

REHABILITATION: A Chronological Postscript

Paris, October 23, 1978.

SINCE I FIRST wrote the above, and especially during the past year, much new material has been published on Lao She and his death. Paradoxically, the cause of this death—whether it was suicide or murder—remains obscure. The following is a record of the different stages of Lao She's rehabilitation process, as seen from France and at last in China.

August 11-25, 1972. The French newspaper *Le Monde* publishes two letters; one by Mrs. Michelle Loi, who maintains that the only source of the suicide story was Taiwan, and the other an answer from Professor René Etiemble, who insists upon the validity of other foreign evidence.¹

February 6, 1974. "For the 75th anniversary of Lao She", the Soviet magazine *Literatournaia Gazeta* publishes an article by A. Antipovskii, who stresses Lao She's former sympathy for the Soviet Union.

October 2, 1977. I receive a letter from Michelle Loi. She writes that, according to the writer Hao Jan 浩然 (whom she met in Peking in September), "Il [Lao She] s'est jeté dans un lac après avoir été critiqué par les gardes rouges et ses collègues. Il était sincèrement attaché à la République Populaire de Chine et avait fait un bon travail après 1949, mais il était susceptible, très imbu de son talent et de sa noblesse. Il a été très peu critiqué. D'autres, qui l'ont été davantage, s'en sont beaucoup mieux tirés. . . ."²

November 16, 1977. The Hsinhua Agency announces the posthumous publication by *Renmin wenzue* 人民文學 (1977, 10, p. 25) of two poems written by the "famous Chinese writer" in 1965. These, translated in French under the titles "Jadis" and "Aujourd'hui" (*Littérature chinoise*, 1978, 4, p. 114), underline the contrast between the old world before Liberation and the new.

November 20, 1977. The *Guangming Daily* 光明日報 publishes three *wu-lü* 五律 poems written by Lao She on the 1965 Spring Festival.

December 5, 1977. The *People's Daily* publishes a poem dedicated to Kuo Mo-jo and written during Spring 1962.

December 1977. *Shanghai wenyi* 上海文藝 (3, p. 10) publishes four poems written during Spring 1962.

¹Mrs. Loi and Prof. Etiemble are well-known scholars in Paris, the former is a pro-PRC writer and the latter a specialist in Comparative Literature.

²The letter is rather difficult to translate and may be rendered as follows: "He threw himself into a lake after he was criticized by the Red Guards and his own colleagues. He was truly fond of the People's Republic of China and has done good work after 1949, but he was touchy, very proud of his talent and nobility. He had been very little criticized. Other writers, although they were more criticized, got out of trouble more easily. . . ."

原中国文联副主席、著名爱国作家、人民艺术家

老舍先生骨灰安放仪式在京隆重举行

邓小平、李先念等党和国家领导人送花圈

吴德邓颖超廖承志沈雁冰康克清杨静仁参加骨灰安放仪式

新华社北京六月三日专电 中国文学艺术界联合会付主席、我国著名爱国作家、人民艺术家老舍先生，受林彪、“四人帮”炮制的“文艺黑线专政”论的摧残迫害，于一九六六年八月二十四日不幸逝世，终年六十七岁。一九七八年六月三日，在北京八宝山革命公墓为老舍先生举行了隆重的骨灰安放仪式。



老舍先生遗像 新华社发

中共中央付主席、国务院付总理邓小平、李先念，中共中央政治局委员、人大常委会付委员长乌兰夫、吴德，中共中央政治局委员、国务院付总理耿飚，人大常委会付委员长郭沫若、袁牧、邓颖超、序承志、周扬、许德珩、胡厥文，国务院付总理王震，中央军委负责人罗瑞卿，政协全国委员会付主席沈雁冰、杨静仁，董颖周送了花圈。送花圈的还有人大常委会、政协全国委员会、中国文联、中国作家协会、中共北京市委、北京市委常委会等单位。人大常委会付委员长吴德、邓颖超、序承志，政协全国委员会付主席、中国文联付主席、中国作家协会主席沈雁冰，政协全国委员会付主席康克清、杨静仁，政协全国委员会秘书长齐燕铭参加了骨灰安放仪式。

