the earliest to have merged traditional operatic form with the thematic concerns of his own historical time. As a devotee of shadow plays, puppet theater, and Hunan operas (Xiangju and Huaguxi), Tian Han grew up appreciating the diverse traditions of folk and local operas (Tian Han 1959: 466). Through family connections, Tian got to know and befriend a famous Hunan opera star, Chen Shaoyi, known for the range, depth, and clarity of his singing voice. Later, Tian Han would recall how the theatrical performance of Chen Shaoyi, and others like him, left a deep impression on his childhood world of dramatic play (Dong

²¹ Mao Zedong's letter was originally addressed to Yang Shaoxuan and Qi Yanming, the playwrights and directors of *Bishang Liangshan* (Forced to go up to the Liang Mountains), which was performed by the CCP Central Committee Party Training School Club (Zhonggong Zhongyang Dangxiao Julebu). When it was first published in *People's Daily* on May 25, 1967 to promote proletarian literature by eliminating old opera with feudalist and reactionary content, the title was changed to "A Letter to Yan'an Beijing Opera Troupes," and the reference to Guo Moruo was deleted because Guo was then out of political favor. The letter was republished in *People's Daily* on May 23, 1982, with the original title, "A Letter to Yang Shaoxuan and Qi Yanming," and collected in *Mao Zedong shuxin xuan* (A Collection of Mao Zedong's letters) (Beijing, Renmin wenxue, 1983).

²² The two most representative operas of Mei Lanfang during the war period are *Kang Jin bing* (Resisting the Jurchens) and *Sheng si hen* (Hatred in life and death) (Liu Yanjun 1996: 295).

²³ "Opera revolution" was a term often used in official media during the Cultural Revolution to refer to the model revolutionary theater (*geming yangbanxi*).

1996: 46–47; Liu Ping 1998: 33). In 1911, Chen Shaoyi performed the role of a revolutionary army commander in a contemporary Hunan opera entitled *Fighting Jingzhou to the Last Drop of Blood* (Xue zhan Jingzhou) to celebrate the military victory over Yuan Shikai's troops. From Chen's work, Tian Han learned much about a mass audience's warm response to an actor's passionate performance in contemporary opera (Tian Han 1942: 438–439; Dong 1996: 57). Chen subsequently participated in the operatic artists' resistance against Japanese invaders that Tian Han led, and he died while a conscript in the war.

Nationalism and patriotism thus occupied early on a central place in Tian Han's dramatic career. He also benefited from the reforms Liang Qichao brought to operatic theater in his effort to advance the republican revolutionary cause. I have previously discussed Liang Qichao's advocacy of operatic theater reform (*xiqu gailiang*) and his call for artists to enact real-life dramas based on history "in timely, magnificent fashion," a phrase that was used later to characterize both the Cultural Revolution and the theatrical revolution that accompanied it (Chen 2002: 93). In terms of themes and concerns, the reformed opera of Liang Qichao's generation had at least five of the same characteristics as the revolutionary model theater of the Cultural Revolution. This connection can be pushed further by demonstrating the ways that Tian Han served as a crucial link between Liang Qichao's early reforms opera and the reforms in the PRC on the eve of the Cultural Revolution.

Tian Han looked to Liang Qichao for more than the ways to reform opera. After entering Xuansheng School in Changsha in 1909, Tian Han and his classmates frequently read Liang Qichao's journal *New Citizen* (Xinmin congbao), which had exerted a powerful influence on the young readers of Hunan (Tian Han 1942: 434; Liu Ping 1998: 17). Having read Liang Qichao's *chuanqi* text of *The Romance of New Rome* (Xin Luoma chuanqi) during his middle school years in Changsha, Tian imitated Liang's reformed opera in his own script, as his play *New Story of Peach Blossom*

Fan reveals.²⁴ In fact, in his first opera script, written when he was fifteen, Tian Han answered Liang's call to write real-life dramas based on historical events. In *New Story of Educating Her Son*, Tian Han rewrote the old opera *Sanniang Educating Her Son* (*Sanniang jiaozi*), which had been popular among illiterate rural women. In the original, a widowed Sanniang promises her late husband that she will raise her son to attain a prestigious social position. On learning that her son is refusing to take his studies seriously, she narrates her family story with the object of motivating him to become a talented scholar. Tian Han switches the setting to the contemporary time of the Republican revolution and its struggle against the die-hards of the Qing court in Hunan. In Tian's plot, a widowed Sanniang educates her son about his father's heroic deeds in the revolutionary war to encourage him to realize his father's dream of unifying China.

The opera begins with Sanniang, performed as a female lead (*zhendan*) role, singing an *erhuang* tune. In the traditional opera style of *zibao jiamen*, or "explaining to the audience one's own name and background," she relates that she sheds tears for her country day and night; although uneducated and isolated in her inner chamber, she is heartbroken by the plight of China, saddled with "demoralized people," a "weak government," and "a sovereignty that is trampled by foreigners" (Tian Han 1913: 3). Man and woman, she exclaims, are equals when it comes to shouldering responsibility for the rise and fall of the country; she therefore wishes she could be a Hua Mulan and join the army to fight for her country. She recalls her late husband, who sacrificed his blood in the revolutionary uprisings in Hanyang. Alone at home with her sorrows, she nevertheless felt fortunate that she was bringing up a son with a strong will and a robust spirit. As Sanniang starts her daily routine of weaving, her son enters the stage as a *xiaosheng*, the designated role in traditional opera for a young scholar. He recalls that his schoolteacher Master Chen has been encouraging him to study science in the hope that he will rescue "sorrowful" China from encroachment by foreign countries: "'Little Japs'

²⁴ According to Dong Jian (1996: 62–65), Liang Qichao's dramas helped Tian Han formulate three credos of an artist's mission: (1) to awaken the masses to acknowledge China's backwardness; (2) to speak in the name of the masses, and (3) to reform the artistic styles of old opera to express contemporary concerns and ideas.

lust over southern Manchuria," the son sings, remembering his master's lesson. "France demonstrated its greed for Yunnan and Guangxi provinces, England paraded its power by managing Tibet, and Russia attempted to take over Mongolia and Xinjiang." In this way, the son takes leave of his playful years and, now a young adult, prepares to avenge his country and live up to his parents' expectations.

