

On the Reception of Upton Sinclair from Japan to China: A Route Through *Chuangzao She* (Creation Society)

By Dr. Hailin Zhou

American literary works had a great influence on Chinese leftist literature during the first half of the 20th century, with more American literary works being translated or introduced to China every year. By the late 1940's, the number of American literary works translated or introduced to China was up to 40-50 copies yearly. From 1919 to 1949, a total of 617 American literary works were translated or introduced to China, accounting for nearly 14% of all translated literary works.¹ Famous writers such as Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Theodore Dreiser, Jack London, Mark Twain, Edgar Allan Poe, Ernest Hemingway, and Upton Sinclair were all familiar to Chinese readers during this period. Novels by Jack London and Sinclair, which show sympathy for the proletariat or the poor, were introduced to Chinese society at the same time as Chinese leftist literature movement was reaching its peak.

During the 1920-30s, Chinese literary society introduced western leftist literary works to China, meanwhile keeping close watch on the Japanese proletarian literature movement; Chinese writers not only translated Japanese proletarian literary works, but also translated western literary works from Japanese translations into Chinese to meet the requirement of, especially, young readers. The purpose of this paper is to clarify that Sinclair's literature was first brought to China through Chinese students who were members of Chuang Zao She and translated or referred to Japanese translations of Sinclair.

When mentioning whether or not Sinclair's literature came to China through the route of Japan, Japanese scholar Sachiko Nakada discussed the complex relationship between the literary circles of Japan and those of China in the 1930s in her book *The Gods of Our Fathers: Jack London, Upton Sinclair and the Japanese*.² She points out how in May 1930 "The Culture of Theater" (Gekijyo Bunka) created by Kubo Hae (久保栄) reported the news that the Art Theaters backed by the League of Chinese Left-Wing Dramatists had performed "The Miners" by L Marten and "The Game of Love and Death" by Romain Rolland³. Further, it was reported that Daxia [大夏] University had performed "The Second Story Man" and Fudan University had offered "The Theft" by Upton Sinclair. There is no firm evidence that the play "The Second Story Man" by Upton Sinclair was introduced to China via Japan as in the case of Jack London, but it does raise the question of how precisely the Chinese came to know Sinclair.

From the Late Taisho to the Early Showa period (around 1925-30), Upton Sinclair was very popular among the Japanese. On the other hand, the introduction and translation of Upton Sinclair in China came to light two or three years later than the so-called "Sinclair Era" in Japan. Yu Dafu, Guo Moruo, Feng Naichao, Zheng Boqi, and Li Yimang (all members of the Creation Society "Chuang Zao She") were the pioneers who introduced Sinclair to China. Adding to the mix Huang Yaomian and Tao Sunjing,⁴ it is not an exaggeration to say that Chuang Zao She is the true force responsible for introducing Sinclair's writings to China. Therefore we can assert that Sinclair was

¹ Wang Jiankai. *Wusi Yilai Woguo Yingmei Wenxuezuopin Yijieshi 1919-1949*. (The History of British and American Literary Works Translated or Introduced to China Since the May Fourth Movement 1919-1949) Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Publisher, 2003, 64-65.

² Nakada, Sachiko. *The Gods of Our Fathers: Jack London, Upton Sinclair and Japanese*. Tokyo: Kokusho Kankokai, 1991.4. 235.

³ "The Chinese Theater of Today" from "The Culture of Theater, Shanghai Branch" by 林守仁 Lin Shouren, but his real name is Yamagami Masayoshi, who is also the translator of Lu Xun's novel, *The True Story of Ah Q*. Yamagami (1896-1938) was a correspondent from the Japanese Press Union at the beginning of the 1930s.

⁴ Both of them translated novels by Sinclair by that time. Huang Yaomian, *Jimmy Higgins*. Shanghai: Qizhi Shutian, 1929, 11. Dao Sunjing, *Peter Gudge Becomes a Secret Agent*. Shanghai: Xiandai Shuju, 1930, 10.

known to Chinese society through students who had stayed in Japan, not necessarily students in America.