老舍先生的骨灰安放仪式由吴德主持，沈雁冰致悼词。悼词中说，我们怀着沉痛和怀念的心情，深切悼念我国著名作家老舍先生。

老舍先生原名舒舍予，北京市人，一八九九年出生于城市贫民家庭。抗日战争时期，老舍先生曾主持中华全国文艺界抗敌协会，在周总理直接关怀和帮助下，为团结和组织广大文艺工作者参加抗日之斗争等方面的工作作出了积极的贡献。后来随

美国讲学并进行创作。一九四九年祖国回国后，老舍先生热情地投入新中国的各项工作，曾任政务院文教委员会委员，全国人民代表大会代表，政协全国委员会常务委员，中国文联付主席，中国作家协会付主席。书记处书记，北京市人民委员会委员，北京市文联主席等职。

老舍先生是著名爱国作家。他把一生贡献给了祖国的文学艺术事业。他在创作上积极进取，著作丰富。解放前，他写了《骆驼祥子》等许多文学作品，对旧社会进行了揭露和批判。新中国成立后，毛主席的革命文艺路线给了他新的艺术生命，他以高度的创作热情，夜以继日地工作，创作了话剧《龙须沟》、《春华秋实》，小说《无名高地有了名》和其他各种形式的许多文艺作品，受到广大人民群众的热烈欢迎和喜爱，在国内外享有崇高声誉，被誉为“人民艺术家”。

悼词说，老舍先生拥护伟大领袖毛主席，热爱敬爱的周总理，拥护中国共产党，热爱社会主义。他认真学习马列和毛主席著作，以周总理关于“活到老，学到老，改造到老”的教导为座右铭，严格要求自己。老舍先生经常注意对青年文艺工作者的培养。他行动，在党的领导下，他在团结作家、画家、艺人以及国际文化活动中，也生活作风简朴，平易近人，这些都是值得我们学习的。

老舍先生是拥护并积极参加无产阶级文化大革命的。毛主席表示拥护。但是由于美国贼心不死和文艺工作者，老舍先生身心遭到严重摧残。

悼词说，老舍先生的不幸逝世，使党和国家、老朋友而志到十分悲痛。我们热爱社会主义祖国，热爱劳动，学习他艰苦朴素、热爱劳动、勇于创新、

PORTION OF AN ARTICLE from the People's Daily, June 4, 1978, reporting memorial meeting held on the occasion of relocation of Lao She's ashes.

January 1978. Shanghai wenyi (1, pp. 6-9) publishes an article by Pa Chin, who recalls that the last time he saw Lao She, on July 10, 1966, the author of the play Tea-house 茶馆 asked him to "tell [his] friends that [he] has no trouble, that [he] was well and had just met the Prime Minister [Chou En-lai] and Vice Premier Chen [Yi]".

February 1978. Hu Chieh-ch'ing 胡絮青 writes an article in Renmin Xiju 人民戏剧 (2, pp. 11-14) about Chou En-lai's concern for her husband and especially his dramas. She reminds that Lao She, in spite of the fact that he was old and ill, went to the countryside as early as 1965, in a people's commune near Peking, and that he wrote a letter the following year to Chairman Mao "wanting to take an active part in the Cultural Revolution"... "to study and be re-educated until the end of his life" 活到老、學到老、改造到老—which was Chou's own advice. "Unfortunately, because of the traitor Lin Piao and the renegade Chiang Ch'ing, who concocted the theory of the 'dictatorship of the literary and artistic black line' 「文藝黑線專政」論, Lao She was himself persecuted to death 被迫害致死".

Shikan 詩刊 (2, p. 67) publishes two poems, written by Lao She in April 1965 during a trip to Japan. Renmin dianying 人民電影 (2-3, pp. 20-21) publishes an article by Ts'ao

Yü 曹馬, who praises the film *Dragon Beard Ditch* 龍鬚溝, that is again shown in Peking for the Spring Festival, and recalls his old friend's "warm love" for socialism.

April 2, 1978. The Hsinhua Agency announces that the *Peking Daily* has recently published a text written by Lao She in 1964 and stressed the fact that the author of *Rickshaw Boy* "remained always faithful to the revolutionary line of Chairman Mao in the literary and artistic fields".