Here we have a typical tale of a filial son (*xiaozǐ*) whose loyalties to his parents are bound up with his duties to his country. Tian Han introduces a surrogate father figure into the play, an old servant of the household. Upon hearing her son recount what he has learned in school, Sanniang charges the servant with disclosing to her son his late father's wish. Speaking in the voice of an authoritative father figure, the old servant, in the *laosheng* role, says that the old master was once a revolutionary warrior committed to overthrowing a monstrous dictator. Before leaving for the battlefield two years before, he sensed that he might never return home to his son, because as a soldier of great determination, he was ready, just like the ancient generals, to die for a righteous cause. His only worry was who would take over his unfulfilled dreams and duty. In an aria, the old servant urges the young master to "act like your father," "appreciate your father's patriotic feelings," "stand tall and firm," and "exert all your efforts without hesitation" in order to fulfill "your father's high expectations":

Deeply wish you would imitate your father,
Deeply wish you would understand your father's patriotism,
Deeply wish you would ride over winds and waves,
Deeply wish you would arouse the whole world with your
strength
With boundless expectations
Oh, my young master,
Wish you exert yourself without hesitation.

深愿你学你父一般模样,
深愿你体你父爱国心肠,
深愿你乘长风破万里浪,

深愿你振天衣立千仞冈。
总言之对主人无穷希望，
我的小主人呀，
愿主人竭尽全力切勿彷徨。

Whereas the old servant foreshadows the attachment to subalterns evident in *The Night a Tiger Was Captured*, Sanniang, in the disguise of a traditional widow, represents Tian Han's earliest construction of a modern woman. This image of liberated woman appeared in his 1920s plays such as *Violin and Rose* and *Before Lunch*, as discussed in section two of this essay. Anyone familiar with the revolutionary model opera will have noticed the striking similarities between Sanniang and Grandma Li in *The Red Lantern*: both are widowed storytellers of a family secret that bears a revolutionary heritage. The comparison is especially striking in Grandma Li's key aria (also in the tune of *erhuang*), which lets Li Tiemei know the real family history following Li Yuhe's arrest: for the past seventeen years, Grandma Li has not told Tiemei the truth for fear she was too young to accomplish her father's wish. Now that her father might never be released from the Japanese prison and come home, Grandma Li wants Tiemei to become strong and brave just like him, so she can carry on his revolutionary work:

For seventeen storm-tossed years I've kept quiet,
Several times I wanted to speak, But I was afraid you were
too young for the truth.
It's most likely your father will not return,
And granny may be jailed too.
Then the heavy burden of revolution will fall on you.
When I tell you the truth, Tiemei,
Don't cry, don't break down, be brave and staunch,
Learn from your father his loyalty, courage, and iron will. (*The Red Lantern* 1970: 28).

十七年风雨狂怕谈以往，
怕的是你年幼小志不刚，几次要谈我口难张。
看起来你爹爹此去难回返，
奶奶我也难免被扑进牢房。

眼见得革命的重担就落在了你肩上，
说明了真心话，铁梅呀，你不要
哭，莫悲伤，要挺得住，你要坚强，
学你爹心红胆壮志如钢！

One difference between the two operas is that in Tian Han's early opera, an unequal social relationship between master and servant is rectified by the gender hierarchy in a traditional society; these power relations account for the widowed mother in Tian's opera readily granting authority to a male member of the "family" who, although a servant, legitimizes the family will in a patriarchal society when he becomes a surrogate father. The hardship and loneliness of the widowed mother reinforce the late father's sacrifice, the servant's loyalty, and the son's willingness to serve his country and take his father's place in society. This interweaving of the personal with the political is paralleled fifty years later in *The Red Lantern*. By virtue of her seniority, the widowed Grandma Li remains the head of the traditional family structure. She is also equal to other members of the family in terms of class, because the Li family consists of surviving members of three workers' families having the same class status and revolutionary values. After Grandma Li has made her understand her father's true identity, Tiemei feels her love for her father intensify as she realizes the love shown by his raising her through "stormed-tossed years," although she was not his biological child. Her grief on losing her father now becomes keener than that of the son in Tian Han's opera because, after they had lived together as parent and child for seventeen years, he has now been taken away from her forever. However, the determination to follow through with the work of their fathers for the Republican revolution and the Communist revolution remains equally strong in the daughter and the son in both operas. A striking difference between Tian Han's early opera and the model play, however, lies in gender politics, which dictated the filial son in Tian Han's play transform into a "filial" daughter, who is faithful to the revolutionary heritage and to her father and grandmother at the same time.

Moreover, both reformed operas can be further studied in the context of operatic conventions. I can only mention in passing that in light of the twelve types of characters in traditional opera enumerated by Zhu Quan of the Ming dynasty, both operas contain transformations of at least five types: (1) *zhong chen lieshi*, or "loyal ministers and ardent men of worth"; (2) *zhu chen gu zi*, or "banished ministers and orphaned sons"; (3) *zha jian ma chan*, or types "rebuking treachery and cursing slander"; (4) *xiao ji lian jie*, or types representing "filiality and righteousness, incorruptibility, and integrity"; and (5) *bei huan li he*, or types expressing "grief and happiness at separation and reunion." As Wilt Idema and Stephen West (1982: 138) point out, Zhu Quan is known for his "didactic and moralistic" conception of theater that reflects the upper-class viewpoint at a time when drama's status was elevated to that of "a minor literary form." Following this strand of thought, one might argue that artists in the Republican and socialist eras further explored the didactic, moralistic, and ideological roles of opera; in this, Tian Han was a pioneer. In this regard, Tian proved no different in his subsequent efforts at injecting an ideological critique against the status quo into the aesthetic plays such as Oscar Wilde's *Salome*.