These former students in Japan, after returning to China, were trying to absorb the movements originally launched by Japanese literary circles; there is no doubt that their translation of Sinclair to Chinese in a sense mirrors the so-called “Sinclair Era” in Japan. Based on my research, the first translation of Sinclair into Chinese is “Mammonart--A Study of the Economy of Art” by Feng Naichao,⁵ a leading member of the Creation Society. And it is quite possible that he read the Japanese translation for reference while he was translating.⁶

However, it is Yu Dafu’s “The Art of Mammonart”⁷ that began the real introduction of Sinclair to Chinese literary culture. As Yu Dafu suggested in his preface “The Translator’s Notes about ‘The Art of Mammonart,’”⁸ Kimura Seisi’s “The Art of Mammonart” was an important reference for his translation. Kimura’s Japanese version was published in October 1927 by Kinseido as the twelfth volume in the “Social Literature Series”; however, Kimura’s version is not a complete translation, as it only covers 28 of 110 chapters. Yu Dafu translates the title “Mammonart” into 拜金艺术, just as Kimura’s Japanese translation is 拜金芸術. In his preface, Yu Dafu calls Sinclair “a justice warrior, a compatriot of proletarians and peasants,”⁹ extolling Sinclair as the true literary writer from whom Chinese literary writers should learn. Yu Dafu evaluates Sinclair’s work from the standpoint of humanitarianism, praising Sinclair’s personality in three memorable examples.

The first example adduced by Yu Dafu is that, when “The Jungle” was about to be published, the press authority tried to bribe Sinclair with big money but he laughed away their offer; the second is that, when the First World War broke out, Sinclair showed his supportive attitude toward this war. However, when the right wing wanted to commission him to work for them, he paid no attention to them at all. And when realizing that his idea about the war was wrong, Sinclair immediately returned to his left wing comrades. The third example is that though he won worldwide fame and respect, Sinclair still made every effort to be modest and never wanted to be a literary authority or leader. Yu Dafu admired Sinclair’s modesty in comparison with the tendencies showed by the members of late Chuang Zao She (the Creation Society), who started the so-called “Revolutionary Literature Movement.” Yu Dafu criticized these radicals by saying that “Chinese intellectuals are prone to fighting for position and tend to behave as if they were leaders.” Sinclair was viewed as an antidote to these ambitions in the Chinese literary circles.¹⁰

In November 1928, Sinclair’s *King Coal*, translated by Guo Moruo, was published.¹¹ This translated novel marked the authentic appearance of Sinclair on the Chinese literary scene; it came out three years after the Japanese version: “King Coal,” translated by Sakai Toshihiko (堺利

⁵ Feng Haichao’s translation, which was published in the journal *Wenhua Pipan*, (*Cultural Comment*) (volume 2, 1928, 2, 15), is not simply a work of translation, but rather an introduction with some translation. Before this introduction, there was a short essay named “Mammonart” by Songning which appeared in the journal *Bei Xin*’s column: “Short Comments” (1928, 2.1). However, it is only a brief introduction.

⁶ I have no solid evidence to demonstrate that Feng Naichao’s translation adapted any part of the Japanese version, but there are two assumptions that lead to this conclusion. 1) He was a foreign student in Japan and fluent in the Japanese Language; 2) he did not note that his translation was based on the original work of Sinclair.

⁷ The introduction of “Mammonart Art” was serialized 19 times in *Bei Xin* from April 1st, 1928 to August 1st, 1929; however, each portion has a different title.

⁸ Later, when all the serials were collected into *Yu Dafu Literary Works · Volume 7*, the editors created a title “The Notes of the Translator for ‘Mammonart Art’” for the whole serial.

⁹ Yu Dafu. “The Notes of the Translator for ‘Mammonart Art,’” *Yu Dafu Literary Works, Vol. 7*. Guangzhou: Huacheng Publisher, 1983. 190

¹⁰ Yu Dafu. “The Notes of the Translator for ‘Mammonart Art.’” 189-200

¹¹ Gu Moruo translated *King Coal* when he went into exile to Japan; therefore, he could not use his real name but his pseudonym: Kanren. This translation was published by Le Qun Publishing run by Zhang Ziping in November 1928 and had been republished four times by May 1930.

彦),¹² was first published in March 1925 by Hakuyosha (白楊社). Sakai was a Japanese pioneer in introducing Sinclair's literary works. As early as March 1907, he had already sent an essay entitled "Tochikujyo (屠畜場) (Slaughterhouse): *The Jungle*, A Translation of The Third Chapter" to *Family Magazine*; with this Sinclair's literary work was for the first time introduced to the Japanese.

