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Recent Books:
Studies of Hu Shih
in the People's Republic of China

CHIH-P'ING CHOU

During the past ten years, the study of Hu Shih (1891-1962),¹ one of the most influential and controversial intellectuals in modern Chinese history, has reached a new peak in the People's Republic of China. A considerable amount of original material, research papers, and books have been published nation-wide. Since 1976, owing to changes in China's political situation, Hu Shih has gradually emerged from disgrace and his reputation has been partially restored. Scholarly papers on his thought and works started to appear in academic journals and magazines after 1978, and the authors of these recent articles have generally agreed that the smear campaign against Hu Shih in the 1950s was biased and unfairly represented many of Hu Shih's accomplishments.²

The Institute of Modern Chinese History at the National Academy of Social Sciences (Chung-kuo she-hui k'o-hsüeh yüan chin-tai shih yen-chiu so) in Peking has contributed a great deal to this by editing and publishing the correspondence and diaries which Hu Shih left in Peking in December 1948 when he fled to Nanking. The three-volume collection of Hu Shih's correspondence was first published for restricted internal circulation in the People's Republic in 1979. This restriction was later lifted, and the collection was published again in Hong Kong in 1983.³ This collection includes 1,346 letters covering the period from 1915 to 1948. Of these 1,346 letters, 139 were written by Hu Shih; the rest were written to him by his friends, col-

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Hu Shih, April 1956. He wrote on the picture: I was not wearing glasses and I felt that I looked a little like my mother.

leagues, students, and contemporaries. Even though only ten percent of the letters were written by Hu Shih, this collection provides us with a rich source for studying Hu Shih's attitude toward many social issues and current events that were important during the period from the Pre-May Fourth Movement to the eve of the downfall of the Kuomintang government. Since this collection covers the most important period in Hu Shih's life and involves so many leading intellectuals, it is an indispensable source for the study of Hu Shih, and a useful reference for the students of modern Chinese intellectual history as well.

Hu Shih ti jih-chi (The Diary of Hu Shih) was published in 1985.⁴ This two-volume collection covers several periods in Hu Shih's life:

1. January 24 to March 23, 1910
2. April 27 to November 14, 1921
3. February 4 to November 23, 1922
4. January 1 to June 21; July 20 to August 2; September 7 to October 19, 1937
5. thirty-seven non-consecutive days in 1944.

The basic style of this collection is consistent with Hu-Shih's famous *Liu-hsüeh jih-chi* (*Hu Shih's Diary Kept While Studying Abroad*), written when he was a student in the United States. Occasionally, Hu Shih did reveal his private sentiments in his diary, but this was by no means his common practice. Some parts of Hu Shih's diary remind me of the seventeenth century notebook *Jih-chih lu* (*A Record of Daily Learning*) written by Ku Yen-wu (1613-82), one of the leading late Ming and early Ch'ing scholars. Hu Shih's diary is not simply a record of what he did in a day; more important, it served as record of what he thought and studied. Hu Shih's many published articles were actually first drafted in his diary. Therefore, Hu's diary is an important source not only for studying his personal life, but also for understanding the methodology in his scholarship.

In addition, the Academy has also edited and published official telegrams between Hu Shih and the Kuomintang government sent during the period between September 1938 and September 1942, while he was the Chinese ambassador to the United States.⁵ The publication of these telegrams has shed new light on Sino-American relations during these four years, and has brought to light Hu Shih's views on the Sino-Japanese war.

A very comprehensive index of Hu Shih's works was edited by Chi Wei-lung, a librarian of Hua-tung shih-fan ta-hsüeh, and published by Jen-min ch'u-pan she in Shanghai in 1984.⁶ So far, this is the most complete and reliable index in Hu Shih's works. A major chronological biography (*nien-p'u*) of Hu Shih compiled by Chi Wei-lung and Ts'ao Po-yen is near completion and will be published by An-hui chiao-yü ch'u-pan she in the near future.⁷ These new publications of Hu Shih's works show a growing interest among Chinese scholars in this formerly condemned intellectual.

One of the most significant events reflecting the new official policy of partially rehabilitating Hu Shih's reputation in the People's Republic was the publication in serial form of Hu Shih's biography in *Kuang-ming jih-pao*, one of the major official newspapers, from October 7 to November 3, 1986. In the conclusion of this series, Pai Chi-an, the author, recognized Hu Shih's scholarly contributions in the areas of Chinese philosophy, literature, and textual studies (*k'ao-cheng*), and praised him as the pioneer who opened new vistas and introduced new methodologies in these fields. However, Hu Shih was charged with being too conservative politically and not flexible enough in his "bourgeois liberalism." As the author put it, Hu Shih eventually stood on the opposite side of the people, and this is "the tragedy of his life."⁸

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Hu Shih's calligraphy: "I will speak out and die, rather than remain silent and live." [Quoted from Fan Chung-yen's (989-1052) "Ling-wu fu."]