April 10, 1978. Shu Chi 舒濟, Lao She's eldest daughter, born in 1933 and now lecturer in physics at the Hopei Teachers Training College, publishes an article, "In Memory of My Father Lao She" in the *Ta Kung Pao*, Hong Kong. About her father's death, Shu Chi writes: "The evil Lin Piao and the 'Gang of Four' anti-Party group, out of their need for the usurpation of the Party and power, cruelly persecuted him and wrested away his life. Fortunately, our wise leader Chairman Hua, succeeding to Chairman Mao's legacy and raising high the great banner of Mao Tse-tung Thought, has overthrown the 'Gang of Four', saved the Revolution, saved the Party, and rendered judgment on the 'theory of the dictatorship of the literary and artistic black line', so that Chairman Mao's literary and artistic line is carried out and my father has been vindicated."

April 11, 1978. The *People's Daily* publishes an article by Yuan Liang-chun 遠良駿, a member of the faculty of the Chinese Literature Department of Peking University, who criticizes the "Gang of Four" for having all writers, except Lu Hsun, excluded from the teaching course and the university lectures. Lao She is restored, along with Mao Tun, Pa Chin, Ts'ao Yü, etc.

May 1978. Publication by Renmin wenzue chubanshe 人民文學出版社 of a new, enlarged edition of *Lao She's Selected Dramas* 老舍劇作選, with a postscript by Hu Chieh-ch'ing.

May 27 - June 5, 1978. At a meeting of the 3rd National Committee of the Federation of Literary and Artistic Circles 中國文學藝術界聯合會, Hu Chieh-ch'ing presents a report on the circumstances of her husband's death. (The report is published under the title "The light of the Party sun is warming up the world of letters and arts" 黨的陽光溫暖着文藝界 in the first issue of the newly re-established *Wenyi bao* 文藝報, 1, pp. 31-35.)

She writes: "I think of Lao She. The theory of 'the dictatorship of the literary and artistic black line' which Lin Piao concocted in cahoots with Chiang Ch'ing destroyed a host of fine literary and artistic workers and wrested away Lao She's life. He was the vice chairman of the Literary Federation 文聯 and the Writers Union 作家協會, but he is no longer able to attend this meeting; he has departed from us for these 12 years. I want to accuse Lin Piao and Chiang Ch'ing for their persecution of Lao She. I believe, were Lao She to attend this meeting himself, these would have been the first words that he would utter, because he was among the first to fall, he was in the forefront and bore the brunt of the persecution. . . .

"During that period, under the reactionary influence of Lin Piao and the 'Gang of Four', there was an outbreak of violence in Peking in which a great many literary and artistic workers were cruelly beaten. That afternoon, Lao She was also beaten by means of stage props used in Peking Opera, suffering severe injuries and with his head bleeding. Lao She angrily protested against such illegal and violent treatment. He held fast to his attitude of "seeking truth from facts" 實事求是 and persisted in his refusal to tell lies or knuckle under. At the risk of being beaten to death, he would not utter a word that would hurt the dignity of the Party. It was for this that he was made to wear a dunce-cap on the spot bearing the label 'A Current Anti-Revolutionary', subjected to untold humiliation and beaten time and again until deep into the night. Just before dawn, when I saw him, he was already breathing his last. His last words to me were: 'I did not say anything against my conscience. I believe Chairman Mao and Prime Minister Chou understand me,

and the people understand me.' He came up from poverty and remained poor for the better part of his life; but he had a boundless love for the Party, for Chairman Mao and Prime Minister Chou, for the new society, and for the working people. Such a celebrated writer of his times, one who had labored day and night to create literature, was thus put to death by the theory of 'the dictatorship of the literary and artistic black line'. When people found his body in Taiping Lake the following day, it had marks and bruises all over. Floating on the water beside his body was a volume of Chairman Mao's poems which he had copied and bound with his own hands and had been reading and reciting up to the very last moment of his life. . . . All this happened from the evening of August 23, 1966, to past midnight on the 24th, barely six months after the unveiling of the theory of 'the dictatorship of the literary and artistic black line'."

