

Duan Guochao's Academic Interactions in the Field of Lu Xun Studies

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Abstract

As a renowned scholar in Lu Xun's research field, Mr. Duan Guochao's academic career is full of exploration and persistence. Through extensive and in-depth academic exchanges, he has made fruitful achievements in the study of Lu Xun's family background, which has promoted the development of Lu Xun's research. This paper discusses Duan Guochao's academic exchanges in the field of Lu Xun's research, analyzes his academic communications, academic discussions and academic activities with colleagues in the academic community, shows Mr. Duan Guochao's academic influence in the field of Lu Xun's research, and also provides an important demonstration role for promoting the academic development of local universities.

Keywords: Duan Guochao, Lu Xun studies, Lu Xun's family background, Academic exchanges, Academic impact

1. Introduction

Mr. Duan Guochao from Weinan Normal University is a nationally renowned scholar, an expert in Lu Xun's family background research, and a literary critic. His academic exchanges are characterized by a high level and a wide scope, involving figures in the field of Lu Xun studies such as Li Helin, Huang Yuan, Nie Gannu, Wu Xiru, Li Jiye, Wang Furen, Zhou Erfu, Zheng Xinmiao, Huang Qiaosheng, Yan Qingsheng, as well as Japanese scholar Matsuoka Toshihiro, scholars from Hong Kong and Macao like Lou Zichun, Lu Xun's son Zhou Haiying, and nephew Zhou Fengyi. His profound and extensive academic exchanges have kept his academic activities at the forefront of research, making significant contributions to local universities and the construction of local culture.

Mr. Duan Guochao has consistently maintained a strong passion for research and an indomitable spirit, continuously producing new academic achievements that have been recognized and praised by the academic community. His representative works include the papers "Lu Xun and Zhu An"[1] and "Lu Xun and Hu Feng"[2], as well as the monographs "Lu Xun's Family Background"[3] and "Essays on Lu Xun"[4]. Additionally, he has written research articles such as "Ke Zhongping and Lu Xun," "Wu Xiru and Lu Xun," "Wang Jiesan and Lu Xun," "Hu Zheng and Lu Xun," "Du Pengcheng and Lu Xun," "Dang Jiabin and Lu Xun," as well as "Lu Xun's Criticism of 'Xueheng' and Wu Mi" and "A Tenacious Explorer: Hu Jinxu's Journey of Learning from Lu Xun." These works have had a wide-ranging impact in the academic community and attracted social attention.

2. An Overview of Academic Exchanges with Colleagues in the Field of Lu Xun Studies

Mr. Duan Guochao's academic career has always been closely intertwined with academic exchanges with scholars in the field of Lu Xun studies.

(1) Correspondence: the Primary form of Academic Exchange

Mr. Duan Guochao has preserved the original letters from 1,249 scholars, totaling 5,281 pages. Among these, letters from 335 individuals, including Lu Xun researchers, relatives of Lu Xun, and editors of Lu Xun studies journals, account for 1,842 pages. These letters constitute about one-third of the total number of people he has engaged in academic exchanges with, underscoring the significance of academic correspondence within the field of Lu Xun studies in Mr. Duan's academic interactions.

(2) Interlocutors: Scholars and Celebrities

A notable aspect of Mr. Duan Guochao's academic exchanges lies in his interactions with "22 individuals who had connections with Lu Xun," such as Wu Xiru, Huang Yuan, Nie Gannu, Sun Xizhen, Li Jiye, Yu Fang, Chen Xuezhao, Hu Feng, Ke Zhongping, Hu Jinxu, Chen Chuqiao, Cao Lengquan, Chen Baichen, Tang Tao, Shi Zhecun, Zheng Xiaoxun, Xu Jie, Lou Zichun, Wang Jiesan, Peng Baishan, Zhou Haiying, and Zhou Fengyi. Moreover, his

exchanges with renowned domestic and international scholars in Lu Xun studies, including Li Helin, Li Jiye (mentioned again here for context, though already listed), Shan Yanyi, Liao Zidong, Lin Chen, Hu Zheng, Zheng Xinmiao, Peng Ding'an, Sun Xizhen (again for context), Jiang Xijin, Matsuoka Toshihiro, Wang Furen, Zhang Mengyang, Huang Qiaosheng, as well as famous writers like Du Pengcheng and Zhou Erfu, form the core of his academic interactions within the field of Lu Xun studies.