New Story of Educating Her Son paved the way for *The Red Lantern* in its innovative use of the traditional family structure, Tian Han's opera *New Story of Peach Blossom Fan* predated the model revolutionary theater in its use of contemporary setting directly reflecting social and political events of the time, as seen in *On the Docks* (*Haigang*, 1973) and *Song of the Dragon River* (*Longxiang song*, 1972). As the title suggests, *New Story of Peach Blossom Fan* is a rewriting of Kong Shangren's *Story of Peach Blossom Fan*, a classic *chuanqi* opera of the Qing. Tian Han's opera removes the tragic love story between Hou Fangyu, a Ming loyalist, and Li Xiangjun, a famed courtesan faithful both to Hou and to the already perished Ming court. Set in 1915, the *New Story of Peach Blossom Fan* "called back from the graves" Kong Shangren and his friends to comment on the still backward, divided, and chaotic state of the new Republic. While revisiting Nanjing and

reviewing their old dreams of a unified and strong—albeit *Han*—China, they attend a drum-singing performance (*guci*) by Liu Jingting, a former friend and one of the most distinguished folksingers of the time. Liu appears as a character in Kong Shangren's original play, where he refuses to perform for the corrupt officials of the Southern Ming dynasty. In Tian Han's new opera, however, Liu Jingting performs for Hou Fangyu and his companions, who become an audience for a play-within-the-play. In his drum-song, Liu Jingting describes how Europe and Japan compete for Chinese territories and proposes, accordingly, his three remedies of constructing a modern and strong China: new schools to produce more educated and talented citizens; new factories to develop natural resources for a modern industry; and new weaponry to build up a modern military force (Tian 1915: 18).

In an episode during the drum-song skit that resembles civilized drama (*wenmingxi*) of the same period, moreover, Liu Jingting brings up topical issues such as encouraging personal savings accounts to prop up China's revenues and rejecting Japanese goods in favor of local products. Different from the *wenmingxi* practice of impromptu speeches to comment on contemporary affairs, Tian attempts in *New Story of Peach Blossom Fan* to retain the lyrical lines of traditional opera while injecting vernacular verses from the drum-song genre. Somewhat more script oriented than the *wenmingxi*, moreover, *New Story of Peach Blossom Fan* reveals a clever plot structure that incorporates a play-within-the-play: Liu Jingting stages his own dramatic narrative on the state of the Republic in a performance watched simultaneously by his literati friends in the outer play and the real audience in the theater space. Such structure found its fullest exploration in Tian Han's *The Death of a Famous Actor* (Ming you zhi si, 1927), in which the inner play comprises the opera star's performance of traditional dramatic roles onstage and the outer play traces his real-life struggle to survive as a poor artist and his frustration in training apprentices to carry on his acting tradition. Tian's experiments in the merging of modern spoken drama and operatic performances led to his best play, *Guan Hanqing* (1958), in which an

inner play stages Guan Hanqing's thirteenth-century Yuan drama entitled *Injustice to Dou'e* (Dou'e yuan) in the traditional operatic style and the outer play in spoken drama form depicts Guan Hanqing's commitment to write for the common people against corruption and abuse, despite the likelihood of imprisonment and exile. Indeed, *Guan Hanqing* dramatizes not so much the life story of the Yuan dramatist as the allegorical journey of Tian Han himself and his search for a modern theater. The play displays Tian's self-image: a faithful believer in social justice and a dedicated playwright. The early seeds of this success can be found in *New Story of Peach Blossom Fan*, which he had designated as a *yuanben* to indicate his commitment to reviving one of the oldest genres of the traditional opera, because *yuanben* refers originally to the script used in the transitional period from the *zaju* of the Northern Song to the *zaju* of the Yuan period.²⁵

What was extraordinary about Tian's early efforts to refashion traditional opera is that it happened a few years before Zhang Houzai's defense of "the old opera" in the May Fourth debate. Literary historians are fond of retelling the familiar opera debate carried out in 1917 and 1918 in issues of *New Youth* (Xin qingnian). In these issues, "new literature" (*xin wenxue*) advocates such as Chen Duxiu, Qian Xuantong, Liu Bannong, Zhou Zuoren, Hu Shi, and others launched an all-out attack on traditional opera (on its themes, characterization, and theatrical conventions) and argued for its elimination. Zhang Houzai, who perhaps because of his support of the old opera is today a lesser-known figure in literary history, delineated three strengths in the old opera that cannot be easily replaced by its modern and Western counterparts: (1) its illusionary method of *suggesting* complex events, a most economical and practical style; (2) its formulaic conventions in singing, speaking, acting, and acrobats (*chang, nian, zuo, da*), without which there would have been no Chinese opera; and (3) its close link to music and singing traditions, which makes it much more interesting than mere staged dialogue. We should preserve old opera, Zhang concludes, because it is the fruitful product of our history

²⁵ According to *Cihai* (Shanghai cishu, 1980, 437), after the Yuan period, *yuanben* also refers to *zaju* of the Song period, to differentiate it from the Yuan *zaju*; it also means a short opera, a *zaju*, or a *chuanqi*.

and society, a crystallization of Chinese literature and arts. It would be impossible, and indeed impractical, to replace it with the new drama in a Chinese society where the audiences are too attached to the old opera to accept a Western form (1918a; 1918b).

