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*COLD NIGHTS* AND THE DISINTEGRATION  
OF EVERYDAY LIFE IN CHONGQING DURING  
THE SINO-JAPANESE WAR, 1937-1945

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*Cold Nights* and the Disintegration of Everyday Life in Chongqing  
During the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Philosophy

July 2017

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Name of student: Yuk-ho Tsui

## Dedication

I wish to dedicate this work to my grandmother, KWOK Shui-ying, who passed away shortly after the initial submission of this thesis.

## Abstract

Ba Jin (巴金, 1904.11.25 - 2005.10.17) completed his final novel, *Cold Nights* (寒夜), in 1947. Ba Jin's earlier works are known for their sentimentality. However, during the Sino-Japanese War, he turned to depictions of the everyday life of ordinary people. Critics such as C. T. Hsia and Nathan Mao deem this change in Ba Jin's style an improvement over that of his earlier works and regard *Cold Nights* as a better work than his *Turbulent Stream* trilogy (激流三部曲). They also note that the everyday life depicted in *Cold Nights* is heavily based on Ba Jin's experiences in wartime Chongqing—an observation that seems to have escaped the attention of most researchers of his work. This thesis focuses on the dreary side of the everyday life depicted in the novel. In Chapter 2, I compare the everyday life of hawkers, rickshaw pullers, and domestic servants to that of the hero of the novel, Wang Wenxuan (汪文宣), and to that of his mother. I argue that Wenxuan is poorer than the above-mentioned lower-class people because he can neither perform heavy manual labor nor afford the services that the lower-class people provide. In Chapter 3, I discuss the everyday life of Wenxuan. He fails to fulfill his dreams through his everyday life, and despairs over his future. I term Wenxuan's psychological state the "disintegration of everyday life". When Wenxuan suppresses the negative emotions caused by this disintegration of his everyday life, the suppressed emotions only further interrupt his peace of mind, causing the emergence of four cases of Freudian parapraxis in the story. In Chapter 4, the focus of my analysis turns to Wenxuan's physical disease. I compare Wenxuan from various perspectives with Du Daxin (杜大心), the hero of Ba Jin's first novella, *Destruction*. I argue that Wenxuan is not a typical tubercular character, and explain that, in addition to presenting pulmonary tuberculosis as a disease of passion and poverty, Ba Jin depicts Wenxuan's disease in terms of war, which was an uncommon metaphorical comparison at the time of the novel's publication.

## Publications Arising from the Thesis

1. “The Disintegration of Everyday Life: Everyday Life in Ba Jin’s *Cold Nights*” (日常生活的崩解—巴金《寒夜》中的日常生活). In *Proceedings of the 2nd International Academic Conference on the Development of Chinese Culture and Humanities* (第二屆中華文化人文發展國際學術研討會論文集), edited by Hwang Shiang Yang (黃湘陽), 579-594. Hong Kong: Research Institute of Chinese Literature and History, 2017.
2. “Du Daxin and Wang Wenxuan: Ba Jin’s Narrative of Two Tubercular Characters” (杜大心與汪文宣：巴金筆下的肺結核患者). In *The Eleventh Florilegium of Theses on Ba Jin* (巴金研究集刊卷十一), edited by Chen Sihe (陳思和) and Li Cunguang (李存光). Shanghai: Shanghai Joint Publishing Company, forthcoming.

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My previous supervisor, Prof CHAK Chi-shing, often notes that it is impossible to write a good MPhil thesis in two years. He has also noted that I am not his most talented student. Therefore, it is quite acceptable that I have completed this thesis in three years. During this three-year period, a number of people have provided assistance to me.

My supervisor, Dr King-fai Tam, is a true gentleman. Before my admission to the MPhil programme, he informed me that he planned to retire soon. However, although my progress often worries him, he rarely pushes me too hard. I am sorry for delaying his retirement. He has a logical mind and his questions often baffle me, but each question has provided me the guidance by which I have revised my thesis. Moreover, his English proficiency has enabled me to become the first and only student in our department to write a dissertation in English.

My oral examination was the first in our department that was conducted in English. I would like to thank the two External Examiners, Prof Stephen Chu and Dr Howard Choy, who offered numerous suggestions about my thesis and who made this examination a wonderful experience.

Many professors in our department, including Prof Chak, Dr Kate Wong, Dr Iris Pan, Dr Brian Tsui, and Dr LEUNG Shuk Man, have given me much valuable advice and extensive professional opinions. I am grateful for their help.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Ba Jin (巴金, 1904.11.25 - 2005.10.17) was a well-known Chinese author. He composed novels and novellas such as *Destruction* (滅亡), *The Setting Sun* (死去的太陽), *Love, A Trilogy* (愛情的三部曲), *Dream on the Sea* (海的夢), *Autumn Day Comes in the Spring* (春天裡的秋天), the *Turbulent Stream* trilogy (激流三部曲),<sup>1</sup> *New Life* (新生), *Sand-Hogs* (砂丁), *Germes* (萌芽), *Fire* (火), *Garden of Rest* (憩園), *Ward Number Four* (第四病室), and *Cold Nights* (寒夜) before the establishment of the People's Republic of China. During the same period as his novels, he published several collections of short stories: *Revenge* (復仇), *Glory* (光明), *Electric Chair* (電椅), *A Duster* (抹布), *The General* (將軍), *Gods, Spirits and Men* (神·鬼·人), *Sinking down* (沉落), *Story of Hair* (髮的故事), *Black Earth* (黑土), *Dragon, Tiger and Dog* (龍·虎·狗), *The Grass of Resurrection* (還魂草), *Little Men, Little Things* (小人小事), *Tragedy in a Quiet Night* (靜夜的悲劇), and others. After 1949, Ba Jin was criticized by the Communist regime for his early belief in anarchism. Although he continually revised his works between 1949 and 1967, he could not escape malicious criticism by government officials in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>2</sup> During the Cultural Revolution, the 14 books of *Ba Jin Wenji* (巴金文集) were defamed as “poisonous weeds”, the writing of which became one of many accusations levelled against Ba Jin.<sup>3</sup> After the

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<sup>1</sup> *Turbulent Stream* is a trilogy written by Ba Jin that consists of three novels entitled *Family* [家], *Spring* [春], and *Autumn* [秋]. See Ba Jin, “Guanyu *Jiliu*” [關於《激流》], in *Chuangzuo huiyilu* [創作回憶錄] (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1982), 95.

<sup>2</sup> Olga Lang, *Pa Chin and His Writings: Chinese Youth Between the Two Revolutions* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 265-277.

<sup>3</sup> Ba Jin, “Ducao bing” [毒草病], in *Random Thoughts* [隨想錄] (Beijing: Writers Publishing House, 2009), 27-28. The other accusations against Ba Jin included “capitalist authority of counter-revolution” [資產階級反動權威], “the black king” [黑老K], and “counter-revolutionist” [反革命分子]. See Chris Y. H. Tsui [徐鈺豪], “*Random Thoughts* and Ba Jin's Inward World” [《隨想錄》與巴金的內心世界], in *Chaoyue shidai de lixiang zhuyi* [超越時代的理想主義], ed. Chen Sihe [陳思和] and Li

Cultural Revolution, as self-administered treatment for the psychological trauma that he suffered during the Cultural Revolution, Ba Jin wrote the 150 essays collected in *Random Thoughts*.<sup>4</sup> He received the Dante Prize in 1982, was awarded the French Legion of Honour in 1983 and the Soviet People's Friendship Medal in 1990, and won the Fukuoka Prize in 1990. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in literature by the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1984 and became an Honorary Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1985.<sup>5</sup> He was praised as a leading authority in the literary world.

Ba Jin's work became well-known soon after the publication of his first novella, *Destruction*, in 1929.<sup>6</sup> After its publication, he wrote and edited many well-received fictional works in the 1930s and 1940s. He wrote his last novel, *Cold Nights*, shortly before 1949. Chapter 4 of this thesis draws a comparison between Ba Jin's first novella and his last novel. Due to Ba Jin's artistic maturity at the time of its conception, *Cold Nights* is recognized as his best fictional work.<sup>7</sup> A number of translations of *Cold Nights* were published between 1952 and 1990.<sup>8</sup> However, recognition of the novel was limited to scholars outside China, for Ba Jin was silenced by the Chinese Communist regime from the 1950s to the 1970s, and his works were banned and destroyed during the Cultural

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Cunguang [李存光] (Shanghai: Shanghai Joint Publishing Company, 2017), 532-541.

<sup>4</sup> Tsui, "Random Thoughts and Ba Jin's Inward World," 541-542.

<sup>5</sup> Li Cunguang, *Bainian Ba Jin — Shengping ji wenxue huodong shilue* [百年巴金——生平及文學活動事略] (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 2003), 193-234.

<sup>6</sup> C. T. Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 242; Lang, *Pa Chin and His Writings*, 136.

<sup>7</sup> Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, 381; Nathan K. Mao, *Pa Chin* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978), 129; Paul G. Pickowicz, "Introduction: Pa Chin's *Cold Nights* and China's Wartime and Postwar Culture of Disaffection," in *Cold Nights*, by Pa Chin, traditional Chinese-English bilingual ed. (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002), xiv-xxvi.

<sup>8</sup> *Cold Nights* was first translated into Japanese in 1952, and a Russian translation was published in 1959, followed by a second Japanese translation in 1963, French and English translations in 1978, and a German translation in 1981. See Marián Gálik, "Comparative Aspects of Pa Chin's Novel *Cold Night*," *Oriens Extremus* 28, no. 2 (December 1981): 151. In addition, the novel was translated into Esperanto in 1990. See Ba Kin, *Frosta Nokto*, trans. Li Shijun (Beijing: China Esperanto-Eldonejo, 1990).

Revolution.<sup>9</sup> Until the last years of his life, however, scholars have proven keen to study materials written by and about Ba Jin.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the significance of *Cold Nights* is often overlooked.

### Introduction to *Cold Nights*

Ba Jin spent most of his life in Shanghai. During the Sino-Japanese War,<sup>11</sup> he moved to Guangzhou and then to Guilin, and he finally settled in Chongqing in October 1940. Except for a number of short trips, he stayed in Chongqing until the end of the war.<sup>12</sup> He lived on the first floor of a three-story building on Minguo Road (民國路), which was also the wartime office of the Culture and Life Publishing House (文化生活出版社). He describes his living environment as follows:

In the winter of 1944, when Guilin had fallen to the enemy, I was living in a room, so small that it could not have been any smaller, on the ground floor of the Culture and Life Publishing House in Minguo Road in Chongqing. In the evening, I often used to prepare a candle to light my desk, and at midnight I would take my thermos to the old man who used to call, “Hot water and fried rice-candies!” to buy some boiled water with which to quench my thirst. I used to go to bed late, but the rats, gnawing incessantly under the concrete floor all night, would prevent me from going to sleep. In the daytime, the whole house would reverberate with the cries of

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<sup>9</sup> Although *Cold Nights* was republished in 1955 and was included in *Ba Jin Wenji* in 1962, Marián Gálík states that the novel was widely noticed in China only after the success of its French translation in 1978. See Marián Gálík, “Comparative Aspects of Pa Chin’s Novel *Cold Night*,” 135. Owning one of Ba Jin’s novels was seen as a crime during the Cultural Revolution. For example, when a girl was found reading *Family* at a train station, she was forced to burn her book. See Ba Jin, “Duoyin jiben xifang wenxue mingzhu” [多印幾本西方文學名著], in *Random Thoughts*, 9-10.

<sup>10</sup> Several scholars conducted interviews with Ba Jin and reprinted his works after the Cultural Revolution to preserve his material. See Ba Jin, “Da jingzi” [大鏡子], in *Random Thoughts*, 143.

<sup>11</sup> Unless otherwise specified, in this thesis, the “Sino-Japanese War” refers to the war between the Republic of China and the Empire of Japan between 1937 and 1945.

<sup>12</sup> Li, *Bainian Ba Jin*, 52-60.

hawkers, the noise of quarrelling, the hubbub of conversation, and the beating of the gongs and drums of the theatre. Noise seemed to come from every direction, and even though I locked myself in my room, I could not get any quiet.<sup>13</sup>

一九四四年冬天桂林淪陷的時候，我住在重慶民國路文化生活出版社樓下一間小得不可再小的屋子裡，晚上常常得預備蠟燭來照亮書桌，午夜還得拿熱水瓶向叫賣「炒米糖開水」的老人買一點白開水解渴。我睡得遲，可是老鼠整夜不停地在那三合土的地下打洞，妨礙着我的睡眠。白天整個屋子都是叫賣聲、吵架聲、談話聲、戲院裡的鑼鼓聲。好像四面八方都有聲音傳來，甚至關在小屋子裡我也得不着安靜。<sup>14</sup>

Under such adverse conditions, Ba Jin began to write his last novel, *Cold Nights*, in late 1944.<sup>15</sup>

In *Cold Nights*, the narrator imagines the Wang family, who lives on the third floor of his three-story building.<sup>16</sup> The family consists of Wang Wenxuan (汪文宣); his wife, Zeng Shusheng (曾樹生);<sup>17</sup> his mother; and his son, Xiaoxuan (小宣), who studies at a boarding school. Wenxuan is in his thirties. He makes a low income as a proofreader at a publishing company, and develops pulmonary tuberculosis in the last years of the Sino-Japanese War. His mother loves him wholeheartedly, and she takes care of him until the end of his life. She somehow cannot accept the fact that there is another woman, his wife Shusheng, who has a larger share of Wenxuan's heart than she does. As a result, quarrels often break out between the two women. Shusheng is the same age as Wenxuan. She works in a bank and earns a high income, with which she is able to afford family expenses, including Xiaoxuan's tuition fees.

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<sup>13</sup> Slightly amended from Ba Jin, "Afterword," in *Selected Works of Ba Jin*, trans. Jock Hoe, 2nd ed. (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2005), 2:538.

<sup>14</sup> Ba Jin, "Houji" [後記], in *Ba Jin wenji* (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1962), 14:295.

<sup>15</sup> Ba Jin, "Tan *Hanye*" [談《寒夜》], in *Ba Jin wenji*, 14:435.

<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 3 for details about Wenxuan's apartment.

<sup>17</sup> Although Wenxuan and Shusheng are not married but only cohabiting, they call each other "wife" and "husband".

Unlike Wenxuan, she enjoys a variety of pastimes and appears both healthy and charming.

The story concentrates on Wang Wenxuan's family life, and many chapters focus on the quarrels between Zeng Shusheng and her mother-in-law and the deterioration of Wenxuan's health. By portraying the dreary side of Wenxuan's everyday life, the book reflects the suffering of educated people during the Sino-Japanese War. When Chongqing is threatened with Japanese attack, Shusheng chooses to move to Lanzhou (蘭州) with her bank, where she can escape her mother-in-law and earn an even higher income with which to pay her husband's medical expenses. However, her departure worsens Wenxuan's health, both physically and psychologically. Wenxuan passes away shortly after the surrender of Japan. Shusheng returns to Chongqing two months later, and she finds that Wenxuan is dead and that her mother-in-law has moved away with Xiaoxuan.<sup>18</sup>

Paul Pickowicz argues that Ba Jin focuses on the corruption, profiteering, and inflation that were widespread during the Sino-Japanese War. These horrors resonated with the novel's original readers because they cathartically allowed readers to re-experience their suffering during the war.<sup>19</sup> As a result, *Cold Nights* was popular, and sold well after the Sino-Japanese War.<sup>20</sup> The novel was serialized in a literary journal called *Wenyi Fuxing* (文藝復興) from August 1946 to January 1947.<sup>21</sup> It was first published as a book by Chenguang Chuban Gongsi (晨光出版公司) in March 1947. After the establishment of the People's

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<sup>18</sup> The version of *Cold Nights* used in this thesis is the 1946 serialized version reprinted in 1990: Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, in *Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature, 1937-1949* [中國新文學大系 1937-1949], ed. Sun Yong [孫頤] et al. (Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Art Press, 1990), 9:279-487. For quoted texts, the English translation by Nathan Mao and Liu Ts'un-yan is used: Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, trans. Nathan K. Mao and Liu Ts'un-yan; with the aid of Jock Hoe's translation: Ba Jin, *Bitter Cold Nights*, in *Selected Works of Ba Jin*, trans. Jock Hoe, 2:235-537. Whenever necessary, I have amended the translated text to conform to the original Chinese text.

<sup>19</sup> Pickowicz, "Introduction," xiv-xxvi.

<sup>20</sup> When *Cold Nights* was reprinted in January 1948, Ba Jin said that 5,000 copies had been sold in the last 11 months. See Ba Jin, "Houji," 297.

<sup>21</sup> Ba Jin, "Guanyu *Hanye*" [關於《寒夜》], in *Chuangzuo huiyilu*, 110.

Republic of China, Ba Jin rewrote the novel to adapt it to the ideology of the new regime. For example, in the adapted novel, Tang Baiqing (唐柏青) is Wang Wenxuan's schoolmate. During their first bout of drinking together, Wenxuan learns that Baiqing's wife died of dystocia. Baiqing becomes disheartened, and commits suicide after their second bout of drinking. In the original version, Ba Jin does not mention that Baiqing holds a master's degree. In the 1962 version of the novel, he supplemented Baiqing's academic background to emphasize that even a writer with a master's degree had no security under the rule of the Nationalist Government.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, he pointed out that Wenxuan's supervisors, Department Chief Zhou (周主任) and Section Chief Wu (吳股長), do not even possess bachelor's degrees, but that nevertheless these two men can order Wenxuan to do things that anyone would be reluctant to do.<sup>23</sup> Ba Jin specifically condemned the Nationalist Government for undervaluing its talented people and for allowing villains to hold sway in their stead. This enabled him to reveal the problems of the Nationalist Government and to praise the new regime. Ba Jin republished the novel in 1955 through Xin Wenyi Chubanshe (新文藝出版社), and included the novel in *Ba Jin Wenji* in 1962.

## Literature Review

*Cold Nights* became well-known in the People's Republic of China after the success of its French translation in 1978. Some scholars, both in

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<sup>22</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, in *Ba Jin wenji*, 14:45. For the purpose of distinguishing this revised version from the original serialized version of *Cold Nights*, this revised version is hereafter cited as "*Cold Nights* (1962 version)". For the original text in the serialized version, see Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 308. Qiao Shihua [喬世華] and Feng Qunying [馮群英] also pointed out this revision. See Qiao Shihua, "Lun jiefang hou Ba Jin dui *Hanye de chanshi he xiugai*" [論解放後巴金對《寒夜》的闡釋和修改], in *Ba Jin: Xin shiji de chanshi* [巴金：新世紀的闡釋], ed. Chen Sihe and Gu Yeping [辜也平] (Fuzhou: Fujian Education Press, 2002), 191; Feng Qunying, "Ba Jin 'Cold' Text Change Research" [巴金《寒夜》文本變遷研究] (master's thesis, Sichuan Normal University, 2012), 11. Note that in wartime Chongqing, less than 0.45% of the population possessed master's degrees. See *Chongqing Yaolan* [重慶要覽] (Chongqing: Government of Chongqing, 1945), 18.

<sup>23</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights* (1962 version), 57. For the original text in the serialized version, see Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 316.

China and elsewhere, have concentrated on Ba Jin's narrative skills or the personalities of the main characters of his novels. For example, Nathan Mao conducted a comprehensive analysis of Ba Jin's literary techniques, including his construction of scenes, the atmosphere of the novel, and the interpersonal conflicts and inner thoughts of the main characters.<sup>24</sup> Some scholars have conducted comparative studies of Ba Jin's works for example, Li Shusheng (李書生) has compared *Family* and *Cold Nights*. He argues that Wenxuan has the same personality as the oldest Gao brother, Gao Juexin (高覺新), as they are both portrayed as feeble. When Wenxuan reaches middle age, he faces poverty, family dissonance, and an infectious disease.<sup>25</sup> However, I disagree with Li's analysis in that the original Wenxuan is not portrayed as feeble. Rather, he is determined to cohabit with Shusheng, even though his mother strongly opposes the idea. Unlike Juexin, who undertakes an arranged marriage, Wenxuan proves more similar to Juexin's brothers, Juemin (覺民) and Juehui (覺慧), who dare to escape from their patriarchal family. Qiao Shihua was the first scholar to compare different editions of *Cold Nights*. He compared the 1946 serialized version of the novel with the 1960 version. He argues that Ba Jin revised the novel to conceal his original intention, as he recognized that the novel's original edition may have caused him trouble under the new regime.<sup>26</sup> Feng Qunying conducted a more comprehensive survey that includes seven different editions of *Cold Nights*. In addition to the modifications to *Cold Nights* that seem subject to ideological influences, Feng points out that some of these changes reveal the progression of Ba Jin's artistic excellence. For example, in the 1955 version, Ba Jin widens the emotional chasm between Shusheng and her mother-in-law, which gives Shusheng all the more reason to leave Chongqing.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Mao, *Pa Chin*, 129-142.

<sup>25</sup> Li Shusheng, "Cong *Jia* dao *Hanye*: Zhishifenzi de xinlu licheng" [從《家》到《寒夜》：知識份子的心路歷程], *Jinan jiaoyu xueyuan xuebao* [濟南教育學院學報], no. 3 (2002): 24-25.

<sup>26</sup> Ba Jin proposes that there is a "magical band" [緊箍咒] on every writer's head so that writers dare not write anything that opposes the requirements of the new regime. See Qiao, "Lun jiefang hou Ba Jin dui *Hanye* de chanshi he xiugai," 180-200.

<sup>27</sup> Feng, "Ba Jin 'Cold' Text Change Research," 12-16.



Since the 1990s, a series of new views have emerged regarding the study of *Cold Nights*. Some scholars have applied symptomatic reading strategies or Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic method to interpret the novel. For example, Lan Dizhi (藍棣之) began with the terrible relationship between Zeng Shusheng and her mother-in-law, and analyzed the difficulties faced by Shusheng and the reasons for her departure from Chongqing.<sup>28</sup> Liu Yan [劉艷] argues that Wenxuan's mother possesses an inverted Oedipus complex that makes her unhealthily attached to her son, and that it is for this reason that she cannot accept her daughter-in-law.<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, most scholars interpret *Cold Nights* with an analysis of certain oft-repeated contentions, including conflicts between the traditional and new cultures, between individuals in family relationships, and in the situation of intellectuals. Ba Jin regarded himself as a "son of the May Fourth Movement",<sup>30</sup> and he composed the *Turbulent Stream* trilogy, which was loosely based on his life, as a condemnation of the traditional family system. The brothers in this trilogy, Gao Juemin and Gao Juehui, escape their family and follow their dreams in Shanghai. However, according to Sun Ping-ping (孫萍萍), when Ba Jin was writing *Cold Nights*, he became disenchanted with the May Fourth Movement. Wenxuan is depicted as a typical follower of the May Fourth Movement, but his dream of establishing an ideal school in his hometown is never realized. Moreover, because of Wenxuan's abject poverty, Sun argues that Wenxuan becomes disillusioned with the May Fourth Movement.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, I disagree that Ba Jin's disillusionment with the May Fourth Movement implies his acceptance of

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<sup>28</sup> Lan Dizhi, "Ba Jin: *Hanye*" [巴金：《寒夜》], in *Modern Literary Classics: Symptomatic Reading* [現代文學經典：症候式分析] (Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 1998), 105-112.