(3) Letter Research: the Main Content of Academic Exchanges

In Mr. Duan Guochao's academic communication practice, the most commonly used research method is letter.

In early 1979, Mr. Duan, who was deeply engaged in Lu Xun studies, wrote an article titled "Lu Xun and Hu Feng," which had been brewing in his mind for a long time. The article focused on the comrade-in-arms and mentor-student relationship between Lu Xun and Hu Feng during their time in Shanghai. Through over 20 letters, Mr. Duan conducted investigations and interviews with veteran Left-wing Writers' League member Wu Xiru (as well as relevant individuals such as Mei Zhi, Hu Feng's wife), obtaining valuable first-hand information.

In January 1982, while writing "Lu Xun and Zhu An," despite consulting a vast amount of literature, Mr. Duan still had numerous questions that needed clarification. Consequently, he wrote letters to four scholars: Huang Yuan, Li Jiye, Sun Xizhen, and Jiang Xijin. He sought to understand and exchange views on topics such as "the situation of the Zhu family in Shaoxing, the circumstances surrounding Zhu An's burial after her death, her personality, character, and cultural cultivation, as well as what issues should be addressed and what purposes should be achieved in studying the relationship between Lu Xun and Zhu An."

All four scholars replied to Mr. Duan in late February 1982. Professor Sun Xizhen believed that this topic was of great significance for studying Lu Xun. Professor Huang Yuan stated that Mr. Duan's discussion illustrated Lu Xun's anti-feudal spirit and revolutionary humanitarianism, which was correct. Lu Xun opposed feudal marriage but respected his mother and Zhu An as two generations of women, sacrificing himself in the process. "Lu Xun only regarded her as his mother's daughter-in-law, respecting her like a guest." Professor Jiang Xijin said that, overall, the topic would help readers understand the issue from certain perspectives, making it beneficial and thus good. Regarding the specific details about Zhu An, Li Jiye mentioned in his letter that he had met the "elder mistress" several times in the years before the War of Resistance Against Japan. She was sincere and extremely kind to the "great mistress," who regarded her as her own daughter.

For the topic of Lu Xun and Zhu An, recommended by Professor Sun Xizhen, Mr. Duan established academic connections with experts such as Yu Fang and Qiu Shixiong.

Mr. Duan had already begun academic exchanges with Li Helin, the founder of Lu Xun studies, as early as 1974. In mid-September 1974, while still teaching at a middle school, Mr. Duan read an article in a newspaper that quoted Lu Xun's phrase, "the sour wine in a new bottle, the rotten meat wrapped in red paper." He found it intriguing and wanted to understand its original meaning but didn't know its source. Therefore, he wrote to Mr. Li Helin for guidance. On September 24th, Mr. Li replied, solving Mr. Duan's query.

Duan Guochao wrote a series of articles exploring the relationships between writers and Lu Xun, such as "Hu Zheng and Lu Xun." To this end, he wrote letters to Hu Zheng and others. Hu Zheng's reply was as long as 13 pages. He even included a photocopy of an article he had written on Lu Xun studies during his time at the Northwest Federation of Literary and Art Circles. After reading it, Duan Guochao felt more confident in writing his article. He quoted Hu Zheng's evaluations of Lu Xun's poetry six times in his piece[5].

When Duan Guochao was writing "Essays on Lu Xun," Wang Furen, a renowned expert in Lu Xun studies and the former president of the Chinese Society for Modern Chinese Literature, wrote to him, emphasizing that the articles "Lu Xun and Xu Guangping" and "Lu Xun and Zhu An" must be included. He argued that a person's thoughts and feelings are inseparable from their life experiences, and Lu Xun's love life had a significant impact on him, urging Duan Guochao to pay attention to these two articles. He also mentioned that Wang Dehou's "Research on 'Letters Between Two Places'" was worth consulting. In 2001, Duan Guochao wrote to Wang Furen, expressing his intention to summarize his lifelong research on Lu Xun by selecting relevant articles and publishing a book titled "Essays on Lu Xun." He asked Wang Furen to write a preface for the book. Wang Furen's preface was reprinted in full by several prestigious publications, including "Xinhua Digest," the "Lu Xun Studies" section of the Renmin University of China's Newspaper and Periodical Data Center, and Shanghai's "Academic Monthly," demonstrating its significant influence [6].