From a cross-cultural perspective, Zhang Houzai's perceptive view of Chinese opera in 1918 was later "repeated"—even using similar terms such as "suggestive" and "illusionary"—by Brecht after having watched Mei Lanfang's performance in Moscow in 1935, a performance that inspired his theory of "alienation effect." Yet Tian Han's reworking old opera in the 1910s, however, does not necessarily put him fully in the same camp as Zhang, who resisted models of Western drama. Aspiring to become "China's Ibsen," Tian Han was among the first few to answer the call by Fu Sinian (1918a; 1918b) to write "scripts of our own" modern spoken drama, instead of merely translating and introducing Western plays. That Fu Sinian's proposal was part of his rebuttal to Zhang Houzai's defense of the old opera highlighted Tian Han's synthetic approach to modern theater: he bridged the old opera with the new spoken drama by scripting both genres, an achievement unmatched in the history of Chinese theater.

✓ Tian Han's profound knowledge and appreciation of traditional opera set him apart from other seminal literary figures, such as Lu Xun, who expressed a more critical view of old opera. Zhou Xinfang's awe-inspiring opera performance in Shanghai in 1916 three days before his departure for Japan had left a lifelong impression on Tian (1936: 491), but Lu Xun records nothing but distaste for the local opera in his canonical story "Village Opera" (Shexi, 1922). In this autobiographical story apparently based on memory of a childhood visit to a local opera, the "I-narrator" and his childhood friends yawn again in dismay and could not "stand" the thought of a woman's "singing until dawn" (Lu 1922a: 146). Years later as an adult, the narrator decides to give the opera another try and goes to see the famous actor Tan Xinpei, only to be disappointed again. There is a long wait for Tan's appearance, and the narrator leaves the theater

before the show ends, enjoying the crisp Beijing air as if for "the first time," and saying "good-bye to Chinese opera that night, never thinking about it again." "If by any chance I passed a theatre," the narrator declares, "it meant nothing to me for in spirit we were long since poles apart" (Lu 1922a: 140). What is worse, the narrator recalls that a few days earlier, he "happened to read a Japanese book," which had put "into words what had remained unformulated" in his mind; the book described Chinese opera as "so full of gongs and cymbals, shouting and leaping, that it makes the spectators' heads swim and is quite unsuited for a theatre" (Lu 1922a: 140). A foreigner's casual—and yet powerful—remarks validate the negative impression of Chinese opera of the I-narrator, and by extension, helped construct Lu Xun's view of opera as part of his iconoclastic program against a "cannibalistic society." I believe that there is a logical connection between a "boring opera" with no end and a windowless and "indestructible" "iron house" that suffocates sleepers to "irrevocable death"; neither is the link accidental between Lu Xun's bidding farewell to the old opera and his "call to arms" to raise "hope" "against pessimism" in order to "obey [his] general's orders," as he so powerfully expresses in his famous "Preface to *Call to Arms*" (Lu 1922b: ix-x). Most paradoxical, Tian Han argued in 1946 for the positive aspects of the old opera as relayed in Lu Xun's "Village Opera," which, Tian believed, depicted the "beautiful and fairy-like" costumes of the stage characters watched by youngsters from afar in a boat. "Lu Xun did not entirely reject the old opera," Tian observes, "since he understood that the old opera grew from the life of the peasants, who were most familiar with it" (1946: 568).

Lu Xun mocked traditional opera in his prose as well. In "On Photography" (Lun zhaoxiang zhi lei, 1924), for example, he criticizes the androgynous and cross-dressing features of Mei Lanfang's operatic performance: why is the art of men acting as an elegant woman seen as "the most noble, most eternal, and most universal" art in China, Lu Xun asks implicitly (Lu 1924b: 203). Anxious to see the emergence of a strong

²⁶ For a discussion of Lu Xun's comment on Mei Lanfang's androgyny and cross-dressing in the context of contemporary Chinese theatre, see Xiaomei Chen 2003: 44–46. For a discussion of Lu Xun's gaze at women with regard to Mei Lanfang, see Eileen J. Cheng 2004: 25–27.

China, Lu Xun might not have considered a feminized man a fitting symbol for the nation.²⁶ Furthermore, as Kirk Denton points out, "On Photography" can be seen as Lu Xun's "allegory about the reception of mimesis in the Chinese cultural context." As the most "realist" of Western arts, when photography arrived in China, it was "defeated by the traditional aesthetic of Beijing opera and its gender mixing." Lu Xun laments the "vat of black dye" that quickly stains foreign things when they arrive on Chinese soil (Denton 1996: 118). Lu Xun sees Mei Lanfang's operatic art and its conventions as expressing one of the chronic ills of the Chinese national character. The old opera, therefore, symbolized one of the strongholds of the Confucian tradition.

Ironically, forty years later, the same metaphor of the old opera as a "stronghold" of the "four olds" once again surfaced as a main target of the Cultural Revolution, when Lu Xun was upheld as "the greatest standard-bearer leading the cultural revolution over thirty years ago" and Mao Zedong received sole credit for defining "the orientation for literature and art as service to the workers, peasants and soldiers" and posing the question of "weeding through the old to let the new emerge" (Anon. 1967: 5). At the same time, Tian Han was persecuted as a member of the deadly "anti-Party and anti-socialist leadership" of "the old Ministry of Culture" with ulterior motives" to undermine "the reform of Peking opera" (Anon. 1967: 9), an absurd accusation, but nevertheless underscoring Tian's role as the President of Chinese Dramatists Association (Zhongguo xijujia xiehui). In this way, Tian and his ilk were made to represent a "black line" of the bourgeoisie from the 1930s to the 1960s that sabotaged the proletarian cultural traditions that Lu Xun and Mao Zedong had pioneered and "Comrade Jiang Qing had practiced and participated in," according to Zhou Enlai in a public speech in the Great Hall of the People in November 28, 1966 (which was received with "thunderous applause" (Anon. 1966: 12–13). Indeed, the real beginning of the Cultural Revolution was not Yao Wenyuan's attack in 1965 on the Beijing opera *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office* (Hai Rui baguan), which