June 3, 1978. A commemorative meeting, attended by several hundreds of personalities (Wu Te 吳德, Teng Ying-ch'ao 鄧穎超, Liao Ch'eng-chih 廖承志, and Shen Yen-ping 沈雁冰) and writers (Chou Yang 周揚, Hsia Yen 夏衍, Pa Chin 巴金, Liu Pai-yü 劉白羽, Chang T'ien-yi 張天翼, Ts'ao Yü 曹禺, Ouyang Shan 歐陽山, Hsieh Ping-hsin 謝冰心, Chang Kuang-nien 張光年, Chou Li-po 周立波, etc.) is held in the Papaoshan Cemetery. Mao Tun 茅盾 (Shen Yen-ping) pronounced Lao She's eulogy. He says: "Mr. Lao She was one who supported and actively participated in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. At the very outset of the campaign he had written a letter to our great leader Chairman Mao expressing support. But due to the theory of 'the dictatorship of the literary and artistic black line' concocted by the traitor Lin Piao and the renegade Chiang Ch'ing, which persecuted and attacked the broad masses of literary and artistic workers, Mr. Lao She suffered severe blows to both body and mind and was persecuted unto death."

June 4, 1978. The *People's Daily* publishes a Hsinhua Agency report of the previous day's meeting, along with a photograph of the deceased.

August 16, 1978. *Guang jiao jing* 廣角鏡 (*Wide Angle*, 71, p. 1, 35 and 38) publishes a set of photographs depicting Lao She's life and showing his family at the June 3 commemorative meeting. Also published is a 2-part article on the author by Huang Shan-shih 黃山史 (pp. 13-16, the second part of which appearing in issue 72, pp. 30-34).

September 10, 1978. The *People's Daily* publishes a 1960 photograph of Mao Tse-tung shaking hands with the "People's Artist" Lao She in the company of the famous actor Mei Lan-fang.

September 19, 1978. In Peking Hotel, I meet Hu Chieh-ch'ing and Shu Yi 舒乙, her second child and the only son of the family. (He was born in 1935 and is now a wood technician living in Peking.) They tell me many details about Lao She's family and life, but nothing about his death. They announce the future publication of a new edition of *Lao niu po che* 老牛破車, enlarged to cover his later works (including novels, "How I wrote *Camel Hsiangtzu*", and plays), under the title *Lao She chuangzuo jingyan tan* 老舍創作經驗談, and of a collection of different texts and pictures, *Lao She wen hua ji* 老舍文畫集, by the Shanghai wenyi chubanshe. In Peking, a *Lao She lun wen ji* 老舍論文集 will also be published.

September 20, 1978. *Renmin wenzue* (pp. 82-90) publishes a long article by the poet Tsang K'e-chia 臧克家, who recalls his association with Lao She from the time of their first meeting in 1935 at Tsingtao to the last phone call he received from his friend after the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, maybe a few days before his death. Entitled "Lao She is present forever" 老舍永在, the article ends in some very moving lines; even Tsang probably does not tell all that he knows.³

³See p. 19 for this passage in Tsang K'e-chia's article.

The Last Phone Call

The Great Cultural Revolution got under way in 1966. The two of us did not see anything of each other; but, silently, we were in each other's thoughts. One morning my phone rang. I picked up the earpiece.

"This is Lao She."

Those were his very first words, in a low and trembling voice.

"These days I haven't been feeling very well. A small vessel busted in my bronchial tube, and I kept spitting big mouthfuls of blood. Following doctors' orders, I have quit smoking and drinking. The Propaganda Chief of the Municipal [Revolutionary] Committee told me I didn't have to go to any more learning 學習 sessions, but to stay home for some rest. A few days ago, I attended a criticism rally 批判大會; quite a few of our friends were there. *Uh*, getting educated a little. . . ." I have known Lao She for scores of years, and this was the first as well as the last time that I heard him speak in such a tone of voice!

I could only try to keep my feelings under control and say a few words to him in a low and solemn voice about taking care of his health. I understood what he did not manage to say. How I wished I could hurry over to his side so we could pour out to each other what's in our hearts.

His voice over the phone was still entwined in my heart when news of his death reached my ears. I felt the pain as though stabbed in the heart. I wanted to cry but tears would not come.

Lao She was persecuted to death. But justice and truth will not die! One sweep of the giant hand of our heroic and wise leader, Chairman Hua, and the "Gang of Four" has been felled!

The "Gang of Four" will long live in infamy.

Lao She's name will forever be remembered by posterity.

The dark clouds have blown away, and when I look up at the jade-blue sky, I see ten thousand stars sparkling. There is one, particularly bright and shiny; I guess it must be the "Star of Longevity". I gaze upon it, my thoughts far away and my mind's eye shut in meditation. I think of Lao She—an elder whom I revered, a dear friend.