Matsuoka Toshihiro is a professor at Shinshu University in Japan and has made substantial academic contributions to the study of Lu Xun's grandfather, Zhou Fuqing. In February 1989, Matsuoka Toshihiro wrote to Duan Guochao, saying, "I've heard that you've written an article titled 'An Overview of Zhou Fuqing's Life and Thoughts.' Please

send me a photocopy of it." Duan Guochao fulfilled Matsuoka's request. In his book "A Study of Lu Xun's Grandfather Zhou Fuqing," Matsuoka Toshihiro quoted Duan Guochao's article more than 20 times. He remarked, "Duan Guochao's article provides a comprehensive account of Zhou Fuqing's life and is the first formal discussion in China on Zhou Fuqing's character and the influence he had on Lu Xun."

(4) Contention and Discussion: The Process of Academic Exchange

The process of Mr. Duan Guochao's academic exchanges with scholars was marked by discussions and contentions over academic viewpoints.

In the initial draft of his paper "Lu Xun and Hu Feng," based on general academic materials, Mr. Duan mentioned that "Xu Xing was a Trotskyist." After reading the draft, Wu Xiru wrote to Mr. Duan, praising the draft but pointing out that some facts needed to be corrected. He stated that Xu Xing's real name was Xu Hefu and that he was not a Trotskyist; the Party had already made a conclusion on him long ago. He suggested that Mr. Duan should make the correction... It would be a good thing to clarify this in your article, and it would also be a literary anecdote. Consequently, Mr. Duan gathered additional information and published "Xu Xing Was Not a Trotskyist" in the second issue of "Modern Literature Research" magazine in 1981.

Poet Hu Zheng believed that Lu Xun's classical-style poetry had achieved great heights. He described it as "imitating ancient forms but creating a unique world, exquisite and magnificent, outshining natural craftsmanship," "praising the glorious national culture and the brilliant fighting life," "its momentum rivaling that of the Tang poets," and "in the realm of poetry, Mr. Lu Xun has completed the true image of Lu Xun." However, he said he did not like Lu Xun's new poetry. In his article, Mr. Duan expressed disagreement with Hu Zheng's viewpoint. He tactfully remarked that Hu Zheng's critique of Lu Xun's poetry, "even if it represents a biased understanding of Lu Xun's new poetry, still qualifies as a fresh perspective," implying that Hu Zheng's understanding of Lu Xun's new poetry was indeed biased.

When writing his paper "Lu Xun and Zhu An," Mr. Duan wrote to Mr. Jiang Xijin to inquire about historical facts and discuss research methods. Mr. Jiang Xijin believed that the work was generally good and beneficial but held reservations about Mr. Duan's proposed research methods. He said, "I cannot set a framework or make regulations on what issues should be addressed and what purposes should be achieved in studying the relationship between Lu Xun and Zhu An."

Regarding some issues in the writing of the paper "Lu Xun and Zhu An," Li Jiye also believed that some questions "seemed unnecessary to study in detail."

It can be seen that exchanges among genuine scholars involve serious discussions of issues and rigorous adherence to facts. They acknowledge what they know and admit what they do not know, while also daring to articulate their own viewpoints. Even in private correspondence, there is a flavor of academic democracy and academic contention.

(5) Books, Poems, and Calligraphy: Bridging the Gap with Academic Counterparts

In Duan Guochao's academic exchanges, the mutual gift-giving of books, poems, and calligraphy often played a significant role in bringing him closer to his counterparts.