is the conventional wisdom, but rather the 1963 campaign against Meng Chao's Peking opera *Li Huiniang* in May of 1963 and the 1964 National Modern Peking Opera Festival (Quanguo jingju xiandaixi guanmo yanchu dahui), when Kang Sheng publicly criticized Tian Han's opera *Xie Yaohuan* as "a poisonous weed against the Party and socialism" (Dong 1996: 850). Although Tian Han wrote the first script of the opera *The Red Detachment of Women* in the same year and it subsequently became a staple of the model theater, Tian Han was attacked for "slandering the Party and its Chairman with his criticism of the Great Leap Forward," and his critics "challenged him to name the villains attacked in the play," as Rudolf G. Wagner's (1990: 137) erudite study of *Xie Yaohuan* has pointed out. Tian Han was also accused of having interfered with the development of model theater; one deadly essay, published in the key Party journal *Red Flag*, accused Tian Han of being a "reactionary authority" (*fandong quanwei*) and "anti-Party master-teacher of the theater circle" (*xiju jie fandang zushi jie*) (Du 1967: 43). The author of this essay turned out to be none other than Du Jinfang, who played the main protagonist in the model theater version of the Peking opera of *The Red Detachment of Women* in 1972.²⁷ Again, the so-called "brilliant victory over the bourgeois line of literature and art" was based on the work of Tian Han in reforming opera even as it humiliated him.

No single thing can be blamed for Tian Han's fate during the Cultural Revolution, but his difficult relationship with Lu Xun played a key role. Because of an unpleasant encounter with Tian Han at an October 1934 meeting where Tian accompanied three leaders of the leftist literary movement (Xia Yan, Zhou Yang, and Yang Hansheng), Lu Xun spoke of Tian Han as one of "the four fellows" who had dared to challenge him (Lu 1936: 541). This derogatory term by Lu Xun, whom Mao Zedong praised as the exemplar of revolutionary literature in the Republican period, was enough to pin the label of "counterrevolutionary" on Tian Han during the Cultural Revolution in 1966. Tian Han died in prison while still wearing the

²⁷ Du Jinfang redeemed herself twenty-two years later in a memorial essay to celebrate Tian Han's art and life entitled "Deeply Missing You" (Shengchang de sinian), *Renmin xiju* (People's drama) 4 (1979).

"hat" of one of the "four fellows."

Many years later, on the occasion of Tian Han's 100th birthday in 1998, Tian Gang, Tian Han's grandson and the director of the Tian Han Foundation and the Tian Han Residential Museum, found himself explaining to a *Guangming Daily* journalist that among the "four fellows" accused by Lu Xun, Tian Han was the only one not to survive the Cultural Revolution. According to the original plan, Tian Han had not been invited to meet with Lu Xun, and it was only happenstance that he ran into Xia Yan and the others and decided to tag along; Tian's presence had made Xia uneasy, because he knew of Lu Xun's dislike for Tian, having personally heard Lu Xun express it on several occasions (Zhao Jinhua 1998).

Literary history has accounted for Lu Xun's animosity toward Tian Han. Dong Jian traces Lu Xun's displeasure to Tian Han's dramatic adaptation of Lu Xun's novella *The True Story of Ah Q* (Ah Q zheng zhuan, 1921) and Lu Xun's discomfort with Tian Han's "sloppiness" and "romantic temperament" (Dong Jian 1996: 401). This feature of Tian Han's personality was noticed in Xia Yan's memoirs, which records an encounter at a Shanghai dinner party hosted by Uchiyama Kanzô in honor of Fujimori Seikuchi, a visiting Japanese leftist writer, at which Lu Xun left early in angry protest over Tian Han's boasting of his friendship with Tanizaki Junichiro. "Looks like he is going to put on a show again," Lu Xun said before departing (Xia 1985: 265). Dong Jian also cites Lu Xun's criticism of Tian Han for staging theater performances in Nanjing after his release from a KMT prison; this Lu Xun took as evidence that Tian Han was collaborating with the KMT government, which Lu Xun opposed. "How come he has to 'stage his operas (*changxi*)' in Nanjing?" Lu Xun ridiculed Tian Han as a restless and self-absorbed dramatist (Dong 1996: 480) whose "showy" personality revealed the worst possible qualities of the *xizi* (dramatist).²⁸

All these reasons notwithstanding, there may be yet another aspect to this complex relationship that so far has escaped notice: could Lu Xun's dislike of Tian Han be understood in light of the satirical critique with which

²⁸ For accounts of the complex and problematic relationship between Lu Xun and Tian Han and other reasons for their disagreements (e.g., the debate over "defense literature" [*guofang wenxue*] and over Hu Feng), see Dong Jian 1996: 399–408, 479–483; Liu Ping 1998: 363–381; and Zhang Yaojie 2003: 284–301. Liu Ping's biography goes further than Dong's pioneering work in documenting certain events not mentioned in previous publications; Zhang Yaojie's biography, however, points to the most negative, and even hypocritical, aspects of Tian Han and upholds Lu Xun as the sharp and fair critic, who could not tolerate Tian Han (300–302).