The complete Japanese translation of *The Jungle* was published in December 1925 by Sobunkaku (叢文閣), and the translator was then a proletarian writer, Maedako Hiroichiro (前田河広一郎). In August 1929 Guo Moruo's Chinese translation of *The Jungle* (under the pseudonym of Yi Kanren) was published through Shanghai Nanqiang Shuju. Guo Moruo explained in his "Afterward to the Translation" that "This translation is based on the original work's third printing issued by New York Vanguard Press in October, 1927."¹³ By his own explanation, we know that he translated this book from English, not Japanese. However, the title of the Chinese version is called "Tuchang 屠场(Slaughterhouse)", which is very much like the title of Sakai's translation. Still it is difficult to affirm that Guo Moruo referred to Sakai's translation because Sakai's translation is based on the first edition of Sinclair's book while Guo Moruo used the third edition, and the two editions differ in many respects.

Sinclair's name and his works had been widely known in Japan since 1925. The proletarian literary journal "Bungei sensen (文藝戦線) (Literature Front)" made great efforts to introduce or translate Sinclair; many famous proletarian writers, such as the literary theorist Aono Suekichi (青野季吉) and novelist Maedako Hiroichirō, wrote essays on Sinclair with great respect. At the beginning of the Showa period, especially around 1930, the Japanese proletarian literary world showed great interest in both American left wing literature and Soviet literature. During the Taisho period (1912-1926), the western literatures, whether classics or modern works of different schools, were all absorbed by Japan; however, the left wing writing represented by Marxist literature dominated almost the entire literary culture of the early Showa. Leaving aside the proletarian journals, such as "Senki" (戦旗) and "Bungei sensen" (文藝戦), even popular magazines such as "Kaizō" (改造) and "Shinchō" (新潮) often boasted essays inspired by Marxist thought and proletarian theories, which promised to promote the Japanese proletarian movement more broadly.

The members of *Chuang Zao She*, who had always been interested in Japanese affairs, knew well the key literary movements in Japan. In February 1928, Guo Moruo was exiled to Japan and was immediately fascinated by the Sinclair boom among the Japanese proletarian thinkers. While devoting himself to studying Marxist works, he translated Sinclair's three famous novels (*King Coal*, *The Jungle*, and *Oil!*). However, he did not view Sinclair's works from a humanistic perspective as Yu Dafu did. Guo did not mention his own thematic understanding of *The Jungle* in his "Afterward to the Translation." He just simply introduced the novel and made limited comments on the plot. However, after translating *Oil!*, he articulated his ideas about Sinclair with a clear but severe tone: "This novelist does not stand for Marxism-Leninism. And if you call him a social democrat, it is not correct either. If he were born in the Soviet Union, he might be called a 'A Revolutionary Accompanist.' Therefore, although I translated his works, it does not mean that I followed everything of him."¹⁴

Guo Moruo then was strongly drawn to Marxism-Leninism through the works of Kawakami Hajime (河上肇) and was looking forward to a brighter human future in a communist society; therefore, he liked Sinclair but didn't agree with his ideology completely. The reason was clear: "I cannot find from Sinclair's works the incisive consciousness seen in the works of the new writers of the Soviet Union. As he was bound by his society, consciously or unconsciously, he suppressed his

¹² Toshihiko Sakai (1870-1933) is the first chairman of Japanese Communism. He created the socialist newspaper, "Civilian News," with Shusui Kotoku (1871-1911), and for his faith in socialism he was jailed many times.

¹³ Guo Moruo, "Afterward to the Translation," *The Jungle*, Shanghai: Nanqiang Publisher, 1929, 8.