Mr. Wang Shijia, the deputy editor-in-chief of "Lu Xun Research Monthly," requested a copy of "The Family Background of Lu Xun" from Mr. Duan Guochao on three occasions. Once, he did so on behalf of Mr. Lou Zichun (Yiding) from Hong Kong and Mr. Ni Moyan from Shanghai, who had expressed their desire to read the book and even asked for an autographed copy. In 1992, they even wrote to request the purchase of 30 copies for their readers. Upon receiving the book, Ni Moyan wrote to Duan Guochao, saying that he had originally thought Duan was from Shaoxing, but was surprised to learn that he had achieved such remarkable results from Weinan in Shaanxi Province. He expressed his admiration and said he would learn from Duan.

Duan Guochao gifted "The Family Background of Lu Xun" to the poet Hu Zheng, who in turn reciprocated with a poem titled "Delighted to Read Professor Duan Guochao's Newly Gifted 'The Family Background of Lu Xun'." When mentioning his views on Lu Xun studies, Hu Zheng confided in Duan Guochao, saying, "This is somewhat my personal 'secret,' which I have never revealed to anyone before." He added, "Every time I read your sincere and enthusiastic letters, I always feel like there's so much I want to say, but due to my limited mental and physical energy, I never manage to do so. Although we have never had a heart-to-heart conversation, our friendship runs deep."

Professor Matsuoka Toshihiro from Japan once gifted a poem to Duan Guochao, which was later turned into a calligraphy piece by the Japanese calligrapher Yamada Yosen and presented to Duan Guochao. In return, Duan Guochao gifted two poems to Matsuoka Toshihiro.

After ten years of painstaking effort, Duan Guochao gradually compiled a series of nearly 200,000-word papers, which were later published as the academic monograph "The Family Background of Lu Xun." When it came time to choose a title for the book, he invited the renowned writer and calligrapher Zhou Erfu to write it. Zhou Erfu responded by sending Duan Guochao two versions of "The Family Background of Lu Xun" for selection in the publication.

3. The Hardships of Academic Exchange and the Perseverance of Scholars

(1) Challenges and Achievements of "Cultural Man from other Provinces"

Duan Guochao's academic career not only epitomizes the academic exchanges at Weinan Normal University but also holds implications for the current and future development of academia. Professor Wang Furen, the former president of the Chinese Society for Modern Chinese Literature and a professor at Beijing Normal University, coined the term "cultural man from other provinces" in his preface to Duan Guochao's "Essays on Lu Xun." This term not only commends Duan's fruitful academic achievements but also sheds light on the hardships faced by scholars from local universities in their academic pursuits. For "provincial cultural figures," geographical constraints make it difficult for them to participate in academic conferences and seminars as frequently as scholars in big cities. Moreover, they are at a disadvantage in accessing academic resources and information, all of which impose limitations on their academic research.

(2) Relentless Exploration and Upholding Academic Truth

In 1979, Duan Guochao completed his landmark paper "Lu Xun and Hu Feng." However, due to the sensitive nature of its content at that time, it was initially challenging to find a platform for publication. In June 1981, Duan Guochao brought a printed copy of the paper to the "Academic Symposium Commemorating the 100th Birth Anniversary of Lu Xun in the Xi'an Area." At the symposium, Mr. Li Helin, the director of the Lu Xun Museum, highly praised Duan Guochao's work, acknowledging his significant contribution. Eventually, "Lu Xun and Hu Feng" was published in "Lu Xun Research Trends," becoming an important document in academic circles.

Another notable work by Mr. Duan Guochao is his paper "Lu Xun and Zhu An," which delves deeply into the tragic marital relationship between Zhu An and Lu Xun. Despite the difficulties in publishing the article due to its sensitive subject matter after completion, Duan Guochao did not give up. The paper was eventually published in the third issue of "Chinese Modern Literature Research Series" in 1983, contributing a fresh perspective and depth to the field of Lu Xun studies.

4. The Shaping of Academic Style and the Widespread Influence of Academic Achievements

(1) Academic Style

Interpretation of Historical Materials from the Perspective of Historical Materialism. In his academic explorations within the field of Lu Xun studies, Mr. Duan Guochao has consistently adhered to examining and interpreting historical materials through the lens of historical materialism. He emphasizes the collection and analysis of data, forming his own unique insights and conclusions through in-depth research into a vast amount of materials. When evaluating Mr. Duan Guochao's research achievements, Mr. Huang Qiaosheng pointed out that Mr. Duan's viewpoints are simple yet profound, sincere and straightforward, neither perfunctory nor extreme.