Lu Xun reviewed Mei Lanfang's American tour in 1930? These performances, according to Lu Xun, had ended the "glory of Chinese national art," instead of enhancing it, as overseas critics had claimed (Chen Mingshu 1986: 32). Lu Xun mocked the uncanny skill with which Mei Lanfang played female roles to gratify the Western gaze at Chinese femininity. Is it possible that Tian Han, a promoter of opera in its modern metamorphosis, evoked in Lu Xun similar deeply felt biases against traditional Chinese dramatists, especially in the persona of a *xizi*?²⁹

Contrary to the May Fourth posture against traditional opera, Tian Han firmly believed that traditional opera could—and should—be reformed to play as vital a role in reforming China as that of the modern spoken drama. Different from Lu Xun's obvious biases against Mei Lanfang, Tian Han offered constructive suggestions expressed in two articles written in 1934, on the eve of Mei Lanfang's tour to the Soviet Union. Unlike Lu Xun, who looked from outside into theater circles in his satirical critiques against Mei Lanfang, Tian Han wrote as an insider—a personal friend of Mei and a famed theater critic—who offered constructive, Marxist-inspired criticism of Mei's operatic art in the context of theoretical debates on the rise and fall of Chinese operatic art. In the first article, Tian (1934a) claims that the achievements of the realist theater of the 1930s surpassed the expectations of the May Fourth critics with regard to their demand that dramatists create an indigenous form of modern Chinese drama worthy of the times. As far as critiquing the tradition of old opera is concerned, however, no major progress had been made on that front. Subsequent advocates of the "nationalist drama movement" (*guoju yundong*) merely studied the art-for-art's-sake formula of the petit bourgeois dramatists from capitalist countries in America and Europe in order to "purify" traditional opera of these influences, but in so doing they neglected to subject the feudalist content of these operas to a proper class analysis (Tian Han 1934a: 5).

Taking Mei Lanfang as a recent example of the state of Peking opera, Tian Han agrees with Huang Su, who pointed out that Mei Lanfang's

²⁹ Lu Xun was not against all dramatists; he promoted "Western" plays by Shakespeare, Ibsen, Shaw, and others. He also showed considerable interest in modern Chinese drama: he surveyed *xinju* (new drama) in Tianjin in 1912 and approved its social and revolutionary function in 1922. Lu Xun served as a member of the school board for the newly founded Beijing People's Art Drama School in 1922, attended its subsequent performances of *xinju*, and approved their theme of freedom from warlords' oppression (Cao 1981). For Lu Xun's view of traditional Chinese opera, see Qiu 1981.

costume operas portray beautiful, aristocratic ladies in the imperial palace, and that these ladies become "the spreaders of the feudalist ideology" (Tian 1934a: 13) and therefore no longer fit the agenda of a modern society. Tian Han cites a staging of *The Lute* (Pipa ji) in Beiping in April 1934 by a joint cast of Chinese and German performers with a scholarly interest in the opera. This opera's celebration of filial loyalty might please Hitler, Tian Han goes so far as to assert, because the German leader could find its model of "virtuous wife and loving mother" appropriate for German women and thus helpful in solving the country's unemployment problem and speed up its war preparations. If that were to happen, Chinese opera would surely "be renowned overseas" after having undergone its ultimate "decline" within Chinese territory (15). In Tian Han's judgment, no one in China had truly attempted to reshape Peking opera into a new form that would at once "reflect the spirit of our times and express the emotions of modern men and women" (17).

Tian Han repeatedly evokes Hu Shi, who he felt had demonstrated a "proletarian spirit" in his critique against the old opera in his earlier career despite his stand against it during the *New Youth* debate. Hu Shi speculated that a "popular" (*tusu*) Peking opera that appealed to the lower social classes (*xia dengren*) had already replaced *Kunqu* opera after the latter had deteriorated into an "elegant" (*wenya*) art of the aristocratic class. Opera's evolution from an aristocratic to a popular art should be seen as "a grand revolution," not a "regression," Hu Shi said, adding that only a popular art based on the needs of the people could survive. While acknowledging the "great achievement that Hu Shi's insights constituted," Tian Han holds that Hu Shi was wrong to envision opera evolving into spoken drama and not to see that it could retain its own form after its content had been revolutionized and modernized. In the Soviet Union, for instance, both opera and spoken drama had made equally impressive strides after the October Revolution, which gave new direction to proletarian art (Tian 1934a: 18–19). In times of great social upheaval, Tian Han believes,

a "famous actor" (*mingling*) such as Mei Lanfang faced only two choices: become either a "tool" for the ruling ideology or a spokesperson for the oppressed people. Tian Han hopes that as a result of his visit to the Soviet Union, Mei Lanfang would "inject fresh blood" into the corpse of Chinese opera and bring it back to life.

In his second essay, "Why Did the Soviet Union Invite Mei Lanfang?" (Sulian weishenme yaoqing Mei Lanfang qu yanxi?, 1934), Tian Han disagrees with media speculations that the realist theater of the Soviet Union had waned and hoped to find inspiration in the "symbolist art" of Mei's Peking opera. On the contrary, Tian Han argues, socialist realism had inspired dramatists to become active participants in constructing a socialist Soviet Union (Tian 1934b: 31). Mei's invitation, Tian believes, reflected the Soviets' interest in imbibing the "Oriental arts" as part of their design to develop "the international art of the proletariat" and thus promote socialist ideology and culture (32); this purpose was discernible in the invitation to a Japanese Kabuki theater company to visit the Soviet Union four years earlier (34–35). Tian Han hopes that Mei Lanfang would use his trip to his advantage and learn from the proletarian theater of the Soviet Union how to reform Peking opera into a vehicle properly reflective of its times (39).