—TSANG K'E-CHIA

Peking, August 7, 1978.

November 1978. *Chinese Literature* (1978, No. 11) publishes the first six chapters of *Camel Hsiang-tzu* 駱駝祥子 (in the 1962 edition), together with Lao She's "How I Came to Write the Novel *Camel Hsiang-tzu*", written in 1945, and an article by Ts'ao Yu entitled "In Memory of Lao She". An Editor's note says: "Maltreated mentally and physically, Lao She died only 67 years old." In its December issue, the magazine continues this new translation of the novel to the middle of Chapter 13.

Qishi niandai 七十年代, a pro-Peking magazine in Hong Kong (No. 106, pp. 67-70), publishes still another report of Lao She's death by the Japanese novelist Ariyoshi Sawako 有吉佐和子, who visited Lao She's widow and eldest daughter in Peking in June 1978. Her account was part of a series of articles on her China tour, her fifth, which began appearing in the *Shùkan shinchō* 週刊新潮 (No. 31, Aug. 3, 1978). This is the gist of her report, based on her conversation with Hu Chieh-ch'ing:

In August 1966, Lao She was ill with bronchitis and was hospitalized for severe hemorrhages. But he was suddenly “dragged out” by young “middle-school students” who had been “stirred up” by “bad elements” of the Wenlian 文聯. He was then beaten with sticks and clubs during a “struggle” meeting in the Wenlian building in the afternoon of Aug. 23, suffering severe injuries and “bleeding all over”. He went home late after midnight, and his injuries were attended to by his wife. In spite of her protestations, he left early in the morning, apparently to rejoin the meeting at the Wenlian. Two days after, on August 25, an anonymous phone call told Hu Chieh-ch’ing of the discovery of Lao She’s body by the side of Taiping Lake. She went there immediately and found her husband’s body under a mat. Although the night was deep, she realized that the corpse was not bloated with water. Even his clothes, shoes and socks were not wet. Without any medical examination, incineration was immediately ordered by the Wenlian representatives. A day later, the family was given back Lao She’s spectacles, wrist-watch and pocket money.

Ariyoshi Sawako quotes Lao She’s widow and his daughter as saying they are convinced it was not a case of suicide. As an old friend of the family—she had become acquainted with the famous Chinese author during a previous 6-month stay in Peking in 1965 and “regarded Mr. Lao She as my own father”—Ariyoshi believes with them that suicide was not in the character of the man. She concludes: “Lao She’s death perhaps will remain forever a riddle. In the absence of a doctor’s determination and a certificate of death, who was it after all who pushed the button of the crematorium? Suicide or not suicide—in neither case was there any reliable evidence.”

IT WOULD BE EASY to say that nobody knows. But certainly someone *does* know, some one person among the Wenlian members or the former Red Guards involved. One question, for instance: how Lao She—who was ill, injured and very feeble—could go to Taiping Lake, which is very far from his home or from the Wenlian building,⁴ being located at the southwest corner of the Tartar City?⁵ There is, at least, one important discrepancy between Ariyoshi Sawako’s account and the Hu Chieh-ch’ing report as published in *Wenyi bao* (See entry under *May 27-June 5, 1978*, above)—and that is, the exact place where Lao She’s body was found: “by the side of Taiping Lake” 太平湖邊 or “in Taiping Lake” 太平湖中? Another publication, *Zhengming* 爭鳴 (No. 9, July 1, 1978, p. 36) had carried a short article about Lao She’s death under the pen-name Shih-ming 仕名; it says that only the head was immersed in lake water.

More than ever, to use Mao Tse-tung’s favorite saying, often quoted by Chou En-lai and Teng Hsiao-ping, an attitude of “seeking truth from facts” 實事求是 is necessary in this case.

—PAUL BADY

⁴Lao She’s home was in Nai-tzu-fu hu-t’ung (see Note 12, on p. 8), near Tung Hua Men 東華門. The Wenlian building is located in Wang-fu Ching 王府井.

⁵Not, as given in Sawako’s article, near the Peking Teachers’ Training University 北京師範大學, which is located outside Te Sheng Men 德勝門 in the northern suburb of Peking.