<sup>29</sup> Liu Yan, "Qinggan zhengduo beihou de luanlun jinji — Ba Jin *Hanye* xinjie" [情感爭奪背後的亂倫禁忌—巴金《寒夜》新解], *Eastern Forum* [東方論壇], no. 2 (1995): 59-62.

<sup>30</sup> Ba Jin, "'Wusi' yundong liushi zhounian" [「五四」運動六十周年], in *Random Thoughts*, 63.

<sup>31</sup> Sun Ping-ping, "The 'Family' in the 'Cold Night' — About The Culture Transcending in Ba Jin's Novels" [「寒夜」中的「家」—論巴金小說的文化超越性], *Huazhong keji daxue xuebao (sheke ban)* [華中科技大學學報(社科版)] 16, no. 1 (2002): 96-100.

traditional culture. Sun notes that Wenxuan's traditional mindset awakens his desire to remain at home. Due to his illness, however, Wenxuan cannot take care of himself, and with his wife's departure, Wenxuan's mother is the only person on whom he can rely. The fact that the sick Wenxuan stays at home relates more to his practical circumstances than to the presence or absence of a "traditional" mind.

In the novel, Zeng Shusheng and Wang Wenxuan are schoolmates who abandon the formalities of marriage and practice cohabitation instead. Gu Yeping analyzes the couple's situation in detail. He argues that the Sino-Japanese War completely changed both Chinese society and the lives of the couple. In the wake of the war, Wenxuan and Shusheng begin to think in new ways, and these changes foreshadow their separation. Shusheng eventually travels to Lanzhou with her supervisor, and asks for a separation from Wenxuan several months later.<sup>32</sup> Like other Chinese scholars, Gu has argued that Shusheng is not a responsible mother. He blames her for failing to take good care of her son, and for arranging for Xiaoxuan to attend an elite boarding school rather than caring for him herself. On one hand, I would argue that Wenxuan also has a responsibility to take care of Xiaoxuan, and that we cannot solely blame Shusheng for the willful neglect of Xiaoxuan. On the other hand, Gu failed to mention that, in the long-term food shortage of the Sino-Japanese War, boarding schools were among the few places that guaranteed meals to their pupils.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, Wenxuan urges his son to continue his studies in the boarding school as assiduously as does Shusheng. The couple are, in fact, both responsible for their son's state, because they both clearly consider their son's well-being.

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<sup>32</sup> Gu Yeping, "Hanye: Liming qian de shenyin yu huhao" [《寒夜》：黎明前的呻吟與呼號], in *Ba Jin chuanguo zonglun xinbian* [巴金創作綜論新編] (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2013), 227-230.

<sup>33</sup> There are many examples that demonstrate that meals were guaranteed at boarding schools even during the worst moment of the war. See Li Danke [李丹柯], *Echoes of Chongqing: Women in Wartime China* [女性，戰爭與回憶：三十五名重慶婦女的抗戰講述], Chinese ed. (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2013), 63, 79, 86-87, 90, 96.

While the Sino-Japanese War certainly contributes to the separation of Zeng Shusheng and Wang Wenxuan, the long-standing quarrels between Shusheng and her mother-in-law is another notable contribution. Jiang Qian (江倩) is the first scholar to specifically study the relationship between the two heroines of *Cold Nights* in detail. She explains the quarrels between the two from various perspectives, noting the status of Wenxuan's mother as a widow and the differences in the two women's academic backgrounds.<sup>34</sup> However, she overlooks the importance of Wenxuan in the novel, and only considers Shusheng and her mother-in-law. Wenxuan, however, is the main character of the novel, and without him, the two heroines would be unconnected to each other, and there would be no quarrels between them to discuss. He is also a cause of the quarrels, for Wenxuan's mother loves him so much that she cannot share his love with Shusheng, and because Shusheng has a large share of Wenxuan's attention, she has the power to argue with her mother-in-law. Furthermore, Wenxuan is the only character who could step in to stop the quarrels, if only he could be the master of his family.

The hero of *Cold Nights*, Wang Wenxuan, is an intellectual by the standards of his society. He graduated from a university in Shanghai with a degree in education. Wang Yingguo (汪應果) observes the smallest details of Wenxuan's conversations with his mother and traces the changes in Wenxuan's mind. He argues that the war, the decaying society, and Wenxuan's family relationships all have damaging effects on Wenxuan. As a result, Wenxuan transforms from a righteous, caring, and patriotic young man to a spineless and self-abasing sick man who even begins to develop psychological disorders.<sup>35</sup> In Ba Jin's narrative, Wenxuan is a prototype of the intellectuals who escaped their patriarchal families after the May Fourth Movement. When these intellectuals encountered the Sino-Japanese War, the weak-minded among them

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<sup>34</sup> Jiang Qian, "Lun *Hanye* zhong poxi guanxi de miaoxie ji qi shehui wenhua neihan" [論《寒夜》中婆媳關係的描寫及其社會文化內涵] (master's thesis, Northwest University, 2002), 19-26.

<sup>35</sup> Wang Yingguo, "Kang-Ri zhanzheng ji zhanhou shiqi de Ba Jin chuanguo" [抗日戰爭及戰後時期的巴金創作], in *Ba Jin lun* [巴金論] (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2009), 226-236.

considered “going back” (回家).<sup>36</sup> However, “going back” usually did not help, and even worsened their situations.<sup>37</sup> Zeng Shusheng is one of the intellectuals who refuses to “go back”. In the 1930s, when the fictional Shusheng studied at the university, there were only three thousand female undergraduates in China. She would have faced many challenges when entering the university.<sup>38</sup> It is notable that when the Wang family face difficulties during the war, Shusheng is the most resolute. Despite a quarrelsome mother-in-law, a weak and dying husband, and an estranged son, she refuses to “go back”, and instead leaves her family again. While Shusheng’s departure seemingly worsens Wenxuan’s situation, Wang Li (王立) carefully considers Shusheng’s situation and motivations and concludes that, if she had not left, the outcome for Wenxuan would not have improved.<sup>39</sup>

Other scholars have condemned traditional culture as the sole cause of Wang Wenxuan’s tragedy. These scholars make use of *Cold Nights* to attack traditional culture and to heap praise on the May Fourth Movement. For example, Wang Zhaosheng (王兆勝) was the first scholar to study the character of Wang Xiaoxuan in great depth. He sees Xiaoxuan’s unsociability as an opportunity for his grandmother to influence him with traditional thoughts. Wang makes use of Lu Xun’s phrase “save the children” (救救孩子) to ask his readers to reject traditional culture.<sup>40</sup> Ma Huai-qing (馬懷強) notes that the personalities

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<sup>36</sup> On December 26, 1923, Lu Xun [魯迅] gave a talk entitled “What’s Next After Nora’s Leaving?” [娜拉走後怎樣] He argues that Nora has two possible choices after leaving—deprivation or going back. See Lu Xun, “What’s Next After Nora’s Leaving?” in *Fen* [墳], illustrated ed. (Guilin: Lijiang Publishing, 2001), 117.

<sup>37</sup> Liu Yongchang [劉永昶], “Huijia’ huoshi ‘zai lushang’ — Zailun *Hanye* de zhishifenzi xingxiang” [「回家」或是「在路上」—再論《寒夜》的知識分子形象], *Journal of Language and Literature Studies* [語文學刊], no. 2 (2001): 31-32.

<sup>38</sup> Shoko Kawamura [河村昌子], “Minguo shiqi de Zhongguo nüzi jiaoyu zhuangkuang yu Ba Jin de *Hanye*” [民國時期的中國女子教育狀況與巴金的《寒夜》], in *Ba Jin: Xin shiji de chanshi*, ed. Chen Sihe and Gu Yeping, 177-178.

<sup>39</sup> Wang Li, “*Hanye* zhong Shusheng de lijiaozou — Ba Jin bixia zhishifenzi lixiang zhuyi de pomie” [《寒夜》中樹生的離家出走—巴金筆下知識分子理想主義的破滅], in *Jiang zhenhua* [講真話], ed. Chen Sihe and Li Cunguang (Shanghai: Shanghai Joint Publishing Company, 2012), 168-173.

<sup>40</sup> Wang Zhaosheng, “Shaozhe xingxiang yu Zhongguo jiu wenhua de laohua — jianlun *Hanye* zhong de Xiaoxuan xingxiang” [少者形象與中國舊文化的老化—兼論《寒夜》中的小宣形象], *Shandong Social Sciences* [山東社會科學], no. 4 (1990): 54-57.

of the main characters in *Cold Nights* appear to be under the influence of traditional Chinese culture. Wang's mother is clearly influenced by traditional culture. However, Ma also positions Wang Wenxuan's spinelessness and Zeng Shushen's willingness to support her husband and son as traces of this traditional culture. Ma concludes that the flaws of these characters taken together lead to the tragedies of the novel.<sup>41</sup> Ding Fu-yun (丁富云) argues that from *Family* to *Cold Nights*, she sees improvements in the family system, marriage, and women's rights, which she positions as the results of the May Fourth Movement. However, she fails to describe the destruction of traditional Chinese culture that resulted from the May Fourth Movement.<sup>42</sup>

### Everyday Life in *Cold Nights*

In this thesis, I analyze the everyday life depicted in *Cold Nights*. In page after page of *Cold Nights*, Ba Jin stresses Chongqing's inflation, food shortage, and infectious diseases, and emphasizes the family life and working routines of the Wang family. In his memoir, Ba Jin notes the close relationship between *Cold Nights* and everyday life during the Sino-Japanese War:

The whole story took place all around me at the place where I was living at that time, upstairs above my room, at the doorway of the big building where I lived, in Minguo Road and the neighboring streets. People sheltered from air-raids, drank wine, quarreled, fell ill... all these things were happening every day. The prices kept shooting up, life was difficult, the wall was suffering setbacks, and people were in constant anxiety... No matter where I went, and

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<sup>41</sup> Ma Huai-qing, "The Negative Influence of the Traditional Culture on the Flaws of the Characters in Nature of *The Cold Night*" [《寒夜》人物的性格缺陷與傳統文化的負面影響], *Journal of Anqing Teachers College (Social Science Edition)* [安慶師範學院學報(社會科學版)] 23, no. 3 (2004): 71-73.

<sup>42</sup> Ding Fu-yun, "Cultural Implications of Family Disintegration in *Cold Night*" [《寒夜》中家庭破毀的文化意蘊], *Journal of Zhengzhou Economics & Management Institute* [鄭州經濟管理幹部學院學報] 22, no. 3 (2007): 71-75.

even when I was sitting in my small room, I would hear the “nobodies” venting their grievances and pouring out their woes. Even if they are not people to whom I can give a name or a surname, people who are known to every household, even if they are not events which everyone has witnessed and which can be recorded in the history books, they are nevertheless people and events I actually often saw and heard at that time. These people lived, and these events occurred continually. Everything was so natural that I seemed to be living in my own novel, I seemed to be watching the people around me acting out a tragic drama of joy and sorrow, reunion and separation. I was familiar with the wine-shop selling cold snacks, I was familiar with the coffee-shop, I was familiar with the semi-government, semi-private book company, I was familiar with every place in the novel. I lived in that small room in peaceful coexistence with the rats and the bedbugs, continually observing what was going on about me, below me and all around me. From their midst, I selected a part to incorporate into my novel.<sup>43</sup>

整個故事就在我當時住處的四周進行，在我住房的樓上，在這座大樓的大門口，在民國路和附近的幾條街。人們躲警報，喝酒，吵架，生病……這一類的事每天都在發生。物價飛漲，生活困難，戰場失利，人心惶惶……我不論到哪裡，甚至坐在小屋內，也聽得見一般「小人物」的訴苦和呼籲。儘管不是有名有姓、家喻戶曉的真人，儘管不是人人目睹可以載之史冊的大事，然而我在那些時候的確常常見到、聽到那樣的人和那樣的事。那些人在生活，那些事繼續發生，一切都是那麼自然，我好像活在我自己的小說中，又好像在旁觀我周圍那些人在扮演一本悲歡離合的苦戲。冷酒館是我熟悉的，咖啡店是我熟悉的，「半官半商」的圖書公司也是我熟悉的。小說中的每個地點我都熟悉。我住在那間與老鼠、臭蟲和平

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<sup>43</sup> Ba Jin, “On *Bitter Cold Nights*,” in *Selected Works of Ba Jin*, 2:543-544.

共處的小屋裡，不斷地觀察在我上下四方發生的一切，我選擇了其中的一部分寫進小說裡面。<sup>44</sup>

C. T. Hsia argues that *Cold Nights* is “firmly grounded in physical and everyday reality.” The main characters, he argues, are “three everyday characters”, and the scenes are “almost unbearably close to ordinary Chinese family life.”<sup>45</sup> According to Hsia’s description, the main characters of the novel are no different than the ordinary people of wartime Chongqing. Many scenes in the novel, especially the later scenes, are set in the Wang’ household. The life of the Wang family, which constitutes the everyday life of the dying Wang Wenxuan and his mother, is similar to the family life of many powerless Chinese families during the Sino-Japanese War. Nathan Mao indicates that Ba Jin “based his novel on his personal experiences” in Chongqing, in which he carefully noted “the prohibitive costs of medical care, of tuition fees, and even of the cost of a birthday cake.”<sup>46</sup> Once again, this argument demonstrates that, in addition to the everyday life of others, Ba Jin also included his own everyday life in the novel. It is clear that *Cold Nights* is heavily grounded in the everyday life of Ba Jin and his community during the war.

Zhou Limin (周立民) argues that the depiction of everyday life is one of the most important features of *Cold Nights*. He notes that Ba Jin was the first writer among his contemporaries to combine nightmares, fantasies, and parapraxes with reflections on everyday life.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, there is as yet no detailed study of the everyday life depicted in the novel. In the following section, I introduce the theoretical framework that this thesis will apply to analyze the parapraxes in *Cold Nights*.

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<sup>44</sup> Ba Jin, “Tan *Hanye*,” 435-436.

<sup>45</sup> Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, 382-386.

<sup>46</sup> Mao, *Pa Chin*, 128.

<sup>47</sup> Zhou Limin, “*Hanye*: yibu shengbufengshi de jingdian zhizuo” [《寒夜》：一部生不逢時的經典之作] (presentation, Jinian *Hanye* chuban qishi zhounian ji sishi niandai changpian xiaoshuo zhuangzuo yantaohui [紀念《寒夜》出版七十周年暨四十年代長篇小說創作研討會], Shanghai, September 23, 2017).

## Freudian Parapraxes

Parapraxes refer to faulty acts that are committed by mentally healthy people that result from the workings of the unconscious. Sigmund Freud was the first scholar to study this phenomenon in detail.<sup>48</sup> Originally called “Fehlleistungen”, Freud characterizes parapraxes in three main categories, which are maintained in this thesis:

- i. Freudian slips,
- ii. Faulty memory, and
- iii. Subconscious actions.<sup>49</sup>

Freud argues that when parapraxes are carefully analysed through psychoanalytic schema, the reasons behind the faulty actions, which are usually undesirable, can be traced.<sup>50</sup>

The most notable of the Freudian parapraxes is the Signorelli parapraxis. This parapraxis came from Freud’s own experience. On a train journey towards Herzegovina and Bosnia, Freud forgot the name of a painter, Signorelli, and produced two substitute names instead—Botticelli and Boltraffio. In his analysis, Freud notes that he divided “Signorelli” into two parts—“signor” and “elli”. The German counterpart of “signor”, “herr”, appeared in a letter sent by a patient who later committed suicide. Freud regretted that he had failed to cure the patient. He wished to forget the letter, but instead, he forgot the prefix of the painter’s name. Coincidentally, “herr” was the prefix of Freud’s destination, Herzegovina. As a result, the prefix of Bosnia, “bo”, replaced the forgotten prefix,

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<sup>48</sup> Eugene Mahon, “Parapraxes in the Plays of William Shakespeare,” *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 55, no. 1 (2000): 335.

<sup>49</sup> Sigmund Freud discusses various parapraxes in the *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. I group the forgetting of proper names, the forgetting of foreign words, the forgetting of names and the order of words, mistakes in speech, and mistakes in reading and writing as Freudian slips; childhood memories, the concealing memories, the forgetting of impressions and resolutions, and errors of memory are related to faulty memory; and erroneous actions and symptomatic and chance actions are considered subconscious actions. See Sigmund Freud, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, trans. A. A. Brill (Mansfield: Martino Publishing, 2011).

<sup>50</sup> Henk de Berg, *Freud’s Theory and Its Use in Literary and Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (Rochester: Camden House, 2003), 30.



“signor”, to form “Botticelli”. In addition, “Trafoi”, the place where the suicidal patient lived, combined in Freud’s mind with “bo” to form another substitute name, “Boltraffio”.<sup>51</sup>

This technique of studying the unconscious mind is called psychoanalysis. Through psychoanalysis, we can study fictional parapraxes in a work of literature to understand its characters’ feelings and actions, as well as the writer’s insights and motivations.<sup>52</sup> For example, Eugene Mahon analysed 38 plays of William Shakespeare to study the playwright’s use of Freudian parapraxes as an aesthetic device to manifest his characters’ self-consciousness;<sup>53</sup> while in Aris Alexandrou’s *Mission Box*, Emmanuela Kantzia described the confessor’s parapraxes as the traces of his betrayal of the comradeship.<sup>54</sup> In Chapter 3 of this thesis, I observe a number of instances of faulty memory and subconscious actions from Wenxuan’s everyday life. I explain the reasons for their emergence through psychoanalysis.

## Illness as Metaphor

Now that I have introduced the Freudian parapraxes, I will now consider the theories through which we will study Wenxuan’s physical illness. During her treatment for breast cancer in 1978, Susan Sontag wrote the critical tome, *Illness as Metaphor*.<sup>55</sup> She argues that her readers should excise metaphoric thinking about illnesses, and that they should instead confront those illnesses truthfully.<sup>56</sup> Her book describes various metaphors that are commonly employed to refer to illnesses in literary

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<sup>51</sup> Freud, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, 4-13.

<sup>52</sup> Berg, *Freud’s Theory and Its Use in Literary and Cultural Studies*, 39-40.

<sup>53</sup> Mahon, “Parapraxes in the Plays of William Shakespeare,” 336-366.

<sup>54</sup> Emmanuela Kantzia, “Evolving Memories: Narrative Habits and Strategies of Survival” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2004), 191-193.

<sup>55</sup> Cynthia J. Davis, “Contagion as Metaphor,” *American Literary History* 14, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 828.

<sup>56</sup> Susan Sontag, “Illness as Metaphor,” in *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and its Metaphors* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1991), 3.

texts, and argues that these metaphors result from people's negative reactions to mysterious illnesses. Those illnesses are seen as mysterious because their causes are unknown and their treatment is ineffective. For pulmonary tuberculosis in the nineteenth century and cancer in the twentieth century, the death rates were so high that people easily related them to death. Therefore, due to their fear of death, people avoid mentioning these illnesses, especially to patients. Instead, Sontag argues, they use metaphors to refer to these illnesses.<sup>57</sup>

The metaphors that Sontag describes in her book are either associated with descriptions of personalities or of social situations.<sup>58</sup> On one hand, people with specific characteristics are generally considered more likely to suffer from certain illnesses. For example, Yu Yue (余悅) argues that Wenxuan's feebleness causes him to tolerate the blood and sputum in his throat, which results in his pulmonary tuberculosis.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, Sontag argues, societies are also imagined as human beings that can fall sick. For example, Xiaobing Tang argues that the blood stains on Wenxuan's proof-sheet signify the hollowness of the patriotic messages written on the sheet.<sup>60</sup> Although I disagree with Tang's argument regarding Chinese writers' styles during the Communist regime, in Chapter 4 of this thesis, I consider his article in my discussion of Ba Jin's contributions to the metaphorical presentation of pulmonary tuberculosis.

This thesis aims to understand the dreary side of the everyday life presented in *Cold Nights*. In Chapter 2, I discuss how difficult everyday life was for ordinary people during the Sino-Japanese War. I begin by

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 5-9.

<sup>58</sup> Ronald Frankenberg, "Sickness as Cultural Performance: Drama, Trajectory, and Pilgrimage Root Metaphors and the Making Social of Disease," *International Journal of Health Services* 16, no. 4 (1986): 606.

<sup>59</sup> Yu Yue, "Disease, Character, Narrative: An Interpretation on Bajin's Novel *Cold Nights*" [疾病·性格·敘事——對巴金小說《寒夜》的一種解讀], *Journal of Radio & TV University (Philosophy & Social Science)* [廣播電視大學學報(哲學社會科學版)], no. 2 (2016): 52.

<sup>60</sup> Xiaobing Tang, "The Last Tubercular in Modern Chinese Literature: On Ba Jin's *Cold Nights*," in *Chinese Modern: The Heroic and the Quotidian* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 153-154.

considering on the lower-class of hawkers, rickshaw pullers, and domestic servants. This group of people is seemingly omitted from the novel. I fill the gap in Ba Jin's novel by supplementing his account with historical data about the lower-class before and after the disintegration of the family system. In addition to considering the fragments of everyday actions depicted in the novel, I illustrate their adaptation to the adverse circumstances in wartime Chongqing. Furthermore, I link the everyday life of Wenxuan's mother to that of the lower-class, because she refuses to give the wash to the laundry women to save money for Wenxuan's medication. I also argue that Wenxuan is even poorer than those in the lower class, because he is too weak to perform heavy manual labor, and does not have spare cash for street food or rickshaw rides.