This conclusion more or less sums up the official view of Hu Shih: recognize his academic contributions, but condemn his politics. This official stance is perfectly realized in the following two books.

Keng Yün-chih's *Hu Shih yen-chiu lun-kao* (*Draft of Studies on Hu Shih*),⁹ published in 1985, is one of the most comprehensive scholarly works on Hu Shih published in the People's Republic of China since 1949. This book includes nine long articles, one appendix and a *nien-p'u*, or chronological biography. The first seven articles can be divided into three categories: (1) Hu Shih's influence on the vernacular literary movement and the new cultural movement, both of which took place in the late 1920s; (2) Hu Shih's scholarship, methodology, and philosophy; and (3) the change in Hu Shih's political attitude from the 1920s to the 1930s. Articles eight and nine are comparative studies of Hu Shih with Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Hu Shih with Ch'en Tu-hsiu.

Slightly less than half of the entire book is devoted to Hu Shih's chronological biography. This *nien-p'u* is not as comprehensive as the ten-volume *Hu Shih-chih hsien-sheng nien-p'u ch'ang-pien ch'u-kao* (*First Draft of a Comprehensive Chronological Biography of Mr. Hu Shih-chih*), compiled by Hu Sung-p'ing and published in Taipei in 1984.¹⁰ However, it is selective and well-condensed. The *Ch'ang-pien ch'u-kao* is so comprehensive that it is almost a chronological summary of Hu Shih's complete works.

The quality of the *nien-p'u* in Keng's book, however, deteriorates with the advance in Hu Shih's age; this is particularly obvious for the period after Hu Shih left China in 1948. I suspect that this is due to the unavailability of the primary material on Hu Shih's later years in China. For Hu Shih's late years, especially the last four years that he spent in Taiwan as the Director of the Academia Sinica, the *Ch'ang-pien ch'u-kao* compiled by Hu Sung-p'ing provides a much fuller picture of Hu's life.

Since Keng Yün-chih is an associate researcher in the National Academy of Social Sciences in Peking and the Academy is the officially designated institute for editing Hu Shih's works, Keng has access to a great amount of Hu Shih's unpublished correspondence, diaries, and manuscripts. The author also has access to many newspapers and magazines published from the 1920's to the 1940's that are difficult to find in Taiwan and the United States. For instance, the author has quoted from several letters written by Hu Shih to his fiancée, Chiang Tung-hsiu, while he was still a graduate student in the United States. These letters, never before published, provide us with im-

portant information about Hu Shih's views on his own marriage and on his relation to Chiang Tung-hsiu.¹¹ The author's search for original material deserves great praise.

The interpretation that the author has adopted is clearly in accordance with official policy. In the conclusion of the first chapter, he contends:

To sum up, we must do whatever we can to use Marxist dialectics to do the research. The dialectical method is the only proper method. Only with this method can we find the truth of history; no other methods will help us accomplish this goal.¹²

This passage underscores the rigidity of a communist scholar's frame of reference and the limited freedom that he has in his academic research. It is virtually impossible to give a fair assessment of Hu Shih's contributions on the basis of such a politically biased and limited point of view. Although the author discusses Hu Shih's political thought, he is unable to free himself from the dialectic of the struggle between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party. Any ideas or opinions sympathetic to the Kuomintang are condemned as "counterrevolutionary" or "feudalistic." On the other hand, anyone who supported the Communist Party is praised as "progressive" or "revolutionary." Hu Shih's patriotism definitely transcended the limits of partisan politics, but communist scholars always try to misrepresent Hu as being loyal to the Kuomintang rather than to China.

Keng Yün-chih uses innumerable vaguely defined terms in his book, including "feudalism," "capitalism," "liberalism," "new democratic revolution," "old democratic revolution," and others. This is not just his personal style; but rather it is a common phenomenon among communist scholars in China. Such conventions often make scholars' papers sound like political propaganda tracts. The concept that academic research should have its own domain, and that it need not serve a political purpose is, to a certain extent, a fantasy in contemporary China. After almost forty years of communist education and a decade of severe and brutal persecution of intellectuals during the Cultural Revolution, academic independence has become an unattainable luxury for Chinese scholars in the People's Republic. While one may criticize their dogmatism, one must also be sympathetic to the political environment in which they have lived and in which they must continue to live and work.