¹⁴ Gu Moruo. "The Preface of 'Oil!'," *Oil!*. Shanghai: Guanghua Publisher, 1930, 6.

own incisive mind.”¹⁵ According to Guo Moruo, the society Sinclair was bound to was America, the headquarters of capitalism. By that time, Guo Moruo became a follower of Marxism, believing that “social being determines social consciousness”; accordingly, Sinclair—since he lived in the quintessential capitalist country and his vision must be “blocked” by his social surroundings—could not, according to Guo, create literary works as excellent as those of the Soviet writers.¹⁶

Actually, at this point Guo Moruo had neither been to America nor to the Soviet Union. His conclusion was made based on his bitter experience in capitalist Japan as well as his own semi-feudal and semi-colonial China. Chinese intellectuals were discontented with inequality and the large gap between the poor and the rich, and they, especially the leftist writers, were apt to admire the Soviet Union and yearn for the socialist system from afar. To Guo Moruo, the Soviet Union was a utopia that human beings dreamed of for thousands of years and that should replace the capitalist system. He accepted and adored everything about the Soviet Union unconditionally; therefore, it is not difficult to understand why he had mixed feelings toward Sinclair who, he believed, as an American had no “true right” to free speech in a capitalist country.

Accordingly, Guo could not help but show his respect for Sinclair’s courage because Sinclair “strove to expose the ghastly part of capitalist society boldly.” To him, the method Sinclair used in his writing, which was “to collect materials with careful preparations and to make use of those materials based on his framework,”¹⁷ had never been known before. Moreover, he was greatly touched by the power of the literary structure which “being magnificent but scrupulous, is constantly changing like the wave that can push the mountain away and turn the sea upside down.” And Guo concluded that “we should adapt and imitate [Sinclair’s] method.”¹⁸

This is a similar method to what Aono Suekichi called “Shirabeta Geijjutsu (調べた芸術)” (The Art of Investigation).¹⁹ The Japanese proletarian literary writers believed that “to investigate, anatomize and criticize the capitalist society ... could be a salvageable and strong way toward Japanese proletarian literature.”²⁰ The translator of *The Jungle*, Maedako Hiroichirō, was concerned about the future of Japanese proletarian literature, so he described Sinclair as a mirror for imitation by pointing out that “without Sinclair’s scientific method to disclose the capitalist social system, Japanese proletarian literature has come to a deadlock.”²¹ Moreover, he criticized “the habit of Japanese literature which is too prone to close observation,”²² and since Japanese literature is an extension of haiku and tanka, the “heritage of aristocracy” narrows and limits the perspectives of Japanese writers. Therefore, they could not write the agony of the contemporary world, and he said Japanese writers should learn from western writers, especially Sinclair.²³ It is interesting that Maedako’s criticism of haiku and tanka is so similar to that of Cheng Fangwu; eight years previously when Cheng Fangwu criticized the “Mini Poem Movement,” he pointed out that haiku and tanka were too aristocratic to reflect the suffering of the poor and working class.²⁴

The introduction of Sinclair stimulated the Japanese Proletarian movement. It is hard to

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ In his essay named “日本の文壇と英文学”(Japanese Literary World and English Literature), included in *The English Studies in Japan for 100 years: Book of Showa*, Kenkyusha, 1969, Senuma Shigeki 瀬沼茂樹 pointed out that, after entering deeply into the life of the American working class and after observing carefully their daily life, working conditions, and political life, then one might create a novel: this is the method which Sinclair used in his novels and this method was called “The Art of Investigation,” which, according to Senuma, was first mentioned and used by Aono Suekichi (青野季吉).

²⁰ Aono Suekichi. “Centering on ‘Jungle’: Reconsider ‘The Art of Investigation’,” *Bungei Sensen*, 1962, 1.

²¹ Maeda Hiroichiro. “The Conversion from Poverty Novels: The History of Proletarian Literature Movement: Semi-Autobiography,” *Kaizo*, 1931.8.

²² Ibid.

²³ Maedako Hiroichiro. “The Brief Thoughts in November, (十一月の断想)” *Bungeisensei*, 1930, 11.

²⁴ Cheng Fangwu, “The Defensive War for Poem (詩之防禦戦),” *Weekly Chuang Zao* No.1, 1923.5.13.

deny that so many proletarian novels, which depicted the misery of the working class and exposed the cruelty of the capitalists, appeared at the beginning of the Showa Era; this had clearly something to do with the Sinclair boom. The masterpieces of Japanese proletarian writing, for example, Kobayashi Takiji's (小林多喜二) "Kanikōsen" (蟹工船) or "A Crab-Canning Boat," Hayama Yoshiki's (葉山嘉樹) "Umini ikuru hitobito" (海に生くる人々), or "The People Who Live on the Sea", were all based on Sinclair's method of exposing the true nature of capitalist exploitation and class consciousness. Generally by that time in Japan, Sinclair's literary works were regarded as a source of *praxis* for Marxism's theory of art. For example, in the advertisement for Maedako's translation of *The Jungle*, you can see the slogans, "The art of Marxism's theory! The masterpiece of Sinclair!" The Japanese leftist writers believed that Sinclair *was* a Marxist or close to a Marxist, even if Guo Moruo could not quite accept this.