In Chapter 3, I ponder the everyday life of Wang Wenxuan. Before his pulmonary tuberculosis becomes active, there are four everyday issues that bother Wenxuan: the Sino-Japanese War, his job, his family, and his health. The war leads him to flee from Shanghai to Chongqing, which destroys his dream of establishing a secondary school in his hometown. After his disease becomes severe, he loses his job, and he can only pin all his hopes on his family. Unfortunately, Shusheng decides to move to Lanzhou with her supervisor to earn an increased salary and to begin a new life. This shatters Wenxuan's last hope. I call his psychological state the "disintegration of everyday life". When Wenxuan attempts to suppress the emotions caused by the disintegration of everyday life, his emotions further disrupt his mind, causing the emergence of Freudian parapraxes. In this chapter, I consider these Freudian parapraxes and explain how they emerge.

After studying Wenxuan's psychological defects, I focus on his physical disease. Wenxuan has been recognized as "the last tubercular in modern Chinese literature".<sup>61</sup> In addition to the fact that he dies shortly before the establishment of the People's Republic of China, his pulmonary tuberculosis is representative of the history of modern Chinese literature. In Chapter 4, I compare the hero of Ba Jin's first

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<sup>61</sup> Tang, "The Last Tubercular in Modern Chinese Literature," 156-160.

fictional work *Destruction*, Du Daxin, to Wenxuan from different perspectives: his passion, his living environment, the course of his disease, and his death. I argue that Wenxuan is not a typical tubercular character in literary works, discuss the depiction of Wenxuan's disease, and explain Ba Jin's use of illness as metaphor.

## Chapter 2

### Hawkers, Rickshaw Pullers, and Domestic Servants in Wartime Chongqing

As the grandson of a landlord, the young Ba Jin lived in a mansion in Chengdu (成都) that housed over 20 servants who served the masters and mistresses of the mansion.<sup>1</sup> However, despite that he was one of these young masters, Ba Jin did not frequently give orders to the servants. At least in his memory, he treated the servants as playmates or even bosom friends:<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes the sedan-chair bearers cooked in the stable and I started the fire for them. I put chopped wood and dried leaves in the wood-burning stove. When they played cards, I watched from the sidelines and often helped Old Tang, a gambler who always lost. Sometimes they also sincerely talked about their painful experiences or truthfully criticized their master's good and bad points. They did not keep anything secret from me; they considered me to be a sympathetic young friend. When I needed their help, they were not at all stingy.

During the time that I spent with the servants and sedan-chair bearers, I saw how they maintained their primitive faith in justice. I knew their joys and sufferings. I saw how they suffered poverty, struggled, and surrendered to death.<sup>3</sup>

有時候轎夫們在馬房裡煮飯，我就替他們燒火，把一些柴和枯葉送進那個木灶裡去。他們打紙牌時，我也在旁邊看，常常給那個每賭必輸的老唐幫忙。有時候他們也誠摯地對我訴說他們的痛苦，或者坦白地批評主人們的好壞。他們對我沒

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<sup>1</sup> Nathan K. Mao, *Pa Chin* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978), 21.

<sup>2</sup> Ba Jin, *Ba Jin zizhuan* [巴金自傳] (Hong Kong: Zili Shudian [自力書店], 1956), 79.

<sup>3</sup> Ba Jin, *The Autobiography of Ba Jin*, trans. May-lee Chai (Indianapolis: University of Indianapolis Press, 2008), 47.

有一點隱瞞。他們把我當作一個同情他們的小朋友。當我需要他們幫助的時候，他們也沒有一點兒吝惜。

我生活在僕人轎夫的中間，我看見他們怎樣懷着原始的正義的信仰，過那受苦的生活，我知道他們的歡樂和痛苦，我看見他們怎樣跟貧苦掙扎而屈服而死亡。<sup>4</sup>

Knowing the miseries of the servants and the sedan-chair bearers, Ba Jin was determined to improve their situation. He shared the views of many intellectuals of the May Fourth Movement, who argued that traveling in a sedan chair constituted inhumane treatment of the bearers.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to practising what he preached, Ba Jin promoted his humanitarian beliefs among his readers. He explicitly expresses his disapproval of sedan chairs in the beginning of his masterpiece, *Family* (家).<sup>6</sup> Together with *Spring* (春) and *Autumn* (秋), the *Turbulent Stream* trilogy (激流三部曲) portray the disintegration of the fictional Gao family. These novels caused readers, especially the teenagers of the 1930s, to consider leaving their patriarchal families. The new generation yearned to form their own families after they became adults or were married. As we can see in *Cold Nights*, although the Wang family consist of three generations, it is a small family with only four members. The family do not hire servants. Therefore, depictions of the everyday life of the lower-class are uncommon in the novel. In fact, the servants and sedan-chair bearers who previously worked in mansions rarely followed their young masters to work for their new families. The eradication of the family system, which Ba Jin aimed to propagate among his readers, indeed caused widespread unemployment among members of the lower class.

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<sup>4</sup> Ba Jin, *Ba Jin zizhuan*, 87.

<sup>5</sup> David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing: City People and Politics in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 33-34. Zhang Henshui [張恨水] states that China cannot be considered democratic when wet nurses and rickshaw pullers remain common in the society. See Zhang Henshui, *Beihai guiyuan* [北海歸燕], in *Yanyu fenfan, fu ni yishi hongyan* [煙雨紛繁，負你一世紅顏] (Beijing: Beijing Institute of Technology Press, 2013), 204.

<sup>6</sup> In the novel, Gao Juemin [高覺民] describes Gao Juehui [高覺慧] as a humanitarian, because Juehui never takes a sedan chair. See Ba Jin, *Family*, in *Ba Jin Xuanji* [巴金選集] (Chongqing: Sichuan People Publishing House, 1982), 1:10.

Therefore, one could argue that, rather than making the life of the lower-class better, Ba Jin argues in favour of a system that somehow made them even poorer.

## The Lower-Class and the Disintegration of the Family System

The unemployed lower-class found themselves liberated from patriarchal families, and needed to find alternative employment. They became the lower-class individuals who populate *Cold Nights*. Among the unemployed lower-class, the sedan-chair bearers were those who suffered the least, for they could continue carrying sedan chairs for the paying public. As public sedan-chair bearers, however, these workers no longer received a guaranteed income or enjoyed the food and accommodations provided by their former employers.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, these workers could make up for their losses by maximizing the number of fares they received. The real challenge faced by the sedan-chair bearers was the advancement in technology that threatened to replace them.

Sets of wheels and ball bearing systems were attached to sedan chairs to produce rickshaws, which required less labor to operate than did sedan chairs.<sup>8</sup> The rickshaw was invented in Japan in the late 1860s and was introduced to Shanghai in 1873 and to Chongqing in 1929, after the city's first paved road, Central Main Road (中區幹路), was constructed.<sup>9</sup> Rickshaws were as flexible as sedan chairs and could reach almost every corner of a city, unlike buses and trams, which had fixed routes. They were more welcomed by passengers than sedan chairs because the wheels helped to reduce the effort required by the

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<sup>7</sup> For example, a sedan-chair bearer serving Ba Jin's grandfather became a homeless beggar after being fired by the old Mr Lee. See Ba Jin, *Ba Jin zizhuan*, 87.

<sup>8</sup> Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing*, 23-24.

<sup>9</sup> Fang Zhou, "The Wheels that Transformed the City: The Historical Development of Public Transportation Systems in Shanghai, 1843-1937" (PhD diss., Georgia Institute of Technology, 2010), 103-104; Zhu Zhihong [朱之洪] et al., ed., *Baxian zhi* [巴縣志] (Chongqing: *Baxian Zhi* Bianzuan Weiyuanhui [巴縣志編纂委員會], 1939), 14:3; Pan Wenhua [潘文華] et al., ed., *Jiu nianlai zhi Chongqing shizheng tekan* [九年來之重慶市政特刊] (Chongqing: The Government of Chongqing, 1936), 75.

pullers, so they could be operated at a higher speed, and passengers could reach their destinations in a shorter time. Rickshaws became so popular in Chongqing that the number of rickshaws increased from 18 in 1929 to 2,550 in 1935,<sup>10</sup> and then to a peak of 3,194 in 1944.<sup>11</sup> However, because a rickshaw required only one puller to operate, if all sedan-chair bearers had transitioned to rickshaw pullers, the number of competitors faced by each rickshaw puller would have at least doubled.

As they were not considered strong enough to carry sedan chairs or pull rickshaws, female servants were less fortunate than males upon the disintegration of the family system. In the 1920s, female servants were classified on the basis of their marital status. Married female servants were called “amah” (阿媽). They had salaries and often worked as nannies or wet nurses. They lived with their employers but could leave the mansions to look after their own families, and they could leave their positions when they so desired.<sup>12</sup> Unmarried female servants, on the other hand, were called “little sisters” (妹子), and were often purchased by their employers. They performed extensive housework, and were not paid, but were given food and accommodations. These servants were often badly beaten if they made mistakes, and they could not leave the mansions freely unless ordered to do so and accompanied by their employers. When they grew up, they were often sold as concubines, or were considered lucky if they were kept as the young master’s concubine.<sup>13</sup>

After the disintegration of the family system, female servants were liberated from their employers. Married female servants returned to their

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<sup>10</sup> Pan, *Jiu nianlai zhi Chongqing shizheng tekan*, 76.

<sup>11</sup> Uchida Tomoyuki [内田知行], “Zhanshi peidu Chongqing shi de shinei jiaotong xitong” [戰時陪都重慶市的市內交通系統], *The Journal of Studies of China’s Resistance War Against Japan* [抗日戰爭研究], no. 4 (November 2013): 124.

<sup>12</sup> After receiving double pay at the year-end, many amahs liked to quit their jobs and find new employers. See Wu Lingmei [吳令湄], *Xichuang xiaopin* [西窗小品] (Hong Kong: Nanyuan Shuwu [南苑書屋], 1965), 95.

<sup>13</sup> There were only very few “little sisters” married to lower-class people, and this can hardly be regarded as lucky. See Kristin Stapleton, *Fact in Fiction: 1920s China and Ba Jin’s Family* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 19-20; Maria Jaschok, *Concubines and Bondservants: A Social History* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1988), 101-102.



families to act as housewives or to look for part-time domestic work on the streets. Many of these servants worked as part-time laundry workers.<sup>14</sup> Unmarried female servants were considered lucky if they were married, either as wives or concubines. Unlucky girls would perform full-time jobs as housemaids in wealthy families until they were married.

The most well-paid servants, either male or female, were those who could cook well. Even now, the Chinese regard food as of the utmost importance in everyday life.<sup>15</sup> A cook could easily make a sufficient income by selling food, and a successful cook could even save enough money to open a restaurant. Even if the cook failed to become a shop owner, a hawker's business in which the cook prepared food on the street was often successful, as the aroma of the food easily attracts pedestrians.<sup>16</sup>

## The Lower-Class in Wartime Chongqing

During the Sino-Japanese War, the Nationalist Government moved its capital from Nanjing to Chongqing in November 1937. Thousands of individuals fled to the provisional capital, and as a result, its population grew from 475,968 in 1937 to 1,049,450 in 1945.<sup>17</sup> The lower-class in Chongqing were thought to have improved financially. However, even hawkers in wartime Chongqing could not make money as easily as they could before the war. For example, cooking over an open fire was banned due to the frequent bombing of the city.<sup>18</sup> This prohibition was

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<sup>14</sup> Stapleton, *Fact in Fiction*, 37. Laundry worker is the only mentioned part-time domestic servant in *Cold Nights*. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, in *Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature, 1937-1949* [中國新文學大系 1937-1949], ed. Sun Yong [孫顯] et al. (Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Art Press, 1990), 9:383, 435, 443.

<sup>15</sup> There is an old Chinese saying that “to a king the people are ‘heaven’, and to the people food is ‘heaven’.” [王者以民人為天，而民人以食為天] See Sima Qian, *Records of the Grand Historian: Han Dynasty I*, trans. Burton Watson, rev. ed. (Hong Kong: Columbia University Press, 1993), 221.

<sup>16</sup> Ma Kwok Ming [馬國明] points out that different types of hawkers possess different advantages to attract customers, and the advantage of street food hawkers is the aroma of the food. See Ma Kwok Ming, *Lubian jingji zhengzhixue · xinbian* [路邊經濟政治學 · 新編] (Hong Kong: Step Forward Multi Media, 2009), 31.

<sup>17</sup> *Chongqing Yaolan* [重慶要覽] (Chongqing: Government of Chongqing, 1945), 19.

<sup>18</sup> An episode of bombing began when Japanese bombers were detected leaving Wuhan [武漢]. A red lantern would be hoisted, representing an air-raid warning.

put in place due to fears that the smoke from open fires would be recognized by the bomber pilots as targets.<sup>19</sup> As a result, people hiding in air-raid shelters were often hungry, especially if bombing campaigns were prolonged. This scarcity created opportunities for hawkers to make money. On one hand, hawkers could enter shelters to sell their food to citizens. On the other hand, hawkers could raise the prices of their food to make large sums of money, as hungry citizens care little about the price of food. However, the prohibition of open fires imposed strict restrictions on the types of food that could be prepared. Hawkers could only sell precooked food such as cakes and pastries,<sup>20</sup> or food prepared without an open fire, such as hot water and fried rice-candies (炒米糖開水).<sup>21</sup>

As the bomb threats progressed, restrictions on hawking in air-raid shelters was tightened. In the first chapter of *Cold Nights*, the dialogue between two hawkers explains their difficulties:

“The only business I had today,” said a hoarse voice at a street corner, “was to sell five pieces of snow-flake pastry and a couple of cakes.” Wenxuan turned his head toward the corner and saw a shadow there.

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When the bombers reached Yichang [宜昌], a second red lantern would be hoisted and a siren alarm would be sounded. When the bombers reached the outskirts of Chongqing, the urgent-warning alarm would be sounded, and the two red lanterns would be taken down. Finally, when the city was clear of the bombing risk, a green lantern would be hoisted. This marked the end of the bombing. See Edna Tow, “The Great Bombing of Chongqing and the Anti-Japanese War, 1937-1945,” in *The Battle for China: Essays on the Military History of the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1945*, ed. Mark Peattie, Edward J. Drea, and Hans van de Ven (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 271-272.

<sup>19</sup> A Chongqing citizen who lit an open fire during an episode of bombing would be sent to the police station. See Zhang Henshui, *Bashan yeyu* [巴山夜雨] (Taiyuan: Beiyue Wenyi Press, 1993), 185.

<sup>20</sup> Cakes and pastries are sold by the two hawkers in the first chapter of *Cold Nights*. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 280.

<sup>21</sup> Ba Jin was a frequent customer of hot water and fried rice-candies. See Ba Jin, “Tan Hanye” [談《寒夜》], in *Ba Jin wenji* [巴金文集] (Beijing: People’s Literature Publishing House, 1962), 14:436. However, Zhang Henshui comments that the “hot water” in hot water and fried rice-candies is not hot at all, and buyers do not know whether the water has been boiled. See Zhang Henshui, *Shangcheng huiyilu* [山城回憶錄], in *Yanyu fenfan, fu ni yishi hongyan*, 76.

"I haven't had any customers at all tonight," replied a younger disheartened voice. "Business has never been worse. Many air-raid shelters won't let us inside. In the old days, I could get into any of them."

"We've no idea where the Japanese were bombing tonight. Was it Chengdu again? Why hasn't the warning been lifted after so many hours?" said the one with the hoarse voice, slowly as if talking to himself, hearing but not really paying attention to his companion's words.

"Last night, it wasn't lifted until the third watch [between 11pm and 1am]. Tonight it might even be later," answered the other.<sup>22</sup>

「我賣了五封雲片糕，兩個蛋糕，就是這點兒生意！」一個沙啞的聲音從側角發出來。他側過臉去，看見一團黑影縮在那兒。

「我今晚上還沒有開張。如今真不比往年間，好些洞子都不讓我們進去了。在早我哪個洞子不去？」另一個比較年青的聲音接着說，聲音裡含了一點失望。

「今晚上不曉得炸哪兒，是不是又炸成都，這麼久還不解除警報，」前一個似乎沒有聽明白他同伴的話，卻自語似地慢慢說，好像他一邊說一邊在思索似的。

「昨天打三更才解除，今晚怕要更晏些，」另一個接腔道。<sup>23</sup>

The hawkers in the above scene were not allowed to hawk in air-raid shelters. Therefore, they could only sell their food after all air-raid warnings had been lifted. As a result, the residents of wartime Chongqing often heard old men hawking hot water and fried rice-candies throughout the night.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Slightly amended from Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, trans. Nathan K. Mao and Liu Ts'un-yan, traditional Chinese-English bilingual ed. (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002), 4-6.

<sup>23</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 280.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 326, 409, 427; Zhang, *Shangcheng huiyilu*, 76.

It is harsh to allow an old hawker to stay outdoors on a cold winter night. Luckily, winters in Chongqing are mild, with an average temperature of 6°C to 8°C.<sup>25</sup> However, Chongqing is well-known for its humidity of roughly 80% year-round.<sup>26</sup> This cold and humid environment often leads to the development of chilblains, which are inflammatory lesions on the skin that result from exposure to non-freezing coldness and humidity. This condition is most common among young women,<sup>27</sup> especially domestic servants who frequently perform washing tasks. Patients with chilblains may find purplish lesions on their fingers or toes that are accompanied by itching, burning, and even intense pain.

In wartime conditions, chilblains were prevalent in various communities.<sup>28</sup> In *Cold Nights*, for example, Wang Wenxuan's mother develops chilblains during the winter:

Wenxuan noticed his mother's red and puffed hands, remarking in surprise, "How did you develop such horrible chilblains?"

Drawing her hand back she answered calmly, "I had them last year, too."

"But they were not as bad as they are now. Don't wash clothes in this cold weather. You'd better give the wash to the laundry woman."

"Do you have any idea of how much that would cost? One thousand four hundred yuan a month. The price has been doubled."

"So what! Your hands are more important. You suffered. I am terribly sorry."

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<sup>25</sup> Zhao Gongqing [趙公卿], ed., *Chongqing* [重慶] (Beijing: Publishing House of Minority Nationalities, 2000), 8.

<sup>26</sup> Zhao Chaozhong [趙朝忠] et al., ed., *Ba Xian Zhi* [巴縣誌] (Chongqing: Chongqing Publishing House, 1994), 76.

<sup>27</sup> A. K. Patra, A. L. Das, and P. Ramadasan, "Diltiazem vs. Nifedipine in Chilblains: A Clinical Trial," *Indian Journal of Dermatology, Venereology and Leprology* 69, no. 3 (May 2003): 211; Tamara D. Simon, Jennifer B. Soep, and J. Roger Hollister, "Pernio in Pediatrics," *Pediatrics* 116, no. 3 (September 2005): 473.

<sup>28</sup> For example, during World War II, up to 50% of women in northern Europe developed chilblains. See Simon, Soep, and Hollister, "Pernio in Pediatrics," 473.

“Money is money. I’d rather save it for your medicine than give it to the laundry woman,” she said.<sup>29</sup>

他拉着她的紅腫的手驚叫道：「媽，你怎麼今年生了凍瘡了！」

母親縮回了手，淡淡地說：「我去年也生過的。」

「去年哪有這樣厲害！我說冷天你不要自己洗衣服吧，還是包給外面大娘洗好些。」

「外面大娘洗，你知道要多少錢一個月？」她不等他回答，自己又接下去：「一千四百元，差不多又漲了一倍了。」

「漲一倍就漲一倍，不能為了省一千四，就讓你的手吃苦啊，」他痛心地說。「我太對不住你了，」他又添上一句。

「可是錢總是錢啊。我寧肯省下一千四給你醫病，也不情願送給那班洗衣服的大娘，」母親說。<sup>30</sup>

Wenxuan’s mother develops chilblains because she washes the family’s laundry instead of hiring a laundry worker. In this case, the mother saves some 1,000 yuan every month to be spent on Wenxuan’s medication. She does her family’s laundry in order to save money, but she refuses to work as a laundry woman. Nevertheless, she develops recurring chilblains every winter. We can well imagine how serious the chilblains of professional laundry workers were in wartime Chongqing. Like Wenxuan’s mother, they had to bear frequent and intense pain to finish their washing tasks.

The treatment for chilblains is unsatisfactory, but the lesions disappear when the temperature rises.<sup>31</sup> However, in wartime Chongqing, some lower-class people put their lives at risk in pursuit of work. Chongqing is known as the “Mountain City” because it consists of

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<sup>29</sup> Slightly amended from Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 382-384.

<sup>30</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 435.

<sup>31</sup> M. H. A. Rustin, Julia A. Newton, N. P. Smith, and Pauline M. Dowd, “The Treatment of Chilblains with Nifedipine: The Results of a Pilot Study, a Double-blind Placebo-controlled Randomized Study and a Long-term Open Trial,” *British Journal of Dermatology* 120, no. 2 (February 1989): 267; Patra, Das, and Ramadasan, “Diltiazem vs. Nifedipine in Chilblains,” 211; Simon, Soep, and Hollister, “Pernio in Pediatrics,” 473-474.

many steeply sloping areas.<sup>32</sup> Almost every rickshaw journey required the rickshaw puller to climb or descend many slopes. To climb a slope, a rickshaw puller had to bend his back, lower his head to the pulling bar, and pull the rickshaw slowly. Throughout the climbing process, the puller would breathe deeply like a dying cow. To descend the slope, the rickshaw puller raised the pulling bar to his shoulders and decelerated the sliding rickshaw. During the climbing and descending processes, the entire rickshaw, including the rickshaw puller and the passenger, could turn over quite easily.<sup>33</sup> In *Cold Nights*, the Wang family can see rickshaw pullers through their window:

The main street came down from a hillside, and she saw rickshaws racing down the hill, the feet of the rickshaw pullers flying in the air. She felt dazed.<sup>34</sup>

大街是從山坡開辟出來的。迎着她眼光的正是高的一段。因此她能夠看見幾輛人力車銜接地從坡上跑下來，車夫的幾乎不挨地的懸空般跑着的雙腳使她眼花繚亂。<sup>35</sup>

Regardless of the danger of their work, some rickshaw pullers provided express services to earn more money. This service was called a “flying run” (飛跑), in which the pullers ran at high speeds. This practice was so tiring that some rickshaw pullers died of exhaustion during their rickshaw journeys.<sup>36</sup> In exchange for their labor and danger, rickshaw pullers charged expensive fares. In 1941, a rickshaw puller charged his passengers 1 yuan per kilometer, which was quite unaffordable for ordinary people.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, rickshaw passengers were primarily part of

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<sup>32</sup> Zhao, *Chongqing*, 6-7.

<sup>33</sup> Zhang, *Shangcheng huiyilu*, 77.

<sup>34</sup> Slightly amended from Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 202.

<sup>35</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 359.

<sup>36</sup> Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing*, 40-41.