Shih Yüan-kao's *Hsien-hua Hu Shih (My Random Reflections on Hu Shih)*,

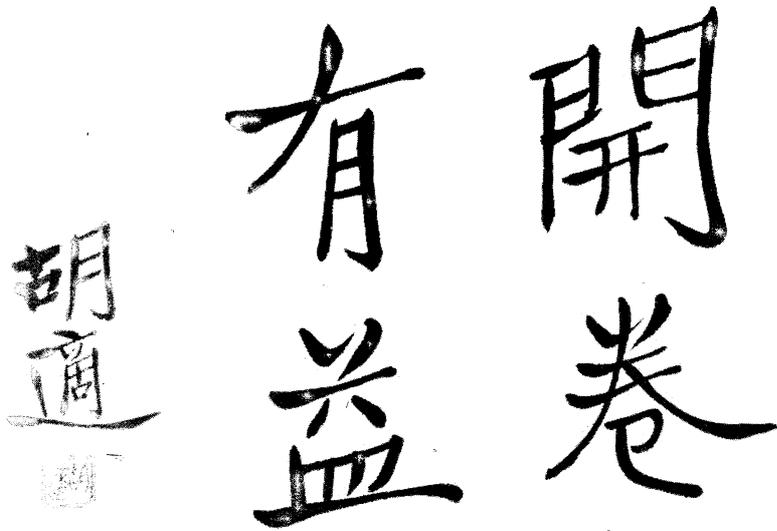
published by Jen-min ch'u-pan she in An-hui in 1985, is another book devoted solely to Hu Shih.¹³ This is not a scholarly work, but rather a personal memoir. The author was a close relative of the Hu family and had a long association with Hu Shih and his wife. Compared to Keng's book, *Hsien-hua Hu Shih* is rather apolitical. However, as the author states in his postscript, he was very hesitant and apprehensive about publishing his memoir. Only after many of his friends encouraged him to write a book on Hu Shih did he free himself from the worry of "being burned by the fire" (that is, of being politically persecuted for his remarks).¹⁴ This tells us that studying Hu Shih in China today is not without its risks. Since the author worries about being persecuted, he subtly added some remarks to protect himself. In the preface to Shih's book, Liu Hai-su, a well known artist and an acquaintance of Hu Shih, portrayed Hu as "a tragic character who died along with a corrupt regime."¹⁵ Here, the "corrupt regime," of course, refers to the Kuo-mintang. Liu Hai-su also wrote that had Hu Shih returned to China in his late years, his mother country would have welcomed him.¹⁶ Anyone with even the slightest knowledge of modern Chinese history would know that this is a bald-faced lie.

Although most of Shih Yüan-kao's interpretations and arguments are fair and apolitical, he still occasionally inserts some "party lines" in his writing. He argues that Hu Shih's motivation in publishing his scholarly paper, "Shuo-ju" (On [the origins and development of the concept] *ju*), was to show his support for the "New Life Movement" (Hsin sheng-huo yün-tung), which was initiated by Chiang Kai-shek in 1934.¹⁷ It is beyond my comprehension that Hu Shih's motivation could have been political or that the publication of this article could have actually helped Chiang Kai-shek promote the "New Life Movement." However, it is quite understandable if we read these arguments as part of the author's attempt to protect himself by showing his loyalty to the Communist Party. In the chapter entitled "What kind of scholar was Hu Shih?" the political propaganda is no longer subtle but blatant: it echoes the recent government policies of "Four Modernizations" and the "Unification of China and Taiwan."¹⁸

While it is true that the current political situation in the People's Republic of China generally restricts such pursuits as the study of Hu Shih, on the other hand Taiwanese avenues of research are not themselves totally open and unlimited. Several of the publications mentioned above, including Hu Shih's correspondence and diary, are still only partially available in Taiwan

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and are still sensitive documents. If Hu Shih was the most deadly enemy of the Communist Party, he was by no means the Kuomintang's darling. This is probably the true tragedy of Hu Shih.



Calligraphy of Dr. Hu Shih, written for the Gest Library. It reads: "Open a book and benefit."