However, there are many different opinions about the purpose of literature among Japanese writers. Accordingly, it is not correct to say that all the proletarian literary writers admired Sinclair. Some doubted his ideology²⁵; some could not be satisfied with his artistry. Chiba Kameo (千葉亀雄) thought that socialism and real art were incompatible; therefore he criticized Sinclair's literary works, which he believed lacked true aesthetic power. He could not agree that Sinclair's literature should be praised as a model for "proletarian literature" because "the world of proletarians is still on the way. His works could not be tenable if we rashly set his literature as a model now."²⁶ He questions whether proletarians, as a social force, have come to maturity, and whether proletarian literature could therefore be realized; therefore, Sinclair's literary works could not be a true model. Chiba ultimately believed that art could not be dominated by ideology, at least until ideology really caused genuine change and reform.

It is interesting to compare Chiba and Guo Moruo's views on Sinclair's works. Though Guo Moruo, like Chiba, also had his reservations about Sinclair, his criticism also departed from Chiba's ideas. Guo was impressed by Sinclair's literary form and technique, but was dissatisfied at his not making enough propaganda for revolutionary ideology and communist ideals. He took *Oil!* for an example and analyzed it as follows:

Oil! exposed the ugliness of American capitalism and the ugliness of the structure of its politics, law, religion, and education, which was built upon ugly capitalism. [Sinclair] found the power to deal with and fight against the ugliness. This power is pregnant in the matrix of ugliness and eventually will produce a new organization that is going to destroy this matrix, and this power is that of the proletarians. The author embodies this power indirectly through the depiction of the protagonist, Paul. The author is able to grasp consciousness accurately; however, he is still looking forward to a symbolic 'childbirth' and is assured that this Paul will be the master of the future world; he lets Paul 'be miscarried' before everyone's eye! The description of the new power after Paul's death is too weak; especially for the setting which lets the only person who sympathizes with Paul, Ruth (Paul's sister) go mad and in the end lets her be plunged into desperate suicide--- he (the author), after careful consideration, ascribes Ruth's death to her heredity---this setting to Paul is a kind of insult---it is the setting that shows the author's flaw in his consciousness and the weakened effect of the art. Because of the author's portrayal of Ruth, the whole novel is tinged with a kind of sentimental hue; as a

²⁵ Miyamoto Yurio wrote in her letter (7/24/1944) to Miyamoto Kanji who was in the prison of Sukamo prison that "When the rich college student went to visit the mine, he was shocked to see the life there and awakened by his own conscience, then he went to great pains to help the unfortunate people. This is really an extraordinary happy ending." Quoted from Nakada Sachiko *The Gods of Our Fathers: Jack London, Upton Sinclair and Japanese*. Tokyo: Kokusho Kankokai, 1991,4.

²⁶ Chiba Kameo. "Vitality and the Beauty of Heterogeneity (生命力と渾成美)" *Bungei Koron*, 1927.6. Quoted from Nakada Sachiko *The Gods of Our Fathers: Jack London, Upton Sinclair and Japanese*. Tokyo: Kokusho Kankokai, 1991,4.

result, the novel he tried his best to write almost ends as a kind of comedy.²⁷

This quote is very important to understand Guo Moruo's evolution in his interpretation of art. No doubt he is different from his Japanese counterparts in receiving Sinclair's literature. Chiba Kameo points out that the reason Sinclair's literature could not attract him is because of its strong trend toward propaganda, which spoils the aesthetic principle; while Guo Moruo thinks that as socialist literary work, Sinclair's literature is not strong enough to effectively propagandize for Marxism and socialism. Though Guo Moruo translated three of Sinclair's novels, he did not at last adopt Sinclair's methods, and he did not use the so-called "Art of Investigation" to create his own works. To Guo Moruo's rich imagination, it was perhaps impossible to create literary works based solely on the facts. However, through the translation of Sinclair's works, he realized the importance of propaganda for Marxist literature, and the idea that all art is merely propaganda flashed into his mind as a revelation.