<sup>37</sup> For reference, the bus fare was 0.8 yuan per kilometer in 1943. See Uchida, “Zhanshi peidu Chongqing shi de shinei jiaotong xitong,” 122-125. From 1941 to October 1944, the overall inflation rate of Chongqing was 11,062%. Therefore, in late 1944, which is the time of *Cold Nights*, the rickshaw fare was 111 yuan per kilometer, while the bus fare was 11 yuan per kilometer. See *Chongqing yaolan*, 84.

the middle-class.<sup>38</sup> In *Cold Nights*, for example, Wang Wenxuan refuses to take a rickshaw, even when he hurts his knee:

Old Mr. Zhong noticed and came over to him, saying: "Aren't you well? You look terrible. You shouldn't work this afternoon. You'd better go home and have a rest."

He nodded gratefully and answered: "Then, will you ask for half a day's leave for me? I really don't feel well." He went out the door. A rickshaw was just passing the entrance, and the puller's eyes strayed towards him. "You'd better go home by rickshaw," Mr. Zhong urged from the doorway.

"It doesn't matter. It's not far. I can walk slowly," he answered, turning his head. Then, pulling himself together, he stepped onto the road to cross to the other side.<sup>39</sup>

鍾老望見他，便走過來說：「你不舒服吧？臉色很難看，下半年不要辦公了。回家去睡個午覺也好。」

他感激地點一個頭，答道：「那麼就請你替我請半天假吧！我自己也覺得精神不大好。」他便走出門去。一輛黃包車正拉到門前，車夫無意地看了他一眼。鍾老在門內勸道：「你坐車回去吧。」

「不要緊，路很近，我可以慢慢走，」他回過頭答道，便打起精神走下馬路，到對面人行道上。去。<sup>40</sup>

When Wenxuan applies for sick leave, his salary is deducted.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, he is forced to contribute 1,000 yuan to his supervisor's birthday party the next day. After that expense, he only has some 100 yuan left to his name, and he cannot even buy a piece of cake to

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<sup>38</sup> The richest people travelled in cars, the poor walked, and rickshaws were mainly used by the middle-class. See Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing*, 25-26.

<sup>39</sup> Ba Jin, *Bitter Cold Nights*, in *Selected Works of Ba Jin*, trans. Jock Hoe, 2nd ed. (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2005), 2:293.

<sup>40</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 317.

<sup>41</sup> The publishing company deducts its employee's salaries even if the employee applies for a two-hour leave. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 291.

celebrate Shusheng's birthday.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, he does not want to spend even a halfpenny on transportation as long as he can barely walk. Once the rickshaw puller finds that Wenxuan cannot afford his services, he quickly turns to another potential customer.

### The Wang Family as Lower-Class

A rickshaw puller could recognize whether an individual could be a potential customer based on the person's attire. In wartime Chongqing, people of the middle class often wore suits,<sup>43</sup> and during winters, they often wore overcoats.<sup>44</sup> However, in *Cold Nights*, Wang Wenxuan is so poor that he cannot afford an overcoat.<sup>45</sup> Throughout the story, he goes out with an old felt hat. He changes his underwear every day, but his underwear deteriorates with every change, and his silk robe is fading. His shoes have been gnawed by rats twice in five months, and there is a large hole in each shoe. On the coldest days, he only wears an additional faded and padded gown on top of his silk robe and an old striped scarf around his neck. Overall, he has the look of a shabby middle-aged man. Therefore, the rickshaw pullers recognize that Wenxuan is not a potential customer, and tend to look down on him. For example, on one occasion, a rickshaw almost crashes into Wenxuan. The rickshaw puller refuses to apologize to Wenxuan, and, instead, scolds him for not paying attention to the traffic conditions, as if the rickshaw journey had been seriously delayed by Wenxuan.<sup>46</sup>

Wenxuan looks feeble in his middle age, and his physical condition is indeed terrible. During his illness, he must take long rests even after short walks. We can well imagine that, if Wenxuan had been

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<sup>42</sup> With only 100 yuan left, Wenxuan cannot buy a one-pound cake, which costs 400 yuan. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 318.

<sup>43</sup> This is what Tang Baiqing wears before he is reduced to poverty. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 305.

<sup>44</sup> Zeng Shusheng and her supervisor wear overcoats during the winter. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 293.

<sup>45</sup> Wenxuan has not bought even a pair of socks in two years, much less an overcoat. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 332.

<sup>46</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 305.



asked to pull a rickshaw, he would have given up the task after working for a matter of minutes. Even if he could take a job as a rickshaw puller, the job would further harm his health. Rickshaw pullers tended to smoke opium to relieve the pain caused by their work, and the drugs caused them to have shorter than average lifespans.<sup>47</sup>

Probably out of self-pity, Wenxuan imagines himself working as a hawker:

The only noise was the sad cry of the old hawker selling hot water and fried rice-candies. It was a weak, hollow, lonely voice. Wang visualized himself as a poor man, neck drawn into his collar, his back hunched and his hands tucked into the sleeves of a torn, greasy cotton-padded gown, one so thin that it could not protect him from the howling wind. For an educated man how lonely and sickly he was and ever would be! He wept under the quilt.<sup>48</sup>

從街上送來淒涼的聲音：「炒米糖開水。」聲音多麼衰弱，多麼空虛，多麼寂寞。這是一個孤零零的老人的叫賣聲！他彷彿看見了自己的影子，縮著頭，駝著背，兩手插在袖筒裡，破舊油膩的棉袍擋不住寒風。一個多麼寂寞病弱的讀書人。現在……將來？他想着，他在棉被下哭出聲來了。<sup>49</sup>

However, Wenxuan is certainly unsuited to work as a hawker in the cold conditions.<sup>50</sup> In fact, after the onset of his pulmonary tuberculosis, he only goes out twice during the winter—once to ask his friend to find him a job, and once to follow Shusheng's car when she leaves for Lanzhou.<sup>51</sup> Even though the weather is warm, the dusty streets of wartime

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<sup>47</sup> Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing*, 40.

<sup>48</sup> Slightly amended from Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 366.

<sup>49</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 427.

<sup>50</sup> In *Cold Nights*, Wenxuan's mother asks him not to open the window to avoid catching a cold. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 415.

<sup>51</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 417, 431.

Chongqing are harmful to his health.<sup>52</sup> All in all, it would have been quite inappropriate for the sick Wenxuan to work as a hawker.

Near the end of his life, Wenxuan is confined to bed. His mother is the only person who looks after him. However, as described by Shusheng, Wenxuan's mother is an incompetent domestic servant:

No matter how much she boasts of being well-educated, of being moral, now that she is over fifty, she is merely a second-class amah, cooking meals, washing clothes, cleaning the house, and which of these does she do to perfection!<sup>53</sup>

她雖然自誇學問如何，德行如何，可是到了五十高齡，卻還來做一個二等老媽，做飯，洗衣服，打掃房屋，哪一樣她做得出色！<sup>54</sup>

Wenxuan's mother has bound feet.<sup>55</sup> When foot binding was still a popular practice, the masters of wealthy families often hired "little sisters" to serve girls who had limited mobility due to their bound feet.<sup>56</sup> Hence, we can deduce that Wenxuan's mother was born into a wealthy family, and that she is accustomed to being served, but is not accustomed to serving others.<sup>57</sup> However, during the Sino-Japanese War, she must work as an unpaid domestic servant for her son, administering drugs, feeding him milk, changing his clothes, and toileting—undertaking tasks that a paid domestic servant would be unwilling to undertake.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> A tubercular patient is recommended to stay in a place with fresh air. See Zhang Dunrong [張敦榕], *Feijiehe de zhenduan yu zhiliao* [肺結核的診斷與治療] (Beijing: People's Military Medical Publisher, 2003), 14. However, the district where the Wangs live is very dusty, especially after a truck passes by. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 417.

<sup>53</sup> Ba Jin, *Bitter Cold Nights*, 480.

<sup>54</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 447.

<sup>55</sup> In a quarrel between Shusheng and Wenxuan's mother, Shusheng ridicules her mother-in-law's bound feet. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 389-390.

<sup>56</sup> Stapleton, *Fact in Fiction*, 22.

<sup>57</sup> In *Cold Nights*, Wang Wenxuan's mother recalls that she has not been massaged for a long time, implying that she was a young mistress in the past. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 417.

<sup>58</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 473. Chinese domestic servants refused to wash their mistresses' contaminated underpants, much less to assist their masters with elimination needs. See Ida Pruitt, *A Daughter of Han: The Autobiography of a*

Wenxuan and his mother are educated people. Wenxuan is a university graduate, and his mother received her education from an old-style private school.<sup>59</sup> However, during the Sino-Japanese War, they were reduced to the lower-class.<sup>60</sup> Wenxuan's mother is called a "second-class amah", for she is not paid, and she is not proficient in domestic duties. Wenxuan appears even more pitiful than his mother. On one hand, he is too weak to perform heavy manual labor. On the other hand, he is too poor to pay for the services provided by hawkers, rickshaw pullers, and domestic servants. Although the educated people of wartime Chongqing did not necessarily become rich or middle-class, neither were all reduced to poverty, despite that the Sino-Japanese War indeed effected a radical change in the everyday life of the Wangs. This change greatly impacted Wenxuan's psychological state, and these effects will be discussed in the next chapter.

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*Chinese Working Woman*, told by Ning Lao T'ai-t'ai (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), 185.

<sup>59</sup> Shoko Kawamura [河村昌子], "Minguo shiqi de Zhongguo nüzi jiaoyu zhuangkuang yu Ba Jin de *Hanye*" [民國時期的中國女子教育狀況與巴金的《寒夜》], in *Ba Jin: Xin shiji de chanshi* [巴金：新世紀的闡釋], ed. Chen Sihe [陳思和] and Gu Yeping [辜也平] (Fuzhou: Fujian Education Press, 2002), 175-176.

<sup>60</sup> One day, Wenxuan's mother suggests that Wenxuan watch a movie. She says that they are "after all, educated people, and need some entertainment." This shows that she regards educated people as more worthy than those in other walks of life. However, Wenxuan refuses to do so, and tells his mother that educated people are now lower-class people who cannot even afford to watch movies. See Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 152.

## Chapter 3

### The Disintegration of Wang Wenxuan's Everyday Life

The plot of *Cold Nights* spans about one year. The story seems to begin in the late autumn of 1944, and comes to an end when Wang Wenxuan dies on September 3, 1945.<sup>1</sup> During that period, the Japanese army fought a series of battles against the National Army in southern China to open a land route from northern China to French Indochina. The Japanese won all three battles and occupied the entire Henan Province (河南省), Changsha (長沙) and Hengyang (衡陽) of Hunan Province (湖南省), and Guilin (桂林) and Liuzhou (柳州) of Guangxi Province (廣西省).<sup>2</sup> Among these occupied provinces and cities, Changsha and Hengyang are important cities for rice and fish farming. The loss of these cities aggravated the food shortage problem in the Kuomintang-controlled area, which resulted in severe hyperinflation in wartime Chongqing.<sup>3</sup>

In October 1944, the consumer price index of Chongqing reached 54,799, with a base index of 101.3 in 1937.<sup>4</sup> The resulting inflation rate over the seven-year period was 53,996%. The cost of rice increased from

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<sup>1</sup> In the daytime before Wang Wenxuan dies, the citizens of Chongqing celebrate the official surrender of Japan. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, in *Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature, 1937-1949* [中國新文學大系 1937-1949], ed. Sun Yong [孫顯] et al. (Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Art Press, 1990), 9: 480.

<sup>2</sup> The campaign was called the Ichigō Offensive [literally, Operation Number One], which consisted of the Battle of Hunan [湖南會戰], the Battle of Changheng [長衡會戰], and the Battle of Guangxi [廣西會戰]. See Cheng Lang-Ping [鄭浪平], *An Everlasting Glory—The Second Sino-Japanese War (1931-1945)* [中國抗日戰爭史 (1931-1945)] (Taipei: Rye Field Publications, 2001), 713-756; Hara Takeshi, “The Ichigō Offensive,” in *The Battle for China: Essays on the Military History of the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1945*, ed. Mark Peattie, Edward J. Drea, and Hans van de Ven (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 392-393.

<sup>3</sup> Hyperinflation refers to an episode of inflation in which the monthly inflation rate exceeds 50%. See Phillip Cagan, “The Monetary Dynamics of Hyperinflation,” in *Studies in the Quantity Theory of Money*, ed. Milton Friedman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 25. During the Sino-Japanese War, an episode of hyperinflation took place in Chongqing from July 1943 to August 1945. See Chang Kia-NGau, *The Inflationary Spiral: The Experience in China, 1939-1950* (Cambridge: Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and John Wiley & Sons, 1958), 371.

<sup>4</sup> *Chongqing yaolan* [重慶要覽] (Chongqing: Government of Chongqing, 1945), 83.

0.32 yuan per liter in 1937 to 174.48 yuan per liter in October 1944.<sup>5</sup> However, wages do not increase to match the price of goods during periods of hyperinflation. Throughout the story, the monthly salary of Wenxuan remains at 7,000 yuan,<sup>6</sup> with which he can hardly purchase 40 liters of rice in October 1944. With runaway inflation, he cannot afford enough rice to feed his family.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, it is understandable that a colleague of Wenxuan asks for a pay increase to make ends meet.<sup>8</sup> On the contrary, Wenxuan dares not express his discontent with his low income to his supervisor, because Zeng Shusheng is the major breadwinner of his family, and he knows that she can feed the family even if he is not working.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, he is concerned about the war, his job, his family, and his health. In the following sections, I discuss these four everyday troubles in the case of Wenxuan.

## The War

The Marco Polo Bridge Incident, which took place on 7 July 1937, marked the start of the Sino-Japanese War. Although Japan failed to win the war in three months as planned, the Japanese army seized Beijing in one month and captured Shanghai in another three, and in this period, 250,000 Chinese people were killed.<sup>10</sup> In the face of what were deemed

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<sup>5</sup> The cost of rice was 12.15 yuan per stone in 1937. See Zhao Chaozhong [趙朝忠] et al., ed., *Ba Xian Zhi* [巴縣誌] (Chongqing: Chongqing Publishing House, 1994), 404. The Nationalist Government standardized all units of length, volume, and weight in 1928, such that 1 stone equals 37.6 liters. See Zhu Zhihong [朱之洪] et al., ed., *Baxian zhi* [巴縣志] (Chongqing: *Baxian Zhi* Bianzuan Weiyuanhui [巴縣志編纂委員會], 1939), vol. 4 (lower), p. 62.

<sup>6</sup> When Wenxuan is dismissed from his post, he is given 10,500 yuan as a compensation, which is the salary of one and a half months. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 401.

<sup>7</sup> On average, a person consumes 1 koku of rice annually, which is 278.3 liters of rice; therefore a person consumes 23.2 liters of rice monthly. If we consider that only Wenxuan and his mother have their meals at home, the Wang family can be estimated to consume 46.4 liters of rice monthly. See George Sansom, *A History of Japan, 1615-1867* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963), 96.

<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, the supervisor refuses to increase the salaries of the low-ranking staff. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 297.

<sup>9</sup> During Wang Wenxuan's illness, Zeng Shusheng asks him to resign, because she can feed the family with her salary. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 378.

<sup>10</sup> Bruce A. Elleman, *Modern Chinese Warfare, 1795-1989* (London: Routledge, 2001), 202-203.

“Japan’s endless acts of aggression” (暴日無止境之侵略), the Nationalist Government decided to move its capital from Nanjing to Chongqing in November 1937.<sup>11</sup> With the National Army’s retreat, the Japanese Army effortlessly occupied Nanjing. The infamous Nanjing Massacre took place soon afterward, during which the Japanese Army killed over 200,000 Chinese people in six weeks.<sup>12</sup> Ordinary people fled to unoccupied areas to escape from the Japanese army.<sup>13</sup> However, the number of people who were able to escape was far lower than the number of those who were not. Among these refugees, the life of the poor was so difficult that they could not feed themselves. Therefore, many refugees saw no difference between living in an unoccupied city and living under the rule of the Japanese:

In reality there is no reason for us to flee since we have neither money nor power. If we die, our death will make little difference, because being alive, to us, isn’t any better than being dead.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Yang Guangyan [楊光彥] et al., ed., *Chongqing Guomin Zhengfu* [重慶國民政府] (Chongqing: Chongqing Publishing House, 1995), 5.

<sup>12</sup> The death toll of the Nanjing Massacre is a controversial subject. The scholarly valid victimization range is between 40,000 and 200,000. See Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, “Leftover Problems,” in *The Nanking Atrocity, 1937-38: Complicating the Picture* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 384. Mark Eykholt states that the death toll is close to 200,000. See Mark Eykholt, “Aggression, Victimization, and Chinese Historiography of the Nanjing Massacre,” in *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 13. Joshua Fogel believes the number is between 200,000 and 240,000. See Joshua A. Fogel, “Introduction: The Nanjing Massacre in History,” in *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography*, 6. Iris Chang claims that the total number of victims is about 260,000. See Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (New York: Penguin Books Ltd, 1998), 102. Most Chinese scholars tends to argue that the death toll reached more than 300,000. See Sun Zhaiwei [孫宅巍], *Chengqing lishi — Nanjing da tusha yanjiu yu sikao* [澄清歷史—南京大屠殺研究與思考] (Nanjing: Jiangsu Renmin Chubanshe [江蘇人民出版社], 2005), 274. I choose to believe that the death toll reached over 200,000, as was concluded by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East. See “The Judgment (excerpts): The United States of America and Others Versus Araki Sadao and Others,” in *Documents on the Rape of Nanking*, ed. Timothy Brook (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), 261.

<sup>13</sup> For example, over 500,000 people fled to Chongqing during the Sino-Japanese War. See *Chongqing yaolan*, 19.

<sup>14</sup> Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, trans. Nathan K. Mao and Liu Ts’un-yan, traditional Chinese-English bilingual ed. (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002), 226.

其實我們這種人無錢無勢，也用不着逃難。就是遇到不幸，也不過輕如鴻毛，活着不見得比死好。<sup>15</sup>

Unfortunately, a better situation was not guaranteed, even for the wealthy. For example, after the Japanese occupied Changsha and Hengyang, the inhabitants of Guilin were ordered to evacuate to Chongqing in September 1944. Around 500,000 refugees took the Hunan-Guangxi Railway (湘桂鐵路) and then the Guizhou-Guangxi Railway (黔桂鐵路) to enter the provisional capital. On the way, thousands of refugees died of hunger, illness, or exhaustion.<sup>16</sup> It is for this reason that, in the novel, the characters are “completely exhausted” after they have moved to Chongqing.<sup>17</sup> When, afterwards, they contemplate moving to Lanzhou (蘭州), it becomes clear that further evacuation would be a disaster for them, including Wenxuan:

The very idea of having to flee or the talk of severance pay meant that Wenxuan would lose his job, signaling the end of his family and everything he held dear. He remembered what he had heard about the many domestic tragedies which occurred during the Hunan-Guangxi evacuation, and he was such a helpless, almost useless person. Was it going to happen to him one day...? It made his blood run cold just to think about it, but he could not stop worrying. The more he tried to sort out his thoughts, the more confused he became. His work, the hostile stares from Department Chief Zhou, none of these meant anything any more. It seemed as though a familiar voice were whispering to him: Catastrophe! In his fantasy, he had been sentenced to death and he did not even want to appeal.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 369.

<sup>16</sup> Yang Yiqun [楊益群], *XiangGui da chetui—kangzhan shiqi wenhua ren da liuwang* [湘桂大撤退—抗戰時期文化人大流亡] (Guilin: Lijiang Publishing, 1999), 4-9. The tragedy is also reflected in *Cold Nights*. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 336-337, 342.

<sup>17</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 363.

<sup>18</sup> Slightly amended from Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 150.

逃難……遭散……這是他的毀滅，還有他的家庭……湘桂撤退的慘劇，他從別人口中聽到的一切……他又是一個這麼不中用的人……要是真的到了那一天……他覺得一身發冷。他不敢再往下想，卻又不能制止自己。他越想，心越亂。他翻過了兩張校樣，卻沒有把一個字裝進他腦子裡去。工作，他已經不關心了。周主任的眼光，他也不再關心了。他彷彿聽見一個熟習的聲音在他的耳邊說：毀滅！他被人宣告了死刑。他沒有上訴的意思。<sup>19</sup>

Moving the capital from Nanjing to Chongqing was an effective military decision on behalf of the Chinese, because Chongqing was renowned for its defensive advantages. The city is located at the south-eastern edge of the Sichuan Basin (四川盆地). It is surrounded by mountains, with the Daba Mountains (大巴山) in the north, the Wu Mountains (巫山) in the east, and the Wuling Mountains (武陵山) in the south.<sup>20</sup> The Japanese army could only attempt to reach Chongqing by either sailing upstream from Yichang (宜昌) or by crossing the mountainous Guizhou (貴州). Both routes proved difficult, because the Japanese Army could only reach as far as Yichang and Dushan (獨山).<sup>21</sup> Failing to reach Chongqing by land or water, the Japanese army instead conducted a series of strategic bombings in the city. A strategic bombing is a bombing campaign in which not only are the opponent's military equipment and installations targeted, but factories, government buildings, and residential areas are also indiscriminately targeted. The bombings

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<sup>19</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 337.

<sup>20</sup> Zhao Gongqing [趙公卿], ed., *Chongqing [重慶]* (Beijing: Publishing House of Minority Nationalities, 2000), 6-7.

<sup>21</sup> The Japanese Army occupied Yichang in June 1940, but the National Army set up a line of defence at the Three Gorges to prevent Japanese aggression against Chongqing. In September 1941, the National Army attacked Yichang and nearly caused the Japanese General of Yichang to surrender. After the Pacific Ocean theatre came into existence in early 1942, the Japanese Army failed to assign a strong corps again to attack Chongqing via Yichang. Later, during the Ichigō Offensive, the Japanese Army conquered Dushan in December 1944. However, the Japanese Army did not prepare enough war materials to attack Chongqing through the mountainous Guizhou region, and the Chinese Air Force attacked the Japanese rear supply base in Hankou [漢口], forcing the Japanese Army to retreat from Dushan. See Cheng, *An Everlasting Glory*, 537-542, 753-758.



aim to wear down the opponent's resistance and morale. During the Great Bombing of Chongqing, for example, the Japanese army conducted 268 air raids against Chongqing from December 1938 to August 1943. A total of 21,600 bombs were dropped. In the deadliest campaign, during 3-4 May 1939, 3,700 people were killed, 2,650 people were injured, and 4,900 buildings were destroyed.<sup>22</sup>

To reduce civilian loss, the Nationalist Government and some private companies constructed air-raid shelters in Chongqing. By December 1944, there were 284 public shelters and 1,541 private shelters in the provisional capital with a total capacity of 444,968 people.<sup>23</sup> However, the ventilation of the air-raid shelters was poor, especially in public shelters. For example, when hiding in the Great Tunnel, a massive public shelter, thousands of people died from suffocation on 5 June 1941.<sup>24</sup> The Wang family are lucky that they are able to hide in a well-managed air-raid shelter run by the private bank at which Zeng Shusheng works as a clerk.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, Wenxuan displays some symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder from time to time. In addition to taking every noise to be an emergency air-raid warning, he has frequent nightmares about air raids:

He slept on, dreaming. Of course, he did not know he was dreaming [...]