Mr. Wang Furen believes that Mr. Duan Guochao has made remarkable achievements in academic research. He places great importance on excavating and organizing materials, employing historical materialism to interpret these materials, and conducting in-depth theoretical analyses of them, thereby forming his own distinctive academic style.

(2) Social Influence

Mr. Duan Guochao's academic achievements have had a profound impact in the field of Lu Xun studies. In particular, his article "Lu Xun and Zhu An" not only reexamines the marital relationship between Lu Xun and Zhu An but also, at the end of the article, critiques the Beijing Lu Xun Museum for incorrectly labeling Zhu An's bedroom in Lu Xun's former residence as the "Lu Xun Library." He points out that this practice disregards the principles of historical materialism and calls for avoiding such errors in future Lu Xun research. The article garnered the attention of leaders and expert scholars at the Beijing Lu Xun Museum. Subsequently, the sign on Zhu An's bedroom door was corrected to "Zhu An's Bedroom," restoring the historical authenticity.

(3) Scholar Evaluation

Domestic scholars and writers also highly evaluate Mr. Duan Guochao and believe that his research has made pioneering contributions [7].

Chen Zhongshi, a famous writer, said: I know very well that teacher Duan is willing to be lonely, can sit down and silently concentrate on Studying Lu Xun, and finally achieve something, which is admirable.

Mr. Peng Ding'an, President of the national Lu Research Association, said that Lu Xun's family background is a good book with detailed information, detailed description, system description and functional demonstration.

Mr. weigangyan, honorary chairman of Shaanxi writers' Association, said that Duan Guochao's family background of Lu Xun made us know a lot of unheard of historical facts. Therefore, we had a more specific and in-depth understanding of Lu Xun's mind at that time and the spiritual world when writing articles.

Zhang Gui, the former curator of Shaoxing Lu Xun Memorial Hall (Zhang runshui, the grandson of Runtu), said that "Lu Xun's family background" provides readers with a rare and good book.

5. Demonstration of Mr. Duan Guochao's Academic Exchanges

Mr. Duan Guochao's academic career has lasted for decades, and he has always maintained extensive exchanges with the academic community, making himself always at the forefront of the discipline.

(1) Academic Integrity and Respect

Mr. Duan Guochao has always adhered to the principles of academic integrity and respect for others in his interaction with colleagues in the academic community. His scholarly demeanor and moral standards in academic discussions and debates provide an important model for creating a positive academic atmosphere.

(2) Academic Courage and Innovation

In the field of Lu Xun's research, Mr. Duan Guochao is not afraid to challenge traditional ideas and has the courage to put forward innovative ideas, as reflected in the studies of Lu Xun and Hu Feng and Lu Xun and Zhu'an. His spirit of exploration and innovation encouraged the latecomers to pursue new knowledge in academic research.

(3) Leading the Academic Development of Local Universities and the Construction of Local Culture

As a scholar in a local university, Mr. Duan Guochao not only made achievements in academic research, but also led the academic development of local universities and promoted the construction of local culture with a higher academic vision.

6. Conclusion

With his profound academic background and a deep passion for Lu Xun studies, Professor Duan Guochao has established extensive connections with scholars and cultural celebrities both domestically and internationally through various means such as correspondence, publications, research papers, poetry, and calligraphy. These engagements have not only broadened his academic horizons but also brought fresh perspectives and depth to the field of Lu Xun studies. His journey of academic exchange embodies a scholar's relentless pursuit of academic truth and a profound understanding of academic responsibility. His interactions have been filled with debates and discussions, fostering an open and inclusive attitude that promotes the exchange of academic viewpoints and drives the collision and integration of academic thoughts. This spirit is particularly crucial in the current academic community, encouraging scholars to actively seek cooperation and exchanges while maintaining their academic independence, in order to achieve knowledge sharing and collective academic progress.

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