Guo Moruo was absorbed in reading Chinese classics and historical texts from his boyhood and since he understood how great was the influence of art on society, he wrote or adapted many historical dramas to serve his new viewpoints. The protagonists in his dramas are mostly people who are isolated from or forgotten by society. They are the "heroes" who might be oppressed, or even killed, but will never submit to their fate. These historical dramas, of course, would never follow the contents of the historical texts and for that, not a few historians criticized his method; however, Guo Moruo rebutted that the historical dramas after all were themselves fictions, or art, and those who criticized him for not "telling the facts" in his fictions sounded ridiculous.²⁸ He could not trust the historical fictions, which were written for the rulers and the dynasts, and he tried to represent through his pen the stories of the failures or losers whose names were erased from history. Meanwhile, after encountering Sinclair's literature, Guo Moruo started to regard the propaganda effort as more important than the artistic effect of literature, and through his writing, he participated in political movements more enthusiastically. As for American literature, one of the earliest translated works which had a significant impact on Chinese society was Whitman's "Leaves of Grass." Guo Moruo's early poems are imbued with Whitman's style and showed his admiration for Whitman, and without the frustration of his appreciation for Sinclair. Of course, Guo Moruo admired Sinclair's literature, but he could not help complaining about its sentimental failings; some researchers believe that since Guo Moruo was a "revolutionary optimist," he could not bear too much sentimentality.²⁹ However, we should remember that it was in Japan, where Guo Moruo was a political refugee, that he encountered Sinclair's literature and after experiencing the "white terror," was in severe depression. That he could not bear the bourgeois sentimental emotion seen in Sinclair's novels was not because he was a revolutionary optimist, but rather fully awakened by Marxism-Leninism.

Guo Moruo's three published Sinclair translations created a great sensation in China. Chinese society, especially the leftist writers, showed their great passion for Sinclair. From the late 1920s to the early 1940s, over thirty of Sinclair's literary texts were disseminated in some form. Many writers, translators, or scholars such as Fu Donghua (付東華), Huang Yaomian (黃藥眠), Qian Gechun (錢歌川), Tao Jingsun (陶晶孫), Jiang Xuekai (蔣學楷), Mai Yefu (麥耶夫), Lu Gongying (陸公英), even Lin Weiyin (林微音), some of whom had otherwise diverse political positions, came together for one purpose: introducing Sinclair to the Chinese. In October 1934, the journal *Xiandai* 現代(Modern) issued a special edition on American literature. After making a comparison of the literatures of the Soviet Union and the American left wing, the editors pointed out that "Today, as the leftist literatures of the whole world are controlled or

²⁷ Guo Moruo. "The Preface to 'Oil'," from *Oil!*, Shanghai: Guanghua Publisher, 1936.6.

²⁸ Refer to the essay. "Juan'erji Xu" by Guo Moruo, *Chuangzao Weekly*, Volume 47, April, 5th, 1925.

²⁹ Wang Xiaolin. "American Literature's Influence on Guo Moruo," *Research of Chinese Literature*, No.2, 2004, 95.

dominated by the theory of the Soviet Union, it is only America that can influence the Soviet Union in new directions. Not to mention that in the Soviet Union, there have never been so many of the exposés represented by Sinclair. It would be amazing to you if only to see that the sensation produced by the new star Dos Passos (1896-1970) in the Soviet Union is even greater than in America. The leftist writers of America do not subordinate themselves to the theory of the Soviet Union as servants, but instead create their own theory.”³⁰ According to most of the writers in this publication, what the Chinese should learn from American literature was the original, creative, and free spirit that represented America.

It is clear that the journal *Xiandai*'s principle was counter to Guo Moruo's. The writers in this edition mostly did not have a close relationship with contemporary Japanese literature; therefore, their viewpoint on American leftist literature was unique. They were not disappointed, as the Japanese writers were, with the propaganda function of American leftist literature. They were not against leftist literature, but they questioned Soviet literature. Generally speaking, most Chinese writers believed in the idea of “Art for Life”, but even those who pursued “Art for Art's sake” were not focused on the technique of writing as Japanese writers were, but instead pursued modern consciousness in modern literary practice.