Suddenly he heard the sound of two cannon explosions, and then again everything was still. Almost simultaneously, his son began crying again and his wife was shrieking.

"The enemy is here," he told himself in alarm [...]

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<sup>22</sup> Edna Tow, "The Great Bombing of Chongqing and the Anti-Japanese War, 1937-1945," in *The Battle for China: Essays on the Military History of the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1945*, ed. Mark Peattie, Edward J. Drea, and Hans van de Ven, 256-261.

<sup>23</sup> Note that there were more than 1,000,000 people living in Chongqing at that time. See *Chongqing yaolan*, 15, 52.

<sup>24</sup> Tow, "The Great Bombing of Chongqing and the Anti-Japanese War," 275.

<sup>25</sup> The environment of the private shelters were much better than that of the public shelters. See Tow, "The Great Bombing of Chongqing and the Anti-Japanese War," 270. In *Cold Nights*, Wenxuan usually hides in an air-raid shelter built beside the bank, and he presents a shelter pass issued by the bank in order to enter the shelter. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 279, 334.

He felt people crowding in on him from all directions, pushing and jostling; his body was tossed to and fro like a ship in a tumultuous sea. Dazed and feverish, he pushed forward frantically with all his strength.

Then he woke up and his hands were shaking.

It was only a nightmare, the first of many weird ones he was to have that night.<sup>26</sup>

他做着連續的夢。他自然不知道自己是在夢中 [……]

他忽然聽見一聲霹靂似的巨響。這聲音不知道在什麼地方發出，可是他們的屋子因此搖動了兩下。震動相當厲害。

忽然他聽見了大炮聲。一聲，兩聲。又靜了下去了。孩子又哭起來。妻發出一聲尖叫。

「敵人打來了！」他驚惶地自語道 [……]

人們好像從四面八方向着他擠來，彷彿有無數隻手在推他，他只覺得身子搖來晃去，似乎立在一隻受着大浪顛簸的船上一樣。他頭腦發熱，發昏。他也用力推別人，用力擠上去。

於是他醒了，醒的時候，他的手還在動。

這不過是他的一個夢。他這一晚卻做了好幾個跟這類似的荒唐的夢。<sup>27</sup>

The sounds of warnings, explosions, and crowds of refugees contribute to the traumatic memories that intrude into Wenxuan's consciousness. This is a piece of evidence to suggest that Wenxuan's everyday life is seriously disrupted by the frequent air raids. However, the number of air raids dropped significantly after December 1941, as the Japanese Air Force shifted its focus to the Pacific Ocean Theatre.<sup>28</sup> When the Japanese army reached Dushan in December 1944, they made their last effort to attack Chongqing by conducting several air raids on the city. However, the multitude of air-raid experiences seem to have rendered the citizens of Chongqing weary of sheltering themselves from air raids.

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<sup>26</sup> Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 22-28.

<sup>27</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 287-289.

<sup>28</sup> Tow, "The Great Bombing of Chongqing and the Anti-Japanese War," 263.

For example, during one of the last air raids, Wenxuan's mother demands to stay at home until after the issuance of the last warning. She says that she would rather be bombed in her home than suffocate in a huddle of refugees.<sup>29</sup> She begins to question the power of the Japanese army.

### Wang Wenxuan's Job

According to Wang Wenxuan's mother, the rich "have no guts" and "are more easily frightened than rats."<sup>30</sup> As mentioned previously, Zeng Shusheng works at a private bank in wartime Chongqing. Before the Japanese army reaches Guizhou, the bank plans to establish a new branch in Lanzhou and to transfer some of its assets to the remote city. Shusheng is pleased with her job, for she is recognized among the significant staff members who are designated to move to Lanzhou:<sup>31</sup>

The work at the bank's not heavy, and we're comparatively free. The boss has been very nice to me recently, and the people I work with aren't too bad.<sup>32</sup>

行裡工作不重，我們又比較自由，主任近來對我很好。同事們都不錯。<sup>33</sup>

In spite of performing only light tasks at the bank, Shusheng receives a high salary. Her salary is reviewed frequently and is adjusted according

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<sup>29</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 333-334.

<sup>30</sup> This is what Wenxuan's mother thinks when she is discussing with Wenxuan the possible relocation of the publishing company for which he works. See Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 116.

<sup>31</sup> Wenxuan's mother also thinks that Shusheng's job is decent. One time she comments of Shusheng, "She always looks like a fresh flower. She can't do this and she can't do that. She can only make herself beautiful; she doesn't even have time for her son. What a joke it is that she's a university graduate and holds a responsible job in a bank!" See Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 68.

<sup>32</sup> Ba Jin, *Bitter Cold Nights*, in *Selected Works of Ba Jin*, trans. Jock Hoe, 2nd ed. (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2005), 2:324.

<sup>33</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 339.

to the inflation rate. For example, her salary is upwardly adjusted by one-third in late 1944.<sup>34</sup>

In contrast to Shusheng's, Wenxuan's work situation is uncomfortable. After the Wang family moves to Chongqing, Wenxuan is unemployed for a few months until a man from his home province recommends him for a job in a publishing company. The company seems to be private, but it is in fact quasi-official in nature. It offers poor future prospects for its low-ranking employees, as it plans to relocate to Lanzhou once the Japanese army approaches Guiyang (貴陽). In that case, all low-ranking employees would be dismissed. Nonetheless, the operation of the company is heavily dependent on its low-ranking employees. From Monday to Saturday, the employees work from 9am to 5pm with a one-hour lunch break. They are given many proofs to proofread each day, and are not allowed a minute's break during working hours. Among the low-ranking employees, Wenxuan has a feeling of discrimination:

He wondered why he had to work twice as hard on a day when everyone else was talking about the war. Who would have done his work had he stayed at home? It was not fair!<sup>35</sup>

他心想：時局這樣緊張，同事中今天也有幾位沒來辦公的，大家都是忙忙慌慌，為什麼單單逼我一個人加倍工作？要是我今天不上班呢？這太不公道了。<sup>36</sup>

Wenxuan is discriminated against because he is not willing to ingratiate himself with his supervisors. Needless to say, for this reason, the supervisors do not care to remedy his unfortunate situation. He despises his co-workers for their obsequious attitudes toward the management. As a result, no one cares to associate with him.

However, Wenxuan's job is precious to him. During the Sino-Japanese War, the unemployment rate in Chongqing was higher than

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 353-354.

<sup>35</sup> Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 242.

<sup>36</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 376.

20%.<sup>37</sup> In late 1944, there were over 400,000 uneducated people in Chongqing, and these people accounted for 40% of the population.<sup>38</sup> These uneducated citizens could only find jobs in industries with low entry barriers, such as the mining, agricultural, manufacturing, and transport industries. These individuals would be lucky to even compete for a job that made a meager living.<sup>39</sup> Wenxuan is not an uneducated man—he is a university graduate with academic qualifications that rank him among the top 0.5% of the population.<sup>40</sup> He has a dream of establishing a secondary school in which the students are eager to learn. Unfortunately, his dream does not come true, and he can only work as a proofreader in a publishing company:

He began his monotonous and tedious proofreading job. When he came in he noticed that the galleys were already on his desk. Actually the pile was not as thick as yesterday's and the unintelligible text printed with a smelly ink was not any more distasteful than other piles of galleys. He had no interest in his work at all as his eyes, hands, and pen moved mechanically, checking for typographical errors. Though he never lifted his head from his work, he did not remember a single word on the galleys.<sup>41</sup>

他的工作開始了。還是那單調沉悶的工作。他桌上一堆校樣(他進來時就看見它們躺在那兒)並不比昨天那堆高。那些半清晰半模糊的字跡，那些似乎還帶着油墨氣味的字跡，今天並不比往常更叫人厭倦。他機械地移動眼光，移動手，移動筆，他在校樣上寫下好些字……而且他始終埋着他的頭。<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> For example, in January 1945, there were 1,047,967 people in Chongqing, of which 222,318 people were unemployed. See *Chongqing yaolan*, 17.

<sup>38</sup> In late 1944, 291,347 people were not literate, and 127,638 people were out-of-school in Chongqing. See *Chongqing yaolan*, 18.

<sup>39</sup> Compared with the 400,000 uneducated people, the four mentioned industries only provided around 310,000 jobs. See *Chongqing yaolan*, 17.

<sup>40</sup> *Chongqing yaolan*, 18.

<sup>41</sup> Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 34.

<sup>42</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 291.

Wenxuan does not need to apply any of the knowledge that he gained in his education to his work. As a result, his ambition is gradually worn down by his tedious routines. He realizes that his dream of starting a school can never be fulfilled in wartime Chongqing. Furthermore, as mentioned in the previous section, he can barely feed his family with his salary. In summary, Wenxuan fails to derive satisfaction from his job.

### The Wang Apartment

Wang Wenxuan is lucky enough to own his apartment, and does not pay monthly rent to live there.<sup>43</sup> The Wang family live in a concrete building that was constructed in the early 1940s. Before the 1940s, most of the buildings in Chongqing were made of wood and bamboo. The intensive use of firebombs during the disastrous air raids in early May 1939 resulted in the destruction of nearly 5,000 buildings.<sup>44</sup> For example, the building in which Ba Jin lived between 1944 and 1946 was rebuilt out of the ruins from these air raids.<sup>45</sup> The building was demolished in 2009 for reconstruction.<sup>46</sup>

In *Cold Nights*, Ba Jin imagines that the Wang family live on the third floor of the above-mentioned building. The apartment consists of two rooms. The walls are dark and dirty, for they are not painted.<sup>47</sup> The larger of the two rooms serves as the living room as well as the bedroom where Wenxuan and Shusheng sleep. There is a small square table in the middle of the room, a double bed by its side, and a desk with a rattan chair beside the window. Wenxuan's mother sleeps in the smaller of the

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<sup>43</sup> After Wenxuan dies, his mother sells the apartment to a neighbor for a small sum of money. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 482. Ba Jin says that an apartment in the building can be bought with a large sum of money. He also points out that Shusheng is the one who buys the apartment. See Ba Jin, "Tan *Hanye*" [談《寒夜》], in *Ba Jin wenji* [巴金文集] (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1962), 14:438.

<sup>44</sup> Tow, "The Great Bombing of Chongqing and the Anti-Japanese War," 260-261.

<sup>45</sup> Ba Jin, "Tan *Hanye*," 438.

<sup>46</sup> Lu Yanhui [盧延輝], "Chongqing Minguo Lu yu Ba Jin de *Hanye*" [重慶民國路與巴金的《寒夜》], *Gongmin daokan* [公民導刊], no. 8 (2013): 52-53.

<sup>47</sup> When a neighbor of the Wang family, the Fang family, buy the apartment from Wenxuan's mother, they repaint it so that it looks much brighter than before. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 482.

two rooms. There is also a rattan chair beside her bed. Whenever a truck passes by, a cloud of dust is raised and fills the apartment. The apartment looks dirty, humble, and undecorated. Moreover, the paper window causes the indoor temperature to vary with the outdoor temperature.<sup>48</sup> For example, in late autumn, Wenxuan notes that his home is already cold,<sup>49</sup> while in the summer, he feels that it is “hot and humid inside the room”, as if the walls “might burst into flames at any moment.”<sup>50</sup>

Moreover, the supply of electrical power in wartime Chongqing could not satisfy even the basic needs of the increased population caused by the influx of refugees from the Sino-Japanese War.<sup>51</sup> There were power outages in different areas of the city throughout the year, and in *Cold Nights*, the frequent blackouts in Wenxuan’s apartment make him feel hopeless:

Shusheng brought in the porridge. At that moment the lights went out. “No electricity again?” he grumbled aloud. “They never let you have enough light.”

His mother lit a candle; then she left the room. The unsteady candlelight and its yellowish flicker colored every object in the room with a melancholy hue. Inside the room, two rats were running around; outside, a woman’s tragic voice wailed so that her offspring’s soul might be called back.

“Light! How dare I hope for it?” he sighed resignedly.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Using paper windows instead of glass windows was a common practice in wartime Chongqing, as this reduced the loss caused by heavy bombings. See Wolfgang Karfunkel, *From Nazi Germany to War Torn Central China: Story of a Young Refugee 1940-1951* [重慶往事：一個猶太人的晚年回憶，1940-1951], trans. Dong Jingxuan [董經綸] (Xi’an: Shanxi Renmin Chubanshe [陝西人民出版社], 2014), 45, 53, 74.

<sup>49</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 304. In October 1944, the average temperature of Chongqing was 17.3°C. See *Chongqing yaolan*, 4.

<sup>50</sup> Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 474.

<sup>51</sup> In 1943, for example, there were 158,231 households in Chongqing, but only 46,247,794kWh of electricity was generated. Therefore, on average, a household could consume 0.8kWh of electricity daily, which could only light an 80W light bulb for 10 hours. See *Chongqing yaolan*, 19, 62.

<sup>52</sup> Slightly amended from Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 192.

妻進屋來照料他吃了稀飯。電燈突然熄了。「怎麼今晚上又停電？」他掃興地說。「他們總不給你看見光明，」他訴苦地又加了一句。

「光明？你現在也要光明了？」妻說。他不知道妻是在讚美他，還是在諷刺他。

母親點燃了蠟燭，又走出去了，屋子裡亮起來，但搖晃不定的慘黃色的燭光，給每一件東西都抹上一層憂鬱的顏色。兩隻老鼠穿過屋子賽跑。樓下有一個女人用淒涼的聲音在給小孩叫魂。

「光明。我哪裡敢存這個妄想啊？」他嘆口氣斷念地說。<sup>53</sup>

During blackouts on winter nights, the apartment is portrayed as especially bone-chilling.

### Wang Wenxuan's Health

Wang Wenxuan is not in good health after he moves to Chongqing. Since 1944, he has suffered from malaria and frequent afternoon bouts of fever.<sup>54</sup> However, he is used to his intermittent fevers, and tends to ignore them. If he had recognized his fever as a symptom of pulmonary tuberculosis and had begun treatment at an early stage, then he might have been able to cure his illness.<sup>55</sup>

Tuberculosis is an infectious disease caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.<sup>56</sup> The infection was extremely common in wartime Chongqing.<sup>57</sup> However, the disease was not listed among the official

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<sup>53</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 354-355.

<sup>54</sup> One day Wenxuan feels sick, for he is thinking of the recurrence of malaria, and is given some pills of quinine. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 317-319.

<sup>55</sup> Before Wenxuan's pulmonary tuberculosis becomes noticeable, his mother often worries about his health, and his wife asks him to have a physical examination in the hospital, but he refuses. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 341-342.

<sup>56</sup> Thomas Moulding, "Pathogenesis, Pathophysiology, and Immunology: Clinical Orientations," in *Tuberculosis and Nontuberculous Mycobacterial Infections*, ed. David Schlossberg (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1999), 48.

<sup>57</sup> In the twentieth century, the rates of pulmonary tuberculosis rose to peak levels during the two World Wars. See Zhang Dunrong [張敦榕], *Feijiehe de zhenduan yu*



epidemics of the Nationalist Government,<sup>58</sup> likely because it was incurable at that time. When pulmonary tuberculosis becomes active in a human body, it develops in three stages:<sup>59</sup>

- i. At stage 1, the patient experiences unusual fatigue after mild exercise and has occasional fevers in the afternoon.
- ii. At stage 2, the patient experiences cough and sputum associated with mild hemoptysis. Furthermore, fever in the afternoon becomes frequent, and the patient experiences sweating during sleep.
- iii. In the final stage, the patient's cough becomes severe. The patient also experiences chest pain, loss of body weight, loss of voice, and difficulty swallowing.<sup>60</sup>

A patient loses his appetite and finds it difficult to swallow food, leading to undernutrition and wasting. A wasted person faces a nine times greater risk of dying than does a non-wasted person.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, the mortality rate for people with stage 3 pulmonary tuberculosis is extremely high. Furthermore, the pain of the disease is often described as

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*zhiliao* [肺結核的診斷與治療] (Beijing: People's Military Medical Publisher, 2003), 7. Pulmonary tuberculosis was a common infectious disease in factories in wartime Chongqing. See Joshua H. Howard, "The politicization of Women Workers at War: Labor in Chongqing's Cotton Mills During the Anti-Japanese War" [戰時女工的政治化：抗戰時期重慶紗廠的勞工研究], in *Chongqing in Historical China and World: Selected Papers on Chongqing History* [中國和世界歷史中的重慶—重慶史研究論文選編], ed. Wang Xi [王希] (Chongqing: Chongqing University Press, 2013), 253.

<sup>58</sup> The official epidemics of the Nationalist Government included cholera, dysentery, typhoid, smallpox, meningitis, diphtheria, scarlet fever, plague, typhus, and relapsing fever. See Huang Hong [黃虹], "Chongqing's Epidemic Prevention During the Anti-Japanese War" [試論抗戰時期重慶傳染病的防治], in *Chongqing in Historical China and World: Selected Papers on Chongqing History*, ed. Wang Xi, 301.

<sup>59</sup> The stages of pulmonary tuberculosis described in this thesis were compiled using the classification in traditional Chinese medicine, and are not to be confused with the 5 stages of active pulmonary tuberculosis recognized by doctors in Western countries, for the stage 3 pulmonary tuberculosis described here is deadly, while the stage 3 described in modern Western medicine is not. See Arthur M. Dannenberg, Jr., "Pathophysiology: Basic Aspects," in *Tuberculosis and Nontuberculous Mycobacterial Infections*, ed. David Schlossberg, 19-21.

<sup>60</sup> Chen Cunren [陳存仁], *Jinjinyouwei tan: Guoyi dashi Chen Cunren shiliao shibu quanshu* [津津有味譚：國醫大師陳存仁食療食補全書] (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2010), 417-423.

<sup>61</sup> Robert E Black et al., "Maternal and Child Undernutrition: Global and Regional Exposures and Health Consequences." *Lancet* 371, no. 9608 (January 2008): 245-247.

unbearable. For example, in *Cold Nights*, Wenxuan's discomfort is described as follows:

His five fingers were rubbing his throat continuously; his movements were awkward and his fingers stiff. His chest heaved upward.

"Wenxuan, what do you want?" his mother asked.

He did not respond. After a while, his stiff fingers unleashed their fury as well as they could on his throat. His body was shaking and the wooden bed was squeaking.

"Wenxuan, bear the pain," she said. Getting up, she took his hand away from his throat. But two or three minutes later it returned to his throat. With his mouth wide open, he scratched hard, while his eyes turned white. Scratching his throat madly, his five fingers, with their long nails, left several bloody stripes on his throat.

"Wenxuan, be patient. You can't do this," his mother implored him in anguish.

Gradually he shifted his gaze toward her face. His eyes seemed to say, "I'm in great pain." His body moved about in the bed, shaking and trembling.<sup>62</sup>

他那五根手指不停地在喉嚨上擦揉，動作仍是遲緩而手指僵硬。忽然他把身子向上挺了一下。

「宣，你要什麼？」母親問。

他不回答。過了半晌，他那五根好像僵硬了的手指忽然狂亂地抓他的喉嚨。身子顫抖着，床板也發出響聲。

「宣，你忍耐點，」母親說着，便站起把他那隻手從他的喉嚨上拉開。但是過了兩三分鐘他的手又放到那地方去了。他大大張開嘴，用力地咻，他的眼睛翻白。他的手指在喉嚨上亂搔。那五根手指都長着長指甲，它們在他的喉嚨上劃了幾條血痕。

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<sup>62</sup> Slightly amended from Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 486-488.

「宣，你忍耐點，這樣是不行的，你不能這樣啊，」母親悲痛地求他。他的眼光慢慢地移到她的臉上。他的眼光說着話：我痛得厲害。他的身子在床上搖擺，顫抖。<sup>63</sup>

#### The pain causes Wenxuan to faint:

His mother's weeping brought him back to consciousness. Lying in bed he was drenched in cold sweat, having also wet his pants. He held his mother's hand tightly, dully looking at her affectionate face. His pain eased. He wanted to smile at her, but tears came instead.<sup>64</sup>

他又被母親的哭喚聲驚醒。他躺在床上滿身冷汗，褲子被小便打濕透了。他抓緊母親的手，呆呆地望着那張親愛的臉。痛苦稍微減輕了一些。他想對母親笑，但是眼淚不由他控制地流出來。<sup>65</sup>

Stage 3 pulmonary tuberculosis is so terrible that a co-worker of Wenxuan, Little Pan (小潘), claims that he would commit suicide to prevent the agonizing onset of stage 3 tuberculosis.<sup>66</sup>

Although stage 3 pulmonary tuberculosis was incurable at that time, a patient with stage 2 tuberculosis could avoid the development of the disease to stage 3 by resting completely from physical and mental exertions and by treating the symptoms accordingly.<sup>67</sup> However, despite the shocking symptoms, many people who coughed with hemoptysis preferred to go to Chinese medical practitioners who, unfortunately, failed to accurately diagnose their ailment as pulmonary tuberculosis.<sup>68</sup> In *Cold Nights*, the Chinese medical practitioner Zhang Boqing (張伯情), who is a relative of Wenxuan's mother, diagnoses Wenxuan as "having

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<sup>63</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 477-478.

<sup>64</sup> Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 490.

<sup>65</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 479.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 457.

<sup>67</sup> Zhang Dunrong, *Feijiehe de zhenduan yu zhiliao*, pp. 146-147. Wenxuan also seems to know this "unofficial prescription", see Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 388.

<sup>68</sup> Karfunkel, *From Nazi Germany to War Torn Central China*, 91.

excessive heat in liver” (肝火旺).<sup>69</sup> This does not help the patient and only delays his treatment until Wenxuan cannot tolerate the symptoms and spends a large sum of money to see a Western-trained doctor, who can no longer help the patient. Wenxuan eventually dies after learning of the surrender of Japan.