NOTES

1. Hu Shih was appointed the Curator of the Gest Oriental Library on May 14, 1950. His official title was "Fellow of the University Library and Curator of the Gest Oriental Library with rank of full Professor." He held this position for two years, and continued to serve as Honorary Curator until his death. Hu Shih evaluated the Gest collection, and wrote several articles related to the Gest Oriental Library:
 - "My Early Association with the Gest Oriental Library," *Green Pyne Leaf*, vol. 6 (June 1951), pp. 1-3.
 - "Eleven Centuries of Chinese Printing: Introduction to an Exhibition of Books from the Gest Oriental Library." This article was not published but exhibited in the Gest Library in April, 1962.
 - "The Gest Oriental Library: The Eye Trouble of an Engineering Contractor Leads to a Rare Collection of 100,000 Volumes," *Princeton Alumni Weekly* (March 7, 1952), pp. 9-10.
 - "The Gest Oriental Library at Princeton University," *Princeton University Library Chronicle*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Spring, 1954), pp. 113-41. This article was translated by Ch'en Chi-ying, *P'u-lin-ssu-tun ta-hsüeh Kai-ssu-t'e tung-fang shou-ts'ang* (Taipei: Ch'ung-kuang wen-i ch'u-pan she, 1965).

For Hu Shih's appointment, see Hu Shih, *Hu Shih kei Chao Yüan-jen ti hsin* (Taipei: Hao-wang-chiao, 1970), p. 36. For the Exhibition in the Gest Library, see Chuang Shen, "Chi P'u-lin-ssu-tun ta-hsüeh Ko-ssu-t'e tung-fang t'u-shu kuan chui-tao Hu Shih-chih hsien-sheng chu-tso chan-lan hui chi ch'i hsiang-kuan chih shih-liao," *Ta-lu tsa-chih*, 24: 10 (May, 1962), pp. 18-24.
2. Most articles published during this smear campaign were collected in *Hu Shih ssu-hsiang p'i-p'an*, 8 vols. (Peking: San-lien shu-tien, 1955).
3. *Hu Shih lai-wang shu-hsin hsüan*. Ed. Chung-kuo she-hui k'o-hsüeh yüan, Chin-tai shih yen-chiu so, Chung-hua min-kuo shih yen-chiu shih. 3 vols. (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1979; rpt. Hong Kong: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1983).
4. *Hu Shih ti jih-chi*. Ed. Chung-kuo she-hui k'o-hsüeh yüan, Chin-tai shih yen-chiu so, Chung-hua min-kuo shih yen-chiu shih. 2 vols. (Peking: Chung-hua shu-tien, 1985).
5. *Hu Shih jen chu-Mei ta-shih ch'i-chien wang-lai tien-kao* Ed. Chung-kuo she-hui k'o-hsüeh yüan, Chin-tai shih yen-chiu so Chung-hua min-kuo shih tsu. (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1978).
6. *Hu Shih chu-i hsi-nien mu-lu yü fen-lei so-yin*. Ed. Hua-tung shih-fan ta-hsüeh t'u-shu kuan. (Shanghai: Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1984).
7. For more information about the Hu Shih *so-yin* and *nien-p'u*, see Chi Weilung, "Kuan-yü Hu Shih chu-i hsi-nien mu-lu yü fen-lei so-yin ho Hu Shih nien-p'u pien-chih ching-kuo," *T'u-shu kuan tsa-chih*, No. 18 (June 1986), pp. 40-44.
8. Pai Chi-an, "Hu Shih chuan," *Kuang-ming jih-pao*, November 3, 1986.
9. Keng Yün-chih, *Hu Shih yen-chiu lun-kao* (Ssu-ch'uan: Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1985), hereafter: Keng.

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10. Hu Sung-p'ing, *Hu Shih-chih hsien-sheng nien-p'u ch'ang-pien ch'u-kao*, 10 vols. (Taipei: Lien-ching ch'u-pan shih-yeh kung-ssu, 1984).
 11. Keng, p. 334; p. 341; p. 346.
 12. Keng, p. 36.
 13. Shih Yüan-kao, *Hsien-hua Hu Shih* (An-hui: Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1985), hereafter: Shih.
 14. Shih, p. 208.
 15. Shih, p. iii.
 16. Shih, p. iii.
 17. Shih, p. 173.
 18. Shih, p. 44.

GLOSSARY

An-hui chiao-yü ch'u-pan she

安徽教育出版社

Ch'en Chi-ying 陳紀瑩

Chi P'u-lin-ssu-tun ta-hsüeh Ko-ssu-t'e tung-fang t'u-shu-kuan chui-tao Hu Shih-chih hsien-sheng chu-tso chan-lan hui chi ch'i hsiang-kuan chih shih-liao

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k'ao-cheng 考證

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和胡適年譜編制經過

Kuang-ming jih-pao 光明日報

Kuomintang 國民黨

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