By integrating his views of Chinese, Japanese, and Soviet art, Tian Han in fact recaptured the spirit of "proletarian modernism" in pursuit of an "international proletarian art" that he had formulated in his Japan years. However, his (and Lu Xun's) views on Mei Lanfang and the decline of Peking opera were to be "revised" by subsequent history; Mei Lanfang's reception in the Soviet Union and the impact of Peking opera on the development of modernist theater in the West saw to that. A now familiar episode in that history of modern drama is Brecht's borrowing from Mei's performance to formulate his theory of "alienation effect." Thus the media speculations that Tian Han had argued against were proven right: Soviet artists—and indeed the artists of the world—did discern in Mei's performance a vital symbolist art with which they might revive the realist

traditions of world theater. The relationship between form and content in traditional theater turned out to be much more intricate and complex than Tian Han had deduced from his oppositions. In both of his essays on Mei Lanfang, nevertheless, Tian Han links the development of proletarian art with opera reform, which he pursued the rest of his life.

After Mei Lanfang's death in 1961, Tian Han wrote three more essays, and in these he lauded Mei's life, which he calls on both the East and West to "treasure." He declares that at the moment when realist art had lost its momentum, countries wanting to rescue their arts from decline had garnered fresh inspiration from Mei's art, which had long transcended the "fourth wall" of Western drama. "We were blessed to have Mei as our own great master, but we did not learn from him in time; we have in fact 'passed the Treasure Mountains and returned home with empty hands.' Now that we have fully understood him, he is no longer with us" (Tian Han 1962: 624).

Tian Han's criticism of Mei Lanfang's earlier career reminds me of the ultraleftist attack on Tian Han by the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution. And Tian Han's "resurrection" of the late Mei Lanfang in 1961 is reminiscent of the post-Maoist rehabilitation of Tian Han and the reversal of the verdict imposed on him during the Cultural Revolution. As a proponent, from the early years of his career, of a leftist literary movement, Tian Han placed undue emphasis on the class analysis element of his "proletarian modernism," and this focus gained dominance in the Chinese literary environment of the twentieth century, culminating in the ultraleftist policies of the Maoist era and the Cultural Revolution. By dying before the Cultural Revolution began, Mei Lanfang, like Lu Xun, avoided the persecution Tian Han suffered, a persecution at least partially based on the discourse of the "proletarian theater" to which Tian Han had contributed from the very beginning of his career.

In conclusion, I have delineated a three-pronged approach in Tian Han's search for a modern and proletarian theater with a focus on his encounters

with the Western modern and Chinese traditional cultures in the 1910s and 1920s and their implications for the literary and theater history in the years to come. I believe that there might be a logical connection between a seemingly accidental set of "fours": (1) the May "Fourth" debate on the old opera; (2) Lu Xun's accusation of Tian Han as one of the "four fellows"; (3) Mao Zedong's call to eliminate the "four olds" of the feudalist and bourgeois culture; (4) Tian Han's persecution at the hand of the "Gang of the Four"; and (5) the post-Mao "four modernizations," which in hindsight still fell short of the May Fourth call for science and democracy almost sixty years earlier. The historical trajectory from Qian Xuantong and Hu Shi's proposal to abolish the old opera to Lu Xun and Mao Zedong's distrust of it revealed the literati's complex and paradoxical relationship to Chinese tradition in their construction of the "new" and "modern." By contrast, Tian Han bypassed this mental block against the "stronghold of traditional culture" shared by seminal leaders of the May Fourth movement, and worked tirelessly at opera reform, scripting the "new" to retain the "old" and finally remodeled it as "modern" and "proletarian." In a merciless twist of history, Tian Han's personal tragedy during the Cultural Revolution proved the scope and depth of his own success at opera reform. Ironically, Tian Han pressed forward the operatic revolution from the 1910s to the eve of the Cultural Revolution without realizing that the ultimate result of the model theater would be to eventually doom his own political and artistic careers. Tian Han's theories and practice of Chinese theater, nevertheless, question the very premises of some of the May Fourth discourse, whose binary views of the "traditional" versus the "modern," "China" versus "the West" laid a foundation for the history of modern Chinese literature and theater, and paved the way for the leftist literature to become a dominate mode of representation. In the larger scheme of things, therefore, fewer "inventions" and "discontinuities" characterize either period than we normally might believe. However, it has been my purpose to demonstrate that in spite of the crucial differences between the Republican and the

PRC cultures, the most extreme form of Maoist art and literature had its deepest roots in the Republican period and ultimately in traditional drama. Accordingly, I have presented a more complex and coherent story of an important writer than has been available in English heretofore, and traced the historical contingencies and continuities of modern and contemporary Chinese literary and cultural history without confining them to seemingly separate eras such as the Republican, Maoist, and post-Mao periods. I also suggest that the Western modernist traditions, when considered in Chinese historical and cultural contexts, have indeed become intricate—and almost unrecognizable—elements of the rich theater art represented by the operas and spoken dramas of Tian Han. I hope this inquiry of Tian Han's life and works will ultimately challenge some of the literary histories centering not merely on the May Fourth paradigm, but also on its central figure, Lu Xun, who becomes a paragon in the narratives of Republican, Maoist, and post-Mao cultures.

Glossary

Ah Q zheng zhuan
 baihua
Bai she zhuan
 bei huan li he
Beijing ren
Bishang Liangshan
 "biaoxian zhuyi de xiju"
 bu dazhong
 Cao Yu
 changxi
 Chaoxian fengyun
 Chen Chuhuai
 Chen Dabei
 Chen Duxiu
 Chen Ningqiu
 Chen Shaoyi
 Cheng Fangwu
 chuanqi
 cun tianli mie renyu
 dai guoge
 dao minjian qu
 "Dong fang hong"
Dou'e yuan
 Du Jinfang
 duoyuan ziyou shiqi
 emo zhuyi
 erhuang
 fan shidai
 fandong quanwei
Fan'elin yu qiangwei
 Fu Sinian
 Fujimori Seikuchi
Gutan de shengyin
Guan Haiqing
 geju
 Guanzi
 guci
 Guo Moruo
 guofang wenxue
 guoju yundong
Hai Rui baguan