Under the influence of Chinese leftist literary movements, the mainstream of Chinese literature moved in even more radical directions. Later Guo Moruo's viewpoint on utilizing literature as a propagandistic tool became the mainstream. His “Commemoration of the 300th Anniversary of the Jia-Shen Year”³¹ can be accounted as one of his literary writings utilized to greatest effect as political propaganda. The essay was written in 1944 when the Allied forces had won the decisive victory in the battlefield of Europe; from that, both nationalists and Communists knew clearly that the final battle to control the future of China was imminent. The tense relationship between the two parties could be perceived by the extraordinary concern from both sides for the 300th anniversary of the fall of the Ming Dynasty.

Guo Moruo lists the reasons that led to the fall of the Ming Dynasty: the oppression of the officials; long-lasting draught; the poverty caused by insect disaster; and most of all, the corruption of the dynasty itself. He points out that one cannot deny that Li Zicheng revolted against the Ming Dynasty by leading the masses into the Ming capital where he built his own dynasty, “Da Shun Guo,” under the claim that the survival of the masses was threatened. Guo Moruo attributed the fall of the Ming Dynasty to its corruption, showing great sympathy to the rebellious Li Zicheng. It is obvious that Guo Moruo spoke for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) that was still in the political wilderness. Immediately, the Nationalist party issued an editorial comment in the newspaper “Central News”³² and sharply rebutted Guo Moruo's essay. In the meantime, pro-Japanese writers wrote essays giving their opinions over the fall of Ming Dynasty. The intellectuals from these three different perspectives all viewed the fall of Ming Dynasty as something beyond mere history; it is obvious that they projected their own political stance onto the fall of the Ming Dynasty.

In Chinese history, the fall of the Ming Dynasty and being ruled by the Qing Dynasty are regarded as a national shame, and since the Opium war, the sovereign power of China had been violated many times, which eventually led to the Sino-Japanese war. When Chinese intellectuals seek out the root of the tragedy for the Chinese nation, they usually trace back to the failures of the Ming era. In formal Chinese history, Li Zicheng is regarded as an extremist who for some symbolized the rising force of the young Chinese Communist Party; therefore, actually a critical issue over who would be the future ruler of China is hidden in the argument centering on Li

³⁰ “Special Issue: Introduction to Modern American Literature”, Shanghai: *Journal Modern (Xiandai 現代)*, Volume 5, Issue 6, October, 1st, 1934.

³¹ This essay's Chinese title is “甲申三百年祭”, which was finalized on March, 10th, 1944. Later, it was serialized from March 19th to 22nd, 1944 in one of the most important newspapers, *Xinhua Daily* (新華日報).

³² Editorial: “Correct One Thought” (“糾正一種思想”), *Central Daily* (中央日報), March 24th, 1944.

Zicheng's merits and crimes. Guo Moruo mentions his motive in writing this essay, telling us that he read the book banned at the beginning of the Qing Dynasty, "Chao Chuang Xiaoshi." He says he could not help feeling sympathetic to Li Zicheng, who had been depicted as a criminal; thus, he decided to write this essay.

That Guo Moruo favored Li Zicheng emerged out of his own disposition to love tragic heroes. It is no doubt that the ambition of the peasant leader to build up a new kingdom for the common people touched Guo Moruo deeply. Being stimulated by the tragedy of Li Zicheng, Guo Moruo wanted to clarify what he saw as a vague or misunderstood part of history in the essay. However, it was no one less than Mao, the leader of the CCP, who perceived the outstanding power of propaganda in this essay. As is known, Mao in his speech "Xuexi He Shiju" ("Study and Current Affairs")³³ introduced Guo Moruo's essay "Commemoration of the 300th Anniversary of the Jia-Shen Year" to his attendants, warning his comrades that they should learn from the lesson of the failure of Li Zicheng: "Do not make the same mistake as being arrogant when winning the victory." Since then, this essay became one of the obligatory reading materials of the "Yanan ZhengFeng Movement" for the leaders of CCP.³⁴

It is hard to deny that in Guo Moruo's essay you can find some of the so-called historical facts questionable and some parts lacking scientifically precise data. However, as it had gained Mao's favorable comments, this essay on history was admired as dogma for the CCP; it became impossible to question it. Though Guo Moruo did not write this essay to please Mao, his idea that literature and history is merely a tool for political purpose won Mao's favor. It is no exaggeration to say that Guo Moruo played an important role for the CCP to take over the reins of Chinese government later. However, without the political freedom of speech, Guo Moruo endeavored on few literary works. On December 6, 1955, Guo Moruo visited Japan 18 years after escaping from Japan. In Tokyo, he met his old friend, Tanizaki Junichiro, at the Imperial Hotel. The dialogue between them is very interesting.³⁵

Tanizaki: Are you busy writing something?