### The Disintegration of Everyday Life

As mentioned previously, there are four everyday issues that bother Wang Wenxuan before his illness becomes severe: the war, his job, his family, and his health. He is haunted by these issues because his expectations of life do not match his reality. Through his everyday life, he hopes that his dreams can be fulfilled. Hence, we can see his everyday life as the connection between his past dreams and his prospects. However, if a person's everyday life is so difficult that his dreams can never be achieved, then he may recognize that he is futureless. I call this psychological state the “disintegration of everyday life”.<sup>70</sup> In *Cold Nights*, for example, Tang Baiqing is a character whose everyday life has disintegrated. He has dreams of living happily with his wife and his child. However, his wife dies of dystocia, and his child dies young. He drowns his sorrows in drink every day:

“If I don't get drunk, what is there to do? The worst that can happen is that I'll get sick and then die. As for death, I am not afraid of it.” With a pained look on his face, he added, “I'm finished — completely finished.”<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 349, 393-394.

<sup>70</sup> Harry Harootunian points out that everyday life is recognized as the “social space of submerged dreams of the past” and a “possibility for the future”, and their inverses are herein used as the characteristics of the disintegration of everyday life. See Harry Harootunian, “Introduction: The Unavoidable ‘Actuality’ of Everyday Life,” in *History's Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Question of Everyday Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 6.

<sup>71</sup> Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 74.

「不吃酒又幹什麼？吃多了至多也不過病——死，我不怕。死了也好，」那人帶着痛苦的表情說。「我完了，我什麼都完了。」<sup>72</sup>

Eventually, he commits suicide.

After his last drink with Baiqing, Wenxuan coughs up sputum with hemoptysis in front of his mother and wife. At this moment, his stage 2 pulmonary tuberculosis becomes noticeable to those around him. As has been noted in this chapter, it would have proven difficult for him to become healthy again. He is later dismissed from his post due to his illness, and for this reason, he need not worry about the issue of the relocation of the publishing company.<sup>73</sup> Even if the Japanese army had occupied Chongqing, he would not have been able to cope with further movement. As a result, he must place all his hopes in his family.

Wenxuan wishes for a harmonious family. However, that can only be achieved when there is mutual respect and understanding between family members. Wenxuan's mother loves him and Xiaoxuan wholeheartedly, but is unhappy with Zeng Shusheng's behavior. Unfortunately, Wenxuan is not strong enough to stop the quarrels between his mother and wife. He tries to please Shusheng by telling her that his mother will return to the countryside to enjoy her twilight years once the war is over.<sup>74</sup> Xiaoxuan is mature and well-behaved. He is obedient to his father and grandmother, but seems to keep his mother at a distance. Because Wenxuan does not have a real say in family matters, the harmony of the Wang family is heavily dependent on Shusheng's attitude. She quarrels with her mother-in-law quite easily because of their different values. Her supervisor loves her, both romantically and professionally, and wants to start a new life with her in Lanzhou. The quarrels between Shusheng and her mother-in-law seem resolvable

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<sup>72</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 306.

<sup>73</sup> Although Wenxuan rejoins the publishing company after receiving Shusheng's letter of separation, he soon resigns without notice due to his poor health. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 455, 471.

<sup>74</sup> This is how Wenxuan convinces Shusheng to come home after a quarrel between Shusheng and her mother-in-law. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 378.

because both women care deeply for Wenxuan.<sup>75</sup> However, once Shusheng moves to Lanzhou, her relationship with Wenxuan becomes jeopardized.

Originally, Shusheng prefers to stay in Chongqing to take care of Wenxuan:

“I don’t want to. If I could stay here, I’d rather stay,” she answered thoughtfully.

“If your supervisor insists that you go, can you refuse him?”

“Certainly I can, though it is generous of him to offer me the opportunity,” she answered loudly.<sup>76</sup>

「我不想去，我能夠不去就不去，」她沉吟地答道。

「行裡調你去，你不去可以嗎？」他繼續問。

「當然可以，我還有這自由，至多也不過辭職，不過我們主任也是一番好意，」她也提高聲音回答。<sup>77</sup>

Ironically, Wenxuan encourages her to go to Lanzhou to start a new life:

When she saw the tears running down his cheeks, she clasped his hand and promised that she would not leave him.

“I know, I know,” he said, deeply grateful. Then as an afterthought, he added, “But you should go. What’s the good of your staying here? My life is finished.”<sup>78</sup>

她看出了他的眼淚。她默默地抓住他的一隻手，過了好一會兒，她才掙出一句話：「我不會走的。」

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<sup>75</sup> One time Shusheng has a vigorous quarrel with her mother-in-law. Wenxuan screams and heavily pounds his forehead, and then the two women promise Wenxuan that they will not quarrel again. In fact, this is the last quarrel between the two women. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 388-390.

<sup>76</sup> Slightly amended from Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 200.

<sup>77</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 357.

<sup>78</sup> Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 200.

「我知道，」他點着頭感動地說。「謝謝你啊！」過了半晌他又低聲說：「其實你應該走。你跟着我一輩子有什麼好處？我這一輩子算是完結了。」<sup>79</sup>

Wenxuan faces the fact that his illness is incurable, and recognizes that he does not want to be a burden on Shusheng. With the successive persuasion of her husband and supervisor, Shusheng decides to go to Lanzhou. However, as she leaves, Wenxuan begins to lose confidence in their relationship:

Since he could not keep her, he welcomed the chance to be with her, just to look at her youthful and radiant face.

Being with her exacted a heavy toll from him. By now he could tell from the casual way she treated the separation that her heart had soared away from him. Smiling, she told him again and again. "I'll come to see you in three or four months. Department Chief Chen knows someone in the airline office, and he can always get a ticket for me. It's really very convenient." He agreed with her, but thought to himself, "When you return, where will I be?" Where would he be? He had no idea.<sup>80</sup>

他無法留住她，卻只好希望多和她見面，多看見她那仍然充滿生命力的面顏。

但這樣的見面有時也會給他帶來痛苦。連他也看得出來她的心一天一天地移向更遠的地方。和他分離，在她似乎並不是一件痛苦的事。她常常笑着對他說：「過三四個月我就要回來看你。陳主任認識航空公司的人，容易買到飛機票，來往也很方便。」他唯唯應着，心裡卻想：「等你回來，不曉得我還在不在這兒。」<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 358.

<sup>80</sup> Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 330.

<sup>81</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 412-413.

He also begins to worry about his future. He calculates the amount of money flowing out of his account every day:

He saw money flowing out continuously day after day, and no way to prevent its flow. Without much income but with limitless expenses, he dreaded the bleak future. But what could he do other than frown?<sup>82</sup>

他彷彿看着金錢一天一天不停地流出去，他袖着手無法攔住它。他沒有絲毫的收入，只有無限期的花費……那太可怕了，他一想起，就皺着眉頭。<sup>83</sup>

After Shusheng leaves Chongqing and follows her supervisor to establish a new branch in Lanzhou, Wenxuan's everyday life becomes so monotonous that his mother cannot stand his situation.<sup>84</sup> Besides eating and sleeping, writing letters becomes Wenxuan's only daily activity. However, in his long letters, he lies and conceals the dull reality of his situation from Shusheng, whereas every letter from Shusheng is short and brief, as if she is too busy assisting her supervisor with the establishment of the new branch to communicate in depth with her family. Wenxuan begins to lose confidence in the relationship. Finally, Shusheng sends Wenxuan a letter of separation, and Wenxuan's everyday life disintegrates:

Without much appetite, Wenxuan and his mother had a simple supper. After washing the dishes, they returned to their seats and chatted about trifles for a while before surrendering themselves to total silence. Yet, it was still too early to go to bed for it was only seven. At last it was eight-thirty. She retired to her room. And he, to his bed.

The whole winter passed thus, except that, at times, there was a blackout. When they had electricity, she would mend clothes

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<sup>82</sup> Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 332.

<sup>83</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 413.

<sup>84</sup> One day Wenxuan gets up and does nothing at home, and his mother says to him, "Wouldn't you like to see a movie this evening? We are, after all, educated people, and need some entertainment." See Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 152.



under the light, or else retell some of her old stories for the umpteenth time. Sometimes, Xiaoxuan would spend a night with them, providing them with a little warmth and companionship. Sometimes Wenxuan would feel a little better and at other times a little worse.

“What else can I do other than eat, sleep, and feel ill?” he asked himself constantly. Forever failing to find an answer, he gave up thinking about it with a bitter laugh. Once he came perilously close to finding an answer. The word “death” sent cold shivers down his spine and made him shudder. He seemed to see his own body disintegrating in the grave and worms crawling all over it.<sup>85</sup>

他們弄好了一頓簡單的晚飯，單調地吃着。兩個人都沒有胃口。吃過飯，收拾了碗筷以後，兩個人又坐在原處，沒有活氣地談幾句話，於是又起了說盡了話似的感覺。看看表，七點鐘，似乎很早。他們捱着時刻，終於捱到了八點半鐘，母親回到自己的小屋，他上床睡覺。

這不是他某一天的生活，整個冬天他都是這樣地過日子。不同的是有時停電，他們睡得較早，有時母親在燈下補衣服，有時母親對他講一兩段已經講過幾十遍的老故事，有時小宣回家住一夜，給屋子添一點熱氣，有時他身體較好，有時他精神很壞。

「我除了吃，睡，病，還能夠做什麼？」他常常這樣地問自己。永遠得不着一個回答。他帶着絕望的苦笑撇開了這個問題。有一次他似乎得到回答了，那個可怕的字（死）使他的脊樑上起了寒粟，使他渾身發抖，使他彷彿看見自己肉體腐爛，蛆蟲爬滿全身。<sup>86</sup>

Wenxuan finds himself in the depths of despair, and has already prepared himself for his end.

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<sup>85</sup> Slightly amended from Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 394-396.

<sup>86</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 438-439.

Due to the gradual disintegration of his everyday life, sadness, boredom, loneliness, and disappointment accumulate in Wenxuan's mind throughout the novel. Whenever he attempts to repress his negative emotions, they only return to his mind with more vigor than before.<sup>87</sup> Emotions, in extreme cases, may disrupt a person's mind and result in faulty actions in the person's everyday life. Sigmund Freud calls these faulty actions "Fehlleistungen", which is translated as "Freudian parapraxes" in this thesis. Freud argues that the reasons behind these parapraxes can be explained through psychoanalysis.<sup>88</sup>

In *Cold Nights*, four cases of Freudian parapraxis can be observed in Wenxuan's everyday life. Among these four cases, two are related to faulty memory, while the other two are subconscious actions. The first case is found at the beginning of the novel. After the air-raid warning has been lifted, Wenxuan leaves the air-raid shelter and returns home. However, he suddenly realizes that he has not heard the sound of bombers, and wonders if there were any air-raid warnings at all.<sup>89</sup> This case of Freudian parapraxis is straightforward, as if Ba Jin were foreshadowing Wenxuan's subsequent faulty actions. Wenxuan presents a monologue right after the emergence of his faulty memory as an explanation:

"Why am I standing here?" he asked himself in a rather loud voice. As much had his thoughts centered on himself that his own voice startled him. He mused to himself, "Wasn't I in the shelter? Yes ... I was in it... I feel cold ... I'm taking a walk... I'm thinking about my quarrel with Shusheng. I want her home, but will she come home? I can't even find her, so how can I get her to come home?"<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> According to ironic process theory, when a person forces himself to forget a matter, the matter is more likely to resurface. See Daniel M. Wegner, David J. Schneider, Samuel R. Carter III, and Teri L. White, "Paradoxical Effects of Thought Suppression," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 53, no. 1 (1987): 11-12.

<sup>88</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 1, Freudian parapraxes are divided into three categories in this thesis, namely: Freudian slips, faulty memory, and subconscious actions. See Sigmund Freud, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, trans. A. A. Brill (Mansfield: Martino Publishing, 2011).

<sup>89</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 279-280.

<sup>90</sup> Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 10-12.

「我站在這裡幹什麼呢？」這次他說出來了，聲音也不低。這時他的思想完全集中在「自己」這兩個字上面，所以他會問。這問話把他自己驚醒了。他接着就在想像中回答道：「我不是在躲警報嗎？——是的，我是在躲警報。——我冷，我在散步。——我在想我同樹生吵架的事。——我想找她回來——」他馬上又問：「她會回來嗎？我們連面都碰不到，我怎麼能夠叫她回家呢？」<sup>91</sup>

If there had been no air-raid warnings, then Wenxuan surely would have returned home. He thus recalls the scene in which he had returned home with his family from the air-raid shelter the day before. Once home, he had talked to Shusheng about a letter that she had received before the issuance of the air-raid warnings. His inquiry had made her so angry that she had dashed out of the apartment.<sup>92</sup> Ba Jin makes clear in the passage quoted above that Wenxuan represses the displeasure caused by his wife's anger, and that this repression leads him to forget the issuance of the air-raid warnings.

Later in the novel, Ba Jin presents another case of Freudian parapraxis related to faulty memory, but this parapraxis is more difficult to explain. It is called the forgetting of resolutions, a situation in which the intention for doing something is omitted due to changes in a person's motives.<sup>93</sup> In *Cold Nights*, the lunch hour at Wenxuan's office is from 12:00pm to 1:00pm each day. One day, Wenxuan notices the signal for lunch and stands up, but does nothing. It does not occur to him that he should go downstairs to eat his lunch.<sup>94</sup> Because he was late for work that morning, and because he could not find Shusheng that morning, he had decided to find her during his lunch hour.<sup>95</sup> However, he has no idea what he will say to her, and he does not even have confidence that he will be able to bring her home:

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<sup>91</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 282.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 280-281.

<sup>93</sup> Freud, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, 159.

<sup>94</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 292.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 291.

Suppose she refused to see him, or if she did see him, refused to smile at him, or refused to answer him with a single word of tenderness? What would he do then? Would his clumsiness with words allow him to express his feelings? Would he be able to make her understand his mental suffering, understand what was in his heart? Would he be able to persuade her, to move her, to reconcile her to coming back home with him? ... As he thought, his determination wavered. His courage deserted him.<sup>96</sup>

要是她拒絕見他，或者見到他不給他一個笑臉，不回答他一句溫和的話，他怎麼辦呢？他的笨拙的口舌能夠表達他的感情麼？他能夠使她瞭解他的苦衷，明白他的胸懷麼？他能夠說服她，感動她，使她滿意地跟着他回家去麼？……他想着，他的決心動搖了，勇氣喪失了。<sup>97</sup>

Therefore, he misses his lunch and avoids finding his wife so that he will not feel embarrassed by speaking with her.

The remaining two cases of Freudian parapraxis involve some subconscious actions. Wenxuan visits a wine shop three times throughout the story. The first time, Wenxuan's schoolmate, Tang Baiqing, sees him from inside the wine shop and invites Wenxuan to drink with him. The other two times, Wenxuan appears to go to the wine shop unintentionally as he is wandering the streets. In fact, during their first bout of drinking, Baiqing tells Wenxuan that his wife has died of dystocia. Wenxuan realizes that drinking is the only way to forget everything:

Wang felt cold shivers up and down his spine; his heart seemed to have been wrung tightly by a huge hand. He felt indescribably bitter and was on the verge of losing his self control. "You can't go on like this!" he said, in order to withstand the stress.

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<sup>96</sup> Ba Jin, *Bitter Cold Nights*, 261.

<sup>97</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 296.

“What do you think I should do? Get married again? Have children? Bring suffering to another?” Baiqing answered, removing his hand from his tear-ridden face and exposing his dull-looking eyes. “No, I wouldn’t do that; I’d rather suffer alone. This world is not for us. We are law-abiding and suffer, while others get rich and become high government officials at our expense.”

“Therefore, we must drink more,” shouted Wang Wenxuan suddenly, joining his friend. Losing all self-restraint, he was like the water bursting out of a broken dam. He wanted to forget everything in his exasperation, and a drunken stupor seemed the only way. “Bring me wine, bring me wine,” he clamoured. The waiter brought him another cup. He looked at the white fragrant-smelling liquid, thinking how crazy the world was.<sup>98</sup>

汪文宣，聽完了這個人的故事，他覺得彷彿有一隻大手把他的心緊緊捏住似的，他嘗到一種難熬的苦味。背脊上一陣一陣地發冷。他的自持的力量快要崩潰了。「你這樣不行啊！」他為了抵抗那越來越重的壓迫，才說出這句話來。

「那麼你說我應該怎樣呢？是不是我再去結婚，再養孩子，再害死人？」同學突然取下蒙臉的手，臉上還有淚痕，兩眼卻閃着逼人的光。「我不幹這種事。我寧願毀掉自己。這個世界不是我們這種人的。我們奉公守法，別人升官發財……」

「所以我們還是拚命喝酒，」他汪文宣大聲接嘴說。他完全崩潰了，他用不着再抑制自己，堤決了一個口，水只有向一個地方流去。他悲憤到了極點，他需要忘記一切。醉自然成了他唯一的出路。「拿酒來，拿酒來！」他喝着。堂倌又送來一杯酒。他望着杯裡香噴噴的白色液體，心裡想：這是怎樣的一個世界啊！<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Slightly amended from Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 78.

<sup>99</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 308.

Later, when Shusheng quarrels with her mother-in-law, Wenxuan cannot bear their voices and leaves the apartment. He wishes to forget everything. He remembers the wine shop subconsciously and walks toward it:

“Where shall I go?” he asked himself, expecting no answer. Aimlessly he wandered toward the wine shop.

“Do what you must to forget the whole thing,” a voice seemed to whisper in his ear. He looked into the little shop and saw that all the seats were occupied except one across a table from a long-haired, thin-faced lone patron wearing a worn-out cotton gown. He decided to share the table with the stranger.<sup>100</sup>

他走在人行道上，腦子裡還是亂哄哄的。夜的寒氣開始洗着他的臉，他的頭腦漸漸地清醒了。

「到哪裡去呢？」他問自己，沒有回答。他無目的地走着。又到了那個冷酒館的門前。

「你應該使自己忘記一切，」一個聲音在他耳邊說。他朝那個小店裡面望。桌子都被客人佔據了。只有靠裡那張方桌旁邊只坐了一個客人，穿一件破舊棉袍，頭髮長，臉黑瘦。那個人埋着頭喝酒，不理睬旁人。「我去拼個位子，」他低聲自語道，就走進去，在那人的對面拉開板凳坐下來。<sup>101</sup>

The stranger is, in fact, Baiqing. This time, unfortunately, when Baiqing leaves the wine shop, he crashes into a truck and takes his own life. Wenxuan witnesses the incident and further relates drinking to the destruction of the self:

He screamed in horror until his voice became hoarse. Tears streaked his face. He felt shattered.

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<sup>100</sup> Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 168.

<sup>101</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 345.

Noiselessly he drew away from the crowd and went home. No one paid him any attention, but a familiar voice haunted him, shouting, "I'm finished; I'm finished."<sup>102</sup>

他恐怖地，痛苦地叫了一聲。但是他喉嚨啞了。眼淚止不住地流了他一臉。他心裡難過得厲害。他接連打着冷噤。他悄悄地離開人群走回家去。沒有人注意他。只有一個聲音伴送他到家。那個熟習的聲音不斷地嚷着：「我完了，我完了。」<sup>103</sup>

Finally, after receiving Shusheng's letter of separation, Wenxuan finds himself in utter despair. He wishes to "find a place where he could forget everything or destroy himself." Thus, he returns to the familiar wine shop. While drinking, he thinks of Baiqing and realizes that their fates are similar.<sup>104</sup>

Wenxuan also visits a coffee shop three times in the novel. The first two times, he is accompanied by Shusheng, but the third time, he unwittingly stops at the entrance of the coffee shop during an afternoon walk alone:

One beautiful day after lunch he went out for a walk. The same dusty streets were still crowded with cars, the traffic conditions still chaotic, and the same unsightly garbage still piled on each street corner. Covering his nose, he walked along the streets. Unwittingly his feet took him to the International Café, where his eyes dwelt on several birthday cakes and all sorts of American candy in its display window. He was surprised that the display was about the same and that things in general had changed so little.<sup>105</sup>

有一天午飯後他出街散步。天氣很好，不過街上仍多塵土，車輛擁擠不堪，而且秩序壞，在一個路角堆了大堆的垃圾，

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<sup>102</sup> Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 174.

<sup>103</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 347-348.

<sup>104</sup> Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 406-426.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 400.

從那裡散佈出來一股一股的霉臭。他掩着鼻走過了一條街。無意間側頭一看，他正立在國際咖啡廳的玻璃櫥窗前。櫥窗裡陳列着幾個生日大蛋糕，和好幾種美國糖果。一切都和幾個月前一樣。<sup>106</sup>

This episode occurs several months after Shusheng's departure. The couple write letters to each other regularly, but Shusheng is so busy that her letters are short and brief.<sup>107</sup> Wenxuan misses her very much and wishes to know more about her life in Lanzhou. Therefore, he recalls the coffee shop where he found Shusheng and where they had heart-to-heart talks:<sup>108</sup>

He entered the café and sat at the same round table where he had sat with her. Two white uniformed waiters were busy moving among the many boisterous customers who were trying to outshout one another in giving their orders. Timidly he sat in a corner, waiting quietly.

A waiter finally came to take his order. "Two cups of coffee," he whispered.

"Eh?" the waiter queried rudely.

"Two cups of coffee," he repeated, raising his voice.

The waiter walked away abruptly and returned shortly with two cups, one of which he put before Wang and the other across from him. "Milk in your coffee?" the waiter asked, holding a can of milk. Wang shook his head no. Pointing at the other cup he added, "That cup takes it." The waiter glared at him, pouring some milk into the cup, and left. Wang put a teaspoon of sugar into the cup opposite him, stirred it a bit, and then put some sugar in his own cup.

"Go ahead and drink," he said to the empty seat across from him, fantasizing that Shusheng was there. Remembering how much she

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<sup>106</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 441.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 440.