阿Q正传
 白话
 白蛇传
 悲欢离合
 北京人
 逼上梁山
 表现主义的戏剧
 不大众
 曹禺
 唱戏
 朝鲜风云
 陈楚淮
 陈大悲
 陈独秀
 陈凝秋
 陈绍益
 成仿吾
 传奇
 存天理灭人欲
 代国歌
 到民间去
 东方红
 窦娥冤
 杜近芳
 多元自由时期
 恶魔主义
 二簧
 反时代
 反动权威
 梵峨林与蔷薇
 傅斯年
 藤森成吉
 古潭的声音
 关汉卿
 歌剧
 管子
 鼓词
 郭沫若
 国防文学
 国剧运动
 海瑞罢官

Haigang
Hong Shen
hongse xinhao
Hou Fangyu
Hu Feng
Hu Shi
Hua Mulan
Huaguxi
Huang Dasha
Huang Su
Huo hu zhi ye
Huo zhi tiaowu
Ito Toramaru
Jiang Guangci
Jianghan yuge
jingju geming
jiu fengsu
jiu sixiang
jiu wenhua
jiu xiguan
Kamen
Kang Jinbing
Kang Sheng
Kang Youwei
Kikuchi Kan
Kong Shangren
"Kuangren riji"
Kunqu
lao xin zhe zhi ren
laosheng
Leiyu
Li Dazhao
Li Huiniang
Li ren xing
Li Tiemei
Li Xiangjun
Li Yuhe
Lian Gu
Liang Qichao
Liang Sicheng
lingde shijie
Lingguang
ling rou tiaohu guan

海港
洪深
红色信号
侯方域
胡风
胡适
花木兰
花鼓戏
黄大傻
黄素
获虎之夜
火之跳舞
伊藤虎丸
蒋光慈
江汉渔歌
京剧革命
旧风俗
旧思想
旧文化
旧习惯
卡门
抗金兵
康生
康有为
菊池宽
孔尚任
狂人日记
昆曲
劳心者治人
老生
雷雨
李大钊
李慧娘
丽人行
李铁梅
李香君
李玉和
莲姑
梁启超
梁思成
灵的世界
灵光
灵肉调和观

Liu Bannong
Liu Cui
Liu Jingting
Longxiang song
"Lun zhaoxiang zhi lei"
Meng Chao
Mozi
Ming you zhi si
mingling
minzhu zhuyi
Moluo shi li shuo
Nan gui
Nanguo
Ouyang Yuqian
Pan Jinlian
pingju
Pipa ji
Qi Yanming
Qian Xuanton
Qu Qiubai
Quanguo jingju xiandaixi guanmo
yanchu dahui
Sange moding nüxing
Sanniang jiaozi
Shao Bo
Shalemei
"She xi"
shehui beiju
Shen Congwen
Shen Yanbing
Sheng si hen
sheng yu
Shisanling shuiku changxiang qu
sitiao hanzi
Tan Xinpei
Tanizaki Junichiro
Tao Jingsun
Tao Xingzhi
tiaohe pai
tusu
Uchiyama Kanzô
wenmingxi
wenya

刘半农
柳翠
柳敬亭
龙江颂
论照相之类
孟超
墨子
名优之死
名伶
民主主义
摩罗诗力说
南归
南国
欧阳予倩
潘金莲
平剧
琵琶记
齐燕铭
钱玄同
瞿秋白
全国京剧现代戏观摩
演出大会
三个摩登女性
三娘教子
绍伯
沙乐美
社戏
社会悲剧
沈从文
沈雁冰
生死恨
圣域
十三陵水库畅想曲
四条汉子
谭鑫培
谷崎润一郎
陶晶孙
陶行知
调和派
土俗
内山完造
文明戏
文雅

Wencheng gongzhu
Wufan zhiqian
xiju jie fandang zushi jie
xiyu gailiang
xizi
xia dengren
Xia Yan
Xiangju
xiao yi lian jie
xiaosheng
xiaozi
Xie Yaohuan
Xin ernü yingxiong zhuan
Xin jiao zi
"Xin langman zhuyi ji qita"
Xin Luoma chuanqi
Xin min congbao
xin pingju
Xin qingnian
Xin taohua shan
xin wenxue
Xuansheng Xuexiao
Xue zhan Jingzhou
Xueyaluo zhi gui
Yan'an pingju yuan
Yang Hansheng
Yang Shaoxuan
Yao Wenyuan
Yecao
yipin da baixing
"Yiyongjun jinxing qu"
Yu Shan
Yuan Shikai
zaju
zha jian ma chan
Zhang Taiyan
zhangyang minzu yu minzhu
jingshen de shiqi
zhengdan
zhiming shang
zibao jiamen
ziyou zhuyi
zhong chen lieshi

文成公主
午饭之前
戏剧界反党祖师界
戏曲改良
戏子
下等人
夏衍
湘剧
孝义廉洁
小生
孝子
谢瑶环
新儿女英雄传
新教子
新浪漫主义及其它
新罗马传奇
新民丛报
新平剧
新青年
新桃花扇
新文学
选升学校
血战荆州
薛亚梦之鬼
延安平剧院
杨翰笙
杨绍萱
姚文元
野草
一品大百姓
义勇军进行曲
俞珊
袁世凯
杂剧
叱奸骂馋
章太炎
张扬民族与民主
精神的时期
正旦
致命伤
自报家门
自由主义
忠臣烈士

zhongjun	忠君
Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao julebu	中共中央党校俱乐部
Zhongguo jingshen	中国精神
Zhongguo xijujia xiehui	中国戏剧家协会
Zhou Xinfang	周信芳
Zhou Yang	周扬
Zhou Zuoren	周作人
zhu chen gu zi	逐臣孤子
Zhu Quan	朱权
Zhujun	竹君

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