Guo: I have given up writing literature.

Tanizaki: It is a great pity.

The word "pity" (惜しいですね) embodied Tanizaki's respect for a fellow writer, and at the same time, it could hardly hide Tanizaki's confusing and complicated emotion toward the politician Guo Moruo. To Tanizaki, the life of a literary writer is to write; it was not appropriate for a literary writer to give up writing halfway, and he regretted Guo Moruo's surrender as a literary creator. However, by that time, Guo Moruo had entered the dominant group in the Chinese government and devoted himself to how to make the new government run well. He had no time to care about literature, which came to be seen merely as a propaganda tool. Since encountering Marxism, Guo Moruo admitted that "my poetic sensations are all dying. And it is beyond my ability to stop it, but only hope the sensations go extinct sooner."³⁶ What he said here represents how he had totally metamorphosed from a liberal artist to a trumpet of Marxism as he determined to devote himself to

³³ This speech was given on April 12th, 1944 on Lecture to High-ranking Officials at Yan'an.

³⁴ Bokuta Eiji introduces what happened around Guo Moruo's essay "Commemoration of the 300th Anniversary of the Jia-Shen Year" in his preface "Explanation" (Kaidai) which is included in his translated book *Historical Figures, Selection of Guo Moruo 15*, Tokyo: Yukon Publisher, Feb., 1983, pointing out that "it is Guo Moruo's intention to make his essay: 'Commemoration of the 300th Anniversary of the Jia-Shen Year', a 'propaganda tool,' to be used for the political struggle and without doubt, Guo Moruo must be very proud of his success for his essay and must be very pleased by it too."

³⁵ Liu Deyou, *Guo Moruo: The Japanese Trip*. (郭沫若：日本の旅), translated by Murayama Makoto, Tokyo: Saimaru Publisher, October, 1992.

³⁶ Guo Moruo, "Guhong" ("Lonely Goose" 「孤鴻」) *Chuangzao Monthly*, Volume 1, Issue 2, April, 1926. Though Guo Moruo started to doubt if he could devote himself totally to art in his early time as a literary writer, he kept writing for almost another 20 years; however, since 1949, he hardly very little.

the dream of building the “kingdom” of a socialist society. Though he confessed to Tanizaki that he chose to give up writing literature, in the political environment he inhabited, which only received literature as a political tool, how could he create anything more? It is likely that Guo Moruo lost his confidence in writing great literature of any kind.

Though Sinclair’s writing influenced Japanese and Chinese literary circles greatly, after World War II, Sinclair’s work almost disappeared from both countries. Recently in Japan, the reputation of proletarian literature has revived, especially among the younger generation. The proletarian masterpiece, *Kanikōsen* (The Crab Boat) has sold 100 times more than typical books, and reached 400,000 copies in the first half of 2008. Owing to the economic downturn, young Japanese have turned their interest not only to Japanese proletarian literary works; accordingly, the works of Sinclair have been reprinted.³⁷ In China, the Sinclair boom lasted until the 1940s, and in the 1950-60s almost no writer doubted or dared to question what the essence or purpose of art should be. Though Sinclair’s works were seldom mentioned in Mao’s China, his influence on contemporary Chinese intellectuals or young leftist students should not be overlooked. Sinclair’s writings came to China through many different routes; however, it is hard to deny that the Japanese Sinclair boom had a vast impact on Chinese literary circles, as the former foreign students who studied in Japan played an essential role in introducing Upton Sinclair to China at large.

³⁷ The evening edition of *Newspaper of Yomiuri* 《読売新聞》 (May 2, 2008) reports that proletarian masterpieces such as *Kanikosen* (蟹工船) and *Toseikatasha* (党生活者) have been reprinted in as many as 400,000 copies to meet the need of readers, especially younger readers.