<sup>108</sup> There are also two times where Wenxuan sees Shusheng from outside the coffee shop. In his eyes, her figure is attractive and energetic. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 293, 317.



enjoyed coffee with milk, he imagined he saw her smiling at him. He swallowed a mouthful of coffee with pleasure.<sup>109</sup>

他進去了。廳子裡客人相當多，剛巧他從前坐過的那張小圓桌正空着，他便擠到裡面去坐了下來。兩個茶房忙碌地端着盤子各處奔走。客人們正在競賽叫喚茶房的聲音的高低。他膽怯地坐在角落裡，默默地等待着。

一個穿白制服的茶房終於走過來了。「兩杯咖啡，」他低聲說。

「嗯？」茶房不客氣地問。

「兩杯咖啡，」他提高聲音再說。

茶房不回答，猝然轉身走了。過了一會這茶房端了兩個杯子走回來，一杯咖啡，放在他面前，另一杯放在他對面。「要牛奶嗎？」茶房拿起牛奶罐頭問道。他搖搖頭說：「我不要。」又指着對面那個杯子說：「這杯要。」茶房瞅了他一眼，把牛奶注入杯中便拿着罐頭走開了。他拿起茶匙舀了糖先放進對面的杯裡，又用茶匙在杯裡攪了一下，然後才在自己的杯中放糖。

「你喝吧，」他端起杯子對着空座位低聲說。在想像中樹生就坐在他的對面，她是喜歡喝牛奶咖啡的。他彷彿看見她對他微笑。他高興地喝了一大口。他微笑了。<sup>110</sup>

In this scene, he imagines that his wife is drinking coffee with him, but in fact, he is talking to an empty chair.

Among the four cases of Freudian parapraxis discussed above, the first two cases stem from a quarrel between Wenxuan and Shusheng, the fourth case relates to Shusheng's move from Chongqing to Lanzhou, and the third case is partly the result of a quarrel between Shusheng and her mother-in-law and partly the result of Shusheng's request for a separation. At first glance, Shusheng is the major source of Wenxuan's

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<sup>109</sup> Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 400-402.

<sup>110</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 442.

unpleasant experiences. She might even be considered to act hatefully toward her husband. However, the opposite is true, for Wenxuan loves Shusheng unfailingly. He wishes to write to her personally as long as he can barely write to avoid revealing his condition and saddening her. Shusheng also cares about Wenxuan until the end of the story:

She wondered why he had not told her about the true state of his health. When she stepped off the airplane that morning, she had decided that she would frankly say to him, "If it'll do you any good, I can come back. I haven't been unfaithful to you."<sup>111</sup>

為什麼病到那樣還不使她知道。「只要你好，我可以回來，我並沒有做過對不起你的事情，」她今天下飛機時還這樣想過。她可以坦白地對他說這種話。<sup>112</sup>

Unfortunately, the Sino-Japanese War interrupts their plans. The couple can only live unharmoniously in wartime Chongqing. Moreover, if Wenxuan had not contracted pulmonary tuberculosis and lost his job, then Shusheng would not have moved to Lanzhou for a higher salary to afford the treatment for his disease.

The Sino-Japanese War, along with Wenxuan's unemployment, discordant family, and deadly illness, lead to the disintegration of Wenxuan's everyday life. This brings him various negative emotions. Among these negative emotions, I argue, despair is the most destructive. Ba Jin points out that the prototypes of Wenxuan are Chen Fanyu (陳范予) and Wang Luyan (王魯彥). Fanyu was a teacher and a contributor to various literary journals, such as *Gajjin* (改進) and *Xiandai qingnian* (現代青年). Luyan was a teacher, novelist, and editor of *Mingguo ribao* (民國日報) and *Mingzhong ribao* (民鐘日報). Like Wenxuan, Fanyu and Luyan both died of pulmonary tuberculosis.<sup>113</sup> However, both lived in hope before they died. At the end of his life, Fanyu wrote a piece of prose

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<sup>111</sup> Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 506.

<sup>112</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 484.

<sup>113</sup> Ba Jin, "Tan Hanye," 448.

in praise of life, and Luyan kept seeking to live.<sup>114</sup> When he learns of the surrender of Japan, Wenxuan tells his mother that he “can die with eyes closed.”<sup>115</sup> This thought could only come from a despairing person whose everyday life has disintegrated, providing that Wenxuan does not lead a fulfilling life. Despair, among other negative emotions, disrupts Wenxuan’s mind and causes the emergence of the Freudian parapraxes discussed above. In conclusion, Wenxuan’s negative emotions and Freudian parapraxes are not solely caused by Shusheng, but rather, they are caused by the disintegration of his everyday life.

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<sup>114</sup> Ba Jin, “Guanyu *Hanye*” [關於《寒夜》], in *Chuangzuo huiyilu* [創作回憶錄] (Beijing: People’s Literature Publishing House, 1982), 106-107.

<sup>115</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 476.

## Chapter 4

### Du Daxin and Wang Wenxuan: Ba Jin's Narrative of Two Tubercular Characters

In Chapter 3, I discussed the disintegration of Wang Wenxuan's everyday life, which led to various Freudian parapraxes. This disintegration, I argue, is caused by the Sino-Japanese War, Zeng Shusheng's departure to Lanzhou, Wenxuan's unemployment, and his pulmonary tuberculosis. Coincidentally, the terms "disintegration" and "pulmonary tuberculosis" may be quite familiar to readers of Russian fiction, for in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this disease was often regarded as a disintegration that turned the patients' bodies to phlegm and blood.<sup>1</sup> Ba Jin began to read Russian fiction when he was 17 years old. There are tubercular characters in many of the works he read, such as Dmitri Insarov, Katerina Ivanovna, and Nicholas Levin.<sup>2</sup> Dmitri Insarov is the hero of Ivan Turgenev's novel *On the Eve*. When Insarov realizes that he cannot return to Bulgaria with his lover, Elena Stakhova, he realizes that he can never breathe the fresh air of Bulgaria again to treat his pulmonary tuberculosis. His tuberculosis then becomes severe, and he dies in Venice shortly thereafter.<sup>3</sup> In Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Katerina Ivanovna, Sofya's stepmother, often beats her children. However, she works diligently to improve their living standards. After her husband's death, Katerina contracts pulmonary tuberculosis. She has a consumptive face and an often excited state of mind.<sup>4</sup> In Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, Nicholas Levin is Princess Kitty's

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<sup>1</sup> Susan Sontag, "Illness as Metaphor," in *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and its Metaphors* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1991), 14.

<sup>2</sup> Ba Jin translated Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and wrote advertisements for Ivan Turgenev's *On the Eve* and Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. See Li Cunguang [李存光], *Bainian Ba Jin — Shengping ji wenxue huodong shilue* [百年巴金——生平及文學活動事略] (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 2003), 11, 50, 70, 80; Ba Jin, *Ba Jin quanji* [巴金全集] (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1993), vol. 18, pp. 419, 547.

<sup>3</sup> Ivan Turgenev, *On the Eve* [前夜], trans. Li Ni [麗尼] (Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 1993), 170-192.

<sup>4</sup> Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, trans. Jessie Coulson (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1964), 304-308, 405-419.

brother-in-law. After the marriage of Kitty and Kostya, the pair notice Nicholas's pulmonary tuberculosis, and take care of him in Moscow. Nicholas regards his death as the fulfillment of his desires.<sup>5</sup> Russian writers of this period often described pulmonary tuberculosis as a disease of passion and poverty, and regarded the patients' deaths as the redemption of their souls. Readers of this literature thus associate the disease with these metaphors, although in reality, of course, not all tubercular patients are poor and passionate.

In 1923, the 19-year-old Ba Jin left his hometown, Chengdu (成都), to study in Nanjing. Unfortunately, when he went to Beijing to take the admission examination for National Peking University in August 1925, he was diagnosed with a mild case of pulmonary tuberculosis. He then underwent two periods of rest cure in Shanghai and Château-Thierry.<sup>6</sup> As a result, he thoroughly understood the illness both physically and metaphorically. Later, when he began his writing career, Ba Jin created several tubercular characters in his early novels and novellas, such as Du Daxin (杜大心) in *Destruction* (滅亡), Chen Zhen (陳真) and Xiong Zhijun (熊智君) in *Rain* (雨), Mai (枚) in *Autumn* (秋), and Wang Wenxuan in *Cold Nights*. Xiaobing Tang even regards Wenxuan as "the last tubercular in modern Chinese literature". He argues that, beginning in 1949, Ba Jin, among other Chinese writers, held illusions about the bright future of the People's Republic of China, and therefore abandoned the metaphorical meaning of pulmonary tuberculosis as concomitant with individual suffering and death.<sup>7</sup> In addition to the fact that Chinese writers were ordered to conceal individual suffering and death in their works after 1949 by government authorities, I disagree that Ba Jin's work led to the abandonment of tuberculosis metaphors. Wenxuan is called "the last tubercular" only because *Cold Nights* was published in 1947, slightly

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<sup>5</sup> Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, trans. George Gibian, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1995), 442-459. Kostya Levin and Nicholas Levin are brothers. For the sake of clarity, I refer to them by their given names in this thesis.

<sup>6</sup> Li, *Bainian Ba Jin*, 13-24.

<sup>7</sup> Xiaobing Tang, "The Last Tubercular in Modern Chinese Literature: On Ba Jin's *Cold Nights*," in *Chinese Modern: The Heroic and the Quotidian* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 158-160.

before the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Nevertheless, I argue that through the depiction of Wenxuan's disease, Ba Jin indeed changed the metaphorical meaning of pulmonary tuberculosis. Before discussing Ba Jin's innovation in the depiction of pulmonary tuberculosis, I will describe the literary tradition of tuberculosis as metaphor.

### Pulmonary Tuberculosis as Metaphor

Ba Jin's maiden work, *Destruction*, was published in 1929, and his final novel, *Cold Nights*, was serialized from August 1946 to January 1947. The first trial of streptomycin, the first effective drug for the treatment of tuberculosis, was completed in 1948.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, stage 3 pulmonary tuberculosis remained an incurable disease when these two fictional works were first published. Although patients with stage 1 or 2 pulmonary tuberculosis could avoid advancing to stage 3 of the disease by undertaking a rest cure,<sup>9</sup> tubercular patients often failed to notice the disease until they coughed with hemoptysis—a signature symptom of stage 2 pulmonary tuberculosis. Even if a patient noticed the disease at an early stage, Chinese society was so tumultuous between the 1920s and the 1940s that patients could hardly obtain sufficient rest to heal their bodies. As a result, the tuberculosis mortality rate was extremely high before the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Moreover, the symptoms of stage 3 pulmonary tuberculosis were agonizing, and included a persistent cough with hemoptysis, permanent loss of voice, swallowing difficulty, and severe weight loss.<sup>10</sup> Overall, the disease was painful and deadly.

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<sup>8</sup> Neil H Metcalfe, "Sir Geoffrey Marshall (1887-1982): Respiratory Physician, Catalyst for Anaesthesia Development, Doctor to Both Prime Minister and King, and World War I Barge Commander," *Journal of Medical Biography* 19, no. 1 (2011): 13.

<sup>9</sup> Zhang Dunrong [張敦榕], *Feijiehe de zhenduan yu zhiliao* [肺結核的診斷與治療] (Beijing: People's Military Medical Publisher, 2003), 146-147.

<sup>10</sup> Wang Zhongxian [汪鍾賢], *Feijiehe* [肺結核] (Shanghai: Shanghai Scientific and Technical Publishers, 2001), 37-39.

As Susan Sontag argues, some diseases are considered particularly mysterious because their causes are unknown and their treatments are ineffective.<sup>11</sup> Many writers present these mysterious diseases as metaphors in literary works. Among these diseases, pulmonary tuberculosis was considered a disease of poverty, especially before *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* was discovered and recognized as the pathogen of the disease.<sup>12</sup> Before this discovery, worn-out clothes, a weak body, poor ventilation, inadequate sanitation, and malnutrition were considered the primary risk factors for pulmonary tuberculosis.<sup>13</sup> In addition, pulmonary tuberculosis was seen as a disease of passion. The passion of the tubercular patient was recognized as an internal fire that consumed the patient's life.<sup>14</sup> Passionate tuberculars often refused to take rest—as if they saw the end of life encroaching. Often, they worked even harder than before to make more of their lives.<sup>15</sup> However, hard work could not cure the disease. Instead, the disease would further develop until the victims could no longer bear the symptoms and sought medication. Unfortunately, doctors could not help patients at such a late stage of the disease. At the end of their lives, the passionate souls of people with pulmonary tuberculosis were imagined to be redeemed through their deaths.<sup>16</sup> In the following sections, I compare the first and last tubercular characters in Ba Jin's fictional works, Du Daxin in *Destruction* and Wang Wenxuan in *Cold Nights*. I examine their passions, their living environments, the course of their diseases, and their deaths to consider Ba Jin's presentation of their diseases through metaphor. Finally, in the last section, I explain the differences between the

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<sup>11</sup> Sontag, "Illness as Metaphor," 5-9.

<sup>12</sup> Robert H.H. Koch discovered that *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* is the pathogen of tuberculosis in 1882. See Thomas Moulding, "Pathogenesis, Pathophysiology, and Immunology: Clinical Orientations," in *Tuberculosis and Nontuberculous Mycobacterial Infections*, ed. David Schlossberg (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1999), 48.

<sup>13</sup> Sontag, "Illness as Metaphor," 15.

<sup>14</sup> "Consumption" has been used as a synonym for severe pulmonary tuberculosis since the fourteenth century. See Sontag, "Illness as Metaphor," 10.

<sup>15</sup> Sontag, "Illness as Metaphor," 21-26.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 42-43.

descriptions of Daxin and Wenxuan's diseases and introduce the uncommon metaphor for this disease that Ba Jin uses in *Cold Nights*.

### Du Daxin in *Destruction*<sup>17</sup>

The hero of Ba Jin's first novella, Du Daxin, is born into a wealthy family in Chengdu. After his graduation from secondary school, he moves to Shanghai and attends a famed university in the city.<sup>18</sup> During his third year at university, he meets a schoolmate who introduces him to anarchism.<sup>19</sup> Soon afterwards, he quits school and puts all his effort into the anarchist movement. He also donates most of the spending money that his family sends him to an anarchist organization, and barely keeps enough to make ends meet.<sup>20</sup> He is so frugal that he lives in a shabby home located in Kangyi Lane (康益里) on Kangti Road (康悌路):<sup>21</sup>

The apartment was small, and not much furnished. There was a wooden bed by the wall on the right, with a thin blanket on it. There were curtain rods, but without bed curtain. A square table was placed by the wall on the left, below the only window of the apartment. Some old books, a bottle of ink, some pens, and some papers were randomly placed on the table. In the middle of the

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<sup>17</sup> The version of *Destruction* used in this thesis is the original 1929 version. See Ba Jin, *Destruction* (Shanghai: Kaiming Shudian [開明書店], 1929).

<sup>18</sup> In the original text, Du Daxin's hometown is "Town C" [C城], and his university is located in "City S" [S市]. See Ba Jin, *Destruction*, 53-58.

<sup>19</sup> The most important Chinese theorist of anarchism, Liu Shiwei [劉師培], proposes overthrowing all authorities so that all people can live freely and equally. See Qiu Weijun [丘為君], "Quanwei yu ziyou: Ziyou zhuyi zai jindai Zhongguo de licheng" [權威與自由：自由主義在近代中國的歷程], in *Liberalism and Pre-Modern Thought in China - Proceedings of the Symposium on the Transformation of Modern Chinese Thought* [自由主義與中國近代傳統——「中國近現代思想的演變」研討會論文集], ed. Liu Qingfeng [劉青峰] and Shum Kwok-leung [岑國良] (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002), 1:239-241. Ba Jin named Du Daxin's belief "equalitarianism" [平等主義] to overcome the censorship at that time. See Ba Jin, *Destruction*, 59.

<sup>20</sup> Ba Jin, *Destruction*, 59. An "anarchist organization" seems to be an oxymoron. However, anarchists form organizations to gather comrades and supporters. For example, Ba Jin joined an anarchist organization, Jun She [均社], in 1921. See Li, *Bainian Ba Jin*, 12.

<sup>21</sup> In the original text, Du Daxin's home is located in "KI Lane" [KI里], "KT Road" [KT路]. See Ba Jin, *Destruction*, 13.



wall, it hung a picture of a kind, middle-aged woman. There were three storage boxes at the corner. That's all the stuff in the apartment.

房子很小，也沒有什麼陳設。靠着右邊的牆壁是一張木板的牀，上面放着薄薄的被褥，雖有牀架，卻沒有帳子。對着門的一堵壁上開了一個窗戶，窗前便是一張方桌。桌上亂堆着舊書，墨水瓶，幾管筆，一些原稿紙。左邊的牆壁被方桌佔去了三分之一的地位，桌子兩邊放了兩把椅子。正當在這堵牆壁底中央處掛了一個大鏡框，裡面放着一個四十多歲的慈祥的婦人底照片。這一堵牆壁和開着門的一堵壁底鄰近的角裡放着三口箱子。這屋子裡所有的東西就是這些了。<sup>22</sup>

As mentioned in the previous section, a shabby apartment is often associated with an increased risk of pulmonary tuberculosis. Even though Daxin later moves to a town, Yangshupu (楊樹浦), with lower rental prices to reduce the commute to his workplace,<sup>23</sup> he is not willing to spend a penny on decoration and moves into the apartment immediately after the previous occupants are forced to move out. His living conditions, therefore, do not improve at all.

Daxin believes in anarchism. He proposes overthrowing the government through revolution so that all people can live freely and equally. He is not didactic, and he understands that actions speak louder than words. Moreover, he is an effective debater as well as a famous poet. His poems, such as “A Hero's Death” (一個英雄底死), which is quoted below, are remarkable for their aesthetics:

I know, destruction awaits  
Him who first rises  
Against the oppressor's yoke;  
My fate is sealed and closed.

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<sup>22</sup> Ba Jin, *Destruction*, 14-15.

<sup>23</sup> In the original text, Du Daxin later moves to “Zone Y” [Y 區]. See Ba Jin, *Destruction*, 207-208.

But tell me, where and when  
Without victims, was ever Freedom won?  
For my native land I perish,  
I feel it, and I know it.  
And in my heart, oh, holy father,  
My fatal star I bless.<sup>24</sup>

對於那般最先起來反抗壓迫的人，  
滅亡是一定會降臨到他底一身：  
我自己本也知道這樣的事情，  
然而我底命運卻是早已注定！  
告訴我：在什麼時候，在什麼地方，  
沒有了犧牲，而自由居然會得勝在戰場？  
為了我至愛的被壓迫的同胞，我甘願滅亡，  
我知道我能夠做到而且也願意做到這樣。<sup>25</sup>

Although she has devoted her life to preaching love, the heroine of the novella, Li Jingshu (李靜淑), likes this tragic and testamentary poem. At her brother's birthday party, Jingshu plays this poem as a song and, afterward, realizes that the poem was composed by Daxin. As a result of her discovery, they fall in love with each other. Although they dare not express their feelings of affection, their love develops every day. Daxin's diary reads as follows:

I went to Jingshu's home these two days. I have promised myself not to visit her again. However, I cannot stop myself. I have become a slave to my love and passion. I can hardly live a normal life without seeing her; I know that this is sinful against my belief, but I can only derive satisfaction out of this.

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<sup>24</sup> Kondratii Ryleev, "Nalivaiko," trans. Jaakoff Prelooker, in *Heroes and Heroines of Russia: Builders of a New Commonwealth*, by Jaakoff Prelooker (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1908), 29.

<sup>25</sup> Ba Jin, *Destruction*, 128-129. Ba Jin took Kondratii Ryleev's poem "Nalivaiko", and assigned it to Du Daxin. See Olga Lang, *Ba Jin and His Writings: Chinese Youth Between the Two Revolutions* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 233-234.

昨天和今天都到靜淑家去了。我不是早說過不去嗎？然而我不能不去，我已經做了我底愛情和激情底奴隸了。不見着她，我簡直不能過日子；見着她雖使我因良心上的痛悔而更感苦痛，但我覺得非此不能滿足的。<sup>26</sup>

Belief, art, and love make Daxin's passions run high, and he becomes metaphorically eligible for pulmonary tuberculosis.

Daxin's pulmonary tuberculosis symptoms are not serious. He coughs and breathes in shallow pants occasionally, especially after a debate. However, he knows that he suffers from pulmonary tuberculosis, likely because he often comes into close contact with tubercular co-workers in the factory where he is employed.<sup>27</sup> He fully understands that his pulmonary tuberculosis can be cured by complete rest, and his friends urge him to take the rest cure. However, his passions prevent him from rest, and his health is progressively weakened through continuous work. When he loses a significant amount of weight, he realizes that his end is nearing. Finally, he performs a suicidal attack on the Police General to avenge his comrade, Zhang Weiqun (張為群).<sup>28</sup> He disguises himself as a reporter at a banquet, shoots the Police General, and commits suicide. Although he fails to kill the Police General, Daxin has indeed devoted his life and death to his political beliefs, eventually becoming a martyr.

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<sup>26</sup> Ba Jin, *Destruction*, 220.

<sup>27</sup> Before pulmonary tuberculosis could be effectively treated, it was a common infectious disease among factory workers. See Joshua H. Howard, "The politicization of Women Workers at War: Labor in Chongqing's Cotton Mills During the Anti-Japanese War" [戰時女工的政治化：抗戰時期重慶紗廠的勞工研究], in *Chongqing in Historical China and World: Selected Papers on Chongqing History* [中國和世界歷史中的重慶——重慶史研究論文選編], ed. Wang Xi [王希] (Chongqing: Chongqing University Press, 2013), 253.

<sup>28</sup> Some anarchists advocate publicizing violent acts, which they call "propaganda by the deed". See Arthur Redding, *Raids on Human Consciousness: Writing, Anarchism, and Violence* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 74-80. Zhang Weiqun is arrested when delivering publicity materials. He is sentenced to death after eight days of torture. See Ba Jin, *Destruction*, 270-301.

## Wang Wenxuan in *Cold Nights*

The hero of *Cold Nights*, Wang Wenxuan, is born in the Sichuan Province (四川省).<sup>29</sup> During his late teenage years, he travels to Shanghai to obtain a university education. However, during the Sino-Japanese War, he flees to Chongqing as a refugee. He can only work as a proofreader in a publishing company on the recommendation of a man from his home province, and he need not utilize any of the skills and knowledge that he learned at the university in his position. Wenxuan barely earns enough money to feed himself and his family. Unfortunately, he dares not refuse his supervisor's requests, no matter how insulting they are.<sup>30</sup> He is a well-known "softie" (老好人) who never grumbles and is determined to bear every misfortune by himself.<sup>31</sup>

Wenxuan intuitively feels that he has contracted pulmonary tuberculosis, but he does not want to tell his mother and wife about his physical condition. He even lies to soothe their nerves until he becomes drunk one day and coughs up blood in front of his mother and wife. At this point, he can no longer hide his illness from them. His mother hires a Chinese medical practitioner to treat him, but the medical practitioner fails to diagnose the patient accurately. Zeng Shusheng then helps her husband to apply for sick leave, which enables Wenxuan to rest from his job. Unfortunately, their apartment is far from a decent location in which to take a rest cure. The surroundings of the apartment are so noisy that Wenxuan cannot rest:

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<sup>29</sup> A neighbor of the Wang family, Mrs. Zhang, regards the Wangs as local, and asks for their help in case she must flee further. See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, in *Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature, 1937-1949* [中國新文學大系 1937-1949], ed. Sun Yong [孫頤] et al. (Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Art Press, 1990), 9:343.

