

Mei Niang and the literary world in occupied Beijing

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This paper is the second part in a series on the work of Mei Niang, a female Chinese writer active mainly during the occupation period. After July 1937, most Chinese intellectuals left Beijing for other parts of the country under the control of the Kuomintang or the Communist party. As a consequence, the Beijing literary scene was in a desolate state. It took until 1943 before a kind new vitality appeared. During this period, in the beginning of 1942, Mei Niang returned from Japan and settled in Beijing. Thus began the most productive time of her life. Until 1945 Mei Niang published numerous novels and essays, actively helped and contributed to the Woman Magazine, and translated contemporary Japanese literature to Chinese.

Mei Niang was also considered a member of the "Xin Jin Zuo Jia Qun" literary group of young writers. These young people attempted to organize themselves into a kind of literary world in Beijing. The criticism of the group was abundant and came from the point of artistic quality on the one hand, and from the point of reality on the other.

This paper further aims to analyze other writers active on the same literary stage in occupied Beijing. The closest to Mei Niang was Yuan Xi, also a member of the "Xin Jin Zuo Jia Qun" group. Others include Xu Zu Zheng, and a trio of Taiwanese writers Hong Yan Qiu, Zhang Wo Jun and Zhang Shen Qie.