<sup>30</sup> One day, Wang Wenxuan is asked to write an advertisement for a book composed by a high-ranking official. He writes a full paper of lies, but his supervisor still thinks that there are "too few complimentary words". Wenxuan rewrites the advertisement by heaping "the most lavish praise on the book". See Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, trans. Nathan K. Mao and Liu Ts'un-yan, traditional Chinese-English bilingual ed. (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002), 464-468.

<sup>31</sup> Throughout the story, Wenxuan's mother and wife often regard him as a "softie". See Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 279, 356, 358, 401, 426, 432.

He did not sleep well that night, disturbed by the mosquitoes, flies, and scurrying rats, as well as the noises of people quarrelling, pleading, joking, and cursing that went on outside his window until midnight.<sup>32</sup>

他一晚上都沒有睡好。有幾隻蚊子和蒼蠅來攪擾他。老鼠們把他的屋子當作競走場。窗下街中，人們吵嘴哭訴，講笑話罵街一直鬧到夜半。<sup>33</sup>

Such adverse living conditions are harmful to Wenxuan's health, and treatment through Chinese medicine only delays the development of Wenxuan's pulmonary tuberculosis. Eventually, Wenxuan's disease reaches the deadly third stage.<sup>34</sup> In his last days, Wenxuan has trouble talking, and lies in bed all day and night. He has difficulty swallowing, and recognizes that the end is near. Sometimes, he loses his patience due to the constant pain. One day he writes to his mother:

Mother, please give me some poison. Let me die quickly. I can't bear to see you suffer, and I'm suffering too much.<sup>35</sup>

媽，你給我吃點毒藥，讓我快死。我不能看見你這樣苦。我太痛苦。<sup>36</sup>

Finally, the disease takes Wenxuan's life on the Victory Day of the Sino-Japanese War.

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<sup>32</sup> Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 462.

<sup>33</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 467-468.

<sup>34</sup> See Chapter 3 for details about the course of Wenxuan's disease. Although Wenxuan does not receive an X-ray examination, his co-workers indicate that his illness has reached "the terminal stage" and request that he "withdraw from the lunch hour and eat at home." See Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 400, 448-450.

<sup>35</sup> Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 476.

<sup>36</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 473.

## Innovation in the Presentation of Pulmonary Tuberculosis as Metaphor

Du Daxin is a typical tubercular character in the literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth century—he is passionate, he lives in poverty, and he dies as a martyr. On the contrary, Wang Wenxuan appears much feebler than Daxin. He has a monotonous and insignificant job, and he dies silently. However, before the Sino-Japanese War, Wenxuan is a passionate young man. He and Zeng Shusheng cohabit soon after their graduation, and they appear to be an ideal couple. At first, Wenxuan plans to establish a secondary school in his hometown with the assistance of Shusheng:

The garden-like background, the young faces, the high-sounding language... The faces of young people, lively, brave, full of hope... smiling at him (Wenxuan) in gratitude.<sup>37</sup>

花園般的背景，年青的面孔，自負的言語……一些青年的臉孔，活潑、勇敢、帶着希望……他們對着他感激地笑。<sup>38</sup>

Unfortunately, the Sino-Japanese War interrupts their dreams, and the Wang family is forced to flee from Shanghai to Chongqing, where Wenxuan can only work as a proofreader at a publishing company. His monotonous work suppresses his ambition, and he gradually becomes a “softie” in the eyes of others. He may be the feeblest tubercular character in modern Chinese literature.

In Chapters 2 and 3, I discussed the banal depression of Wenxuan’s everyday life. Needless to say, when he was writing *Cold Nights*, Ba Jin regarded pulmonary tuberculosis as a disease of poverty. However, in *Cold Nights*, pulmonary tuberculosis is also considered a disease of passion. Before the Sino-Japanese War, Ba Jin clarifies, Wenxuan was a passionate young man. During the Sino-Japanese War,

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<sup>37</sup> Ba Jin, *Bitter Cold Nights*, in *Selected Works of Ba Jin*, trans. Jock Hoe, 2nd ed. (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2005), 2:446.

<sup>38</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 423.

Wenxuan realizes that his dream cannot come true, and grows angry about his working conditions:

“Heavens!” A silent protest formulated in his mind. “How can I have become like this! I put up with everything. Anyone can push me around. Surely I’m not going to let my life be wasted by this incomprehensible rubbish!”<sup>39</sup>

「天啊，我怎麼會變成這樣一個人啊，我什麼都忍受，什麼人都欺負我。難道我的生命就該被這些糾纏不清的文字銷磨光嗎？」他心裡發出了這個無聲的抗議。<sup>40</sup>

Wenxuan maintains his anger even as his disease progresses to the deadly stage:

He coughed sputum, sputum streaked with blood. He would spit it onto a piece of paper, roll it into a ball and throw it onto the wastebasket. Once, through lack of care, some blood fell onto the proof-sheet, and he tried to wipe away the mark with a scrap of paper, lightly, taking care not to apply any pressure lest he tear the bad-quality paper of the proof-sheet. When he took away the scrap-paper, the stain of his blood was still visible among the words and phrases glorifying the standard of living of the people. “For the sake of your lies, my blood will soon run dry!” he thought with rancour, seized by a desire to tear the proof to shreds.<sup>41</sup>

他會咳出痰來，痰裡也帶點血。他把痰吐在廢紙上，揉成一團，全丟在字紙簍中去。有一次他不小心濺了一點血在校樣上。他用一片廢紙拭去血跡，他輕輕揩了一下，不敢用力，害怕弄破紙質不好的校樣。他拿開廢紙，在那段歌頌人民生活如何改善的字句中間還留着他的血的顏色。「為了你這些

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<sup>39</sup> Slightly amended from Ba Jin, *Bitter Cold Nights*, 310.

<sup>40</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 330.

<sup>41</sup> Ba Jin, *Bitter Cold Nights*, 505.

謊話，我的血快要流盡了。」他憤怒地想，他幾乎要撕碎那張校樣。<sup>42</sup>

It is only because he thinks that he “must accept whatever happens just to survive” that Wenxuan dares not express his anger, and appears to be a “softie”.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, Wenxuan’s unsuccessful marriage gives readers the mistaken impression that he has fallen out of love with Shusheng. In fact, Wenxuan loves Shusheng until he dies:

He could not change his clothes by himself; he could not sit up easily. Every time he wrote to Shusheng it was a strain, and he had to bear severe pain before he could finish writing a few lines, such as: “I am still fine; my body can carry on.” He used the same words over and over.

“Why are you doing all that? Let me write the letters for you,” his mother begged him. All her pleading fell on deaf ears. He would not listen to her. If he did not write to Shusheng in his own hand, she would know that he was gravely ill.

“Why don’t you let her know the truth?” his mother asked, unable to control herself.

He hesitated for a long time, and finally he wrote on a piece of paper, “I wish her happiness.”<sup>44</sup>

他不能夠自己穿衣服，也不能夠自由地坐起來。每次他給樹生寫信，總是懷着拚死的決心，忍受極大的痛苦，才能夠寫下四五行字。「我還好，我的身體可以支持下去，」他永遠這樣說。

「你何苦啊，我替你寫吧，」母親用了類似哀告的聲音說，也沒有用，在這件事上他不肯聽從母親的話。要是他不能親筆寫信，那麼她知道他一定是病重了。

「為什麼不讓她知道呢？」

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<sup>42</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 465.

<sup>43</sup> Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 132.

<sup>44</sup> Slightly amended from Pa Chin, *Cold Nights*, 478.



有一天母親忍不住吐出了這句話。

他遲疑了半天才寫出五個字的答語來：

「我願她幸福。」<sup>45</sup>

Although his ambitions are suppressed during the Sino-Japanese War, Wenxuan's love and anger make him metaphorically eligible for pulmonary tuberculosis.

Unlike other writers, however, Ba Jin uses an uncommon metaphor to portray Wenxuan's death. Instead of ending the story with the redemption of the deceased protagonist's soul,<sup>46</sup> Ba Jin describes Wenxuan's death in terms of war:

He was overcome by the pain. The pain invaded his whole being, increasing slowly, increasing continuously, chasing away every other thought. Pain made him forget everything. He could think only of how to endure it, of how to escape it. A hopeless battle was in progress. He lost. But he had to continue the struggle. He cried out in noiseless grief: "Then let me die. I cannot bear such pain!"

But his beloved ones, his mother and his son could not understand his soundless cry. They could not help him find release from his pain.

The pain went on, growing all the time.

The third of September, day of victory, day of joy and laughter, brought no change to the room. In the streets, people paraded in the victory celebrations, wreathed in smiles, while overhead, planes performed their aerobatics, scattering celebration leaflets, but in Wang Wenxuan's flat, there was only suffering and tears.

That day, he lost and regained consciousness three times. He felt he had reached the limit of pain that any man could endure. He wished that "death" might come at once to deliver him.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 473-474.

<sup>46</sup> Sontag, "Illness as Metaphor," 42-43.

<sup>47</sup> Ba Jin, *Bitter Cold Nights*, 525-526.

他被痛苦佔有了。痛苦第一。痛苦逐漸增加，不停地增加，痛苦趕走了別的思想。痛苦使他忘記了一切。他只記得忍受痛，或者逃避痛。一場絕望的戰鬥又在進行。他失敗了，但是他不得不繼續作戰。他無聲地哀叫着：「讓我死吧，我受不了這種痛苦。」

然而他的親愛的人，他母親和他兒子不能了解這種無聲的語言。他們不會幫忙他解除這痛苦。

痛苦繼續着，而且不停地增加。

九月三日，勝利日，歡笑日，也沒有給這個房間帶來什麼變化。在大街上人們帶着笑臉歡迎勝利遊行的行列。飛機在空中表演並且散佈喜慶的傳單。然而在他汪文宣的屋子裡卻只有痛苦和哭泣。

他這一天暈過去三次，而又醒了轉來。他覺得已經到了一個人所能忍受的痛苦的頂點了，他願意「死」馬上來帶走他。<sup>48</sup>

In the above passage, terms such as “invaded” (佔有), “battle” (戰鬥), “lost” (失敗), and “struggle” (作戰) are traditionally associated with war. In the late 1940s, Ba Jin’s Chinese readers had experienced war, even if they lived on the home front. By describing Wenxuan’s death in terms of war, Ba Jin conceives death from pulmonary tuberculosis as a war. Readers can feel Wenxuan’s pain by recalling the suffering that they experienced during the Sino-Japanese War.

Pulmonary tuberculosis was traditionally regarded as a disease of passion and poverty, and patients’ souls were thought to be redeemed when they died. Many believed that the disease was caused by excess passion and severe poverty. Ba Jin breaks with literary tradition by describing pulmonary tuberculosis in terms of war. This is an innovation in the literary tradition of presenting pulmonary tuberculosis as a metaphor. Ba Jin also introduces a new cause of pulmonary tuberculosis to his readers—war. Unlike passion and poverty, war cannot be considered the primary cause of the disease. On one hand, war certainly

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<sup>48</sup> Ba Jin, *Cold Nights*, 479-480.

deteriorates a person's everyday life, often even causing it to disintegrate, which results in negative emotions, which can cause pulmonary tuberculosis. On the other hand, war can reduce a person to poverty, which also leads to the traditional path of the disease. However, war itself cannot be considered the impetus for tuberculosis, and herein lies Ba Jin's metaphorical innovation.

## Conclusions

*Cold Nights* is the final novel written by Chinese novelist Ba Jin. Some literary critics such as C. T. Hsia and Nathan Mao regard this novel as among Ba Jin's masterpieces. The novel captures everyday life in wartime Chongqing, an aspect of the novel that most researchers have unfortunately overlooked. In this thesis, I set out to explore the everyday life depicted in the novel, and, in this process, I have discovered that the novel includes very little detail regarding the everyday life of hawkers, rickshaw pullers, and domestic servants. Here, I filled in this gap by describing the transformation of the lower-class upon the disintegration of the family system in China.

Before the May Fourth Movement, most members of the lower class in China were employed by extended family members. However, in the 1920s and 1930s, young masters and mistresses left their families, causing the disintegration of the family system. This led to the unemployment of many lower-class people, who were forced to look for employment elsewhere in a highly competitive society in which many other lower-class people were already for hire. Unfortunately, the Sino-Japanese War worsened the everyday life of the Chinese population. Although those who lived in Chongqing were able to avoid the rule of the Japanese army, their work was nevertheless seriously affected.

*Cold Nights* focuses primarily on how educated people as a group were affected by the war. Wang Wenxuan, the protagonist, graduates from a university in Shanghai. Unfortunately, the Sino-Japanese War makes Wenxuan's situation even worse than that of the traditional lower-class people, for his disease makes him unable to perform heavy manual labor, and he has no spare money to spend on the services provided by other lower-class people. His dream of building a secondary school will never be fulfilled, and he despairs about his future. His everyday life has disintegrated, and his mind is filled with negative emotions. When he suppresses his negative emotions, however, they interfere with his mental activities, causing the emergence of Freudian parapraxes. In *Cold Nights*, four Freudian parapraxes can be observed in Wenxuan's

everyday life, including two cases of faulty memory and two cases of subconscious action. Although these Freudian parapraxes are not fatal, they reflect the serious psychological impact that the war has on Wenxuan.

Wenxuan's illness is also worthy of extended study. Wenxuan is regarded as "the last tubercular in modern Chinese literature",<sup>1</sup> and this characterization signifies that the literary tradition of presenting pulmonary tuberculosis as a metaphor was largely abandoned by Chinese writers after the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Traditionally, writers of this period regarded pulmonary tuberculosis as a disease of poverty and passion, and assumed that tubercular patients' souls were redeemed through their deaths. However, Ba Jin breaks this tradition by describing Wenxuan's death in terms of war rather than of redemption. This made Ba Jin's contemporary readers, who had just experienced the suffering of the Sino-Japanese War, more easily understand Wenxuan's pain and suffering.

Both the physical and psychological everyday life depicted in *Cold Nights* is unwholesome. According to Ba Jin, the plot of the novel is based on the suffering of the educated class that he witnessed during the Sino-Japanese War. Ba Jin wrote *Cold Nights* to speak for those educated people, especially those who had died of pulmonary tuberculosis.<sup>2</sup> In 1962, he stated that the novel aimed to condemn the Nationalist Government, under which countless innocent people died painful deaths during the Sino-Japanese War.<sup>3</sup> I argue, however, that Ba Jin's criticism of the Nationalist Government also intended to demonstrate his political correctness under the new Communist regime. When we consider the situation of writers and intellectuals during the Sino-Japanese War, we find that the culprit of the tragedies of the educated people is most often the war, for the war turned educated

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<sup>1</sup> Xiaobing Tang, "The Last Tubercular in Modern Chinese Literature: On Ba Jin's *Cold Nights*," in *Chinese Modern: The Heroic and the Quotidian* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 156-160.

<sup>2</sup> Ba Jin, "Houji" [後記], in *Ba Jin wenji* [巴金文集] (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1962), 14:296.

<sup>3</sup> Ba Jin, "Tan *Hanye*" [談《寒夜》], in *Ba Jin wenji*, 14:435.

individuals into lower-class refugees. As an educated individual, Ba Jin experienced the very same suffering, if perhaps not to the extent he describes in the novel. His original purpose in writing *Cold Nights* was to teach the new generation about the tragedies that the educated people of his generation experienced during the Sino-Japanese War. The significance of *Cold Nights* is that the story reveals the everyday life of educated people in wartime Chongqing. This novel allows contemporary readers some understanding of those who lived through the war, especially those who have not been included in history books.

I believe that literary works are important sources for historical study. However, some of the content of literary works is fictional, and for this reason, careful analysis of fictional content is necessary. One of the challenges that I faced as I wrote this thesis was combining fictional literature and historical data. In Chapter 2, I divided my discourse into two timeframes—the period after the disintegration of the family system and the period of the Sino-Japanese War. The data I used in the first timeframe was purely historical, while in the second timeframe, I combined the fictional content of the novel with historical data. For example, throughout the story, Wenxuan's monthly salary is said to be 7,000 yuan. However, readers are allowed no understanding of the salaries of other characters, other than the bonuses received by Wenxuan's supervisors. Therefore, to determine the extent of Wenxuan's poverty, I investigated real commodity prices at that time. The prices of cakes and coffee, which are mentioned in the novel, were not taken into account, for Wenxuan is too poor to enjoy those delicacies. Instead, I calculated the price of rice based on its price before the Sino-Japanese War and the inflation rate during the war. I demonstrated that Wenxuan would not have been able to buy enough rice to feed his family during the later stages of the war. This example illustrates how difficult Wenxuan's everyday life would have been during the Sino-Japanese War. However, the actual situation of the war was far more complicated. For example, the real-time variations in prices of commodities can never

be reflected in official statistics.<sup>4</sup> We can well imagine that if Wenxuan were a real person, his everyday life would have proven even worse than that depicted in the novel.

In Chapter 3, I also applied historical data to my analysis, such as the conditions of air-raid shelters, the employment statistics during the war, and the extensive use of paper windows in wartime Chongqing. However, the focus of the chapter is the psychological impact of the war on Wenxuan. Throughout the story, Wenxuan acts irrationally on several occasions. I classified these instances as different types of Freudian parapraxes, and sought their causes by studying Wenxuan's thoughts and monologues surrounding the incidents. Some of the analyses extended through a number of chapters, for some of Wenxuan's thoughts and monologues do not appear immediately before or after the parapraxes, and some parapraxes emerge as a series of separate actions that occur in different parts of the novel. Perhaps these difficulties could be easily resolved if I were a certified psychotherapist, or if Wenxuan were a real person who could be interviewed. Nevertheless, psychologists hold various views on Freudian parapraxes. For example, cognitive psychologists argue that Freudian parapraxes represent sequential mistakes made during language production. These mistakes may be caused by various factors, such as a lack of concentration and insufficient knowledge.<sup>5</sup> From a more trivial perspective, one might even argue that it was not Ba Jin's intention to present these Freudian parapraxes.

Similarly, the metaphorical meanings of pulmonary tuberculosis, which I discussed in Chapter 4, are not free from controversy. As I

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<sup>4</sup> In the Kuomintang-controlled area, commodity prices could rise every few hours, so that the prices in the afternoon were higher than those of the morning. See Chak Chi-shing [翟志成], "Feng Youlan de jueze ji qi zhuanbian" [馮友蘭的抉擇及其轉變], in *Dangdai Zhongguo zhexue diyiren: wu lun Feng Youlan* [當代中國哲學第一人：五論馮友蘭] (Taipei: The Commercial Press, 2008), 64. This inflation caused many tragedies. For example, Yang Yulie [楊丕烈], the Principal Prosecutor of Nanzheng District [南鄭區], committed suicide because the commodity prices were so high that he could not obtain enough food. See He Chengjun [何成濬], *He Chengjun Jiangjun zhanshi riji* [何成濬將軍戰時日記] (Taipei: Biographical Literature, 1986), 589.

<sup>5</sup> Barbara MacMahon, "The Freudian Slip Revisited: A Case of Mistaken Identity in *Finnegans Wake*," *Language & Communication* 15, no. 4 (1995): 294-299.

mentioned at the end of that chapter, pulmonary tuberculosis can be the direct result of poverty and passion, but not of war. Nevertheless, Ba Jin represents pulmonary tuberculosis in terms of war. Likewise, the course and treatment of cancer have been frequently represented in terms of war since the 1880s, as Susan Sontag notes in her tome *Illness as Metaphor*. Sontag, however, only relates warfare to cancer, but not to pulmonary tuberculosis.<sup>6</sup> Does this mean that she could not find any evidence of war metaphors that describe pulmonary tuberculosis? Or does she think that it is inappropriate to describe this illness as a war? Either way, Ba Jin indeed describes Wenxuan's illness with this uncommon metaphor in a timely manner. This war metaphor enabled readers to truly understand Wenxuan's pain and suffering.

These interpretations of *Cold Nights* are important. As Zhou Limin stated in the symposium commemorating the seventieth anniversary of the publication of *Cold Nights*, the novel is a classic that was "published under an evil star." Its interpretability is richer than that of any other Ba Jin's literary works, yet the work has been long neglected by Chinese literary critics.<sup>7</sup> I believe that there are further instances of Freudian parapraxis in the novel, as well as evidence of other psychological impacts of the war on Wenxuan, such as his dreams and nightmares. For example, the second chapter of the novel presents a nightmare, and Wenxuan has various dreams and nightmares in Chapters 21 and 22 after Shusheng decides to move to Lanzhou. For Wenxuan, dreams and nightmares are embodiments of unpleasant experiences, while for scholars, they offer valuable data about Wenxuan's subconscious beliefs and desires. We might note, for example, that Wenxuan's nightmare in Chapter 2 of the novel is the only occasion on which Wenxuan disobeys Shusheng. In the nightmare, the couple encounter an air raid. Shusheng urges Wenxuan to flee, but Wenxuan insists that he find his mother before entering the air-raid shelter. Is it likely that Wenxuan would dare

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<sup>6</sup> Susan Sontag, "Illness as Metaphor," in *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and its Metaphors* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1991), 65-69.

<sup>7</sup> Zhou Limin, "*Hanye*: yibu shengbufengshi de jingdian zhizuo" [《寒夜》：一部生不逢時的經典之作] (presentation, Jinian *Hanye* chuban qishi zhounian ji sishi niandai changpian xiaoshuo zhuangzuo yantaohui [紀念《寒夜》出版七十周年暨四十年代長篇小說創作研討會], Shanghai, September 23, 2017).



to disobey Shusheng only when his mother is in danger? Or does Wenxuan subconsciously think that his mother is more important than Shusheng? I am sure that scholars could go into further detail about Wenxuan's psychological state by studying his dreams and nightmares through critical lenses such as Freud's theories of the Oedipal Complex and the interpretation of dreams. It may be for this reason that C. T. Hsia states that Ba Jin became "a psychological realist of great distinction" after writing *Cold Nights*.<sup>8</sup> From my point of view, *Cold Nights* captures the everyday life of ordinary people in wartime Chongqing, and Ba Jin succeeds in recording an important part of the history of that period.

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<sup>8</sup> C. T. Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 386.

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