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**Writings on Patriotic Theme in Chinese Autobiographical Literature of the Song
Dynasty China (960-1279)**

Wang Ying(王莹)

Professor, Institute of Literature, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT: *After the Yuan Army invaded the Central Plain at the end of the Song Dynasty, the Song Empire was broken. Faced with the atmosphere and historical background of the national crisis, the Song scholar-official class generally set up a moral standard and value system of "taking the world as their own duty", regarded loyalty to the country and the emperor as the most righteous path, and made a political choice to consciously transform their identity from scholar-officials to military generals who would save the country from being battered. At the same time, patriotic climax and expression of personality became an inseparable unity. Take Wen tianxiang for example, their loyalty to the Song emperor and patriotism was highly unified with their personality, it has been widely praised by future generations. The outstanding scholars' writings made a patriotic literature climax at the end of the Song Dynasty. It not only reflected the profound influence of neo-confucianism on the personality construction of the scholar-officials and literary intelligentsia in the Song Dynasty, but also accorded with the orthodox literary thought in the Late Song Dynasty. In their patriotic writings, their noble national integrity of serving the country with death, coupled with their superb talent and creative skills, endowed their works with the epic temperament of shining through the ages. Therefore, the Song scholar-officials' patriotic writing made the Song Dynasty a highlight moment of patriotic writing in the history of Chinese literature.*

KEY WORDS: song dynasty China, national crisis, scholar-officials, political choice, patriotic writing

INTRODUCTION

The Song Dynasty (960-1279) is a period with highly prosperous economy, culture and education in Chinese history. It terminated the political confusion from the end of the

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Tang Dynasty to Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms. After the empire was established, Song emperors deprived scholar-officials of military powers determining to govern the country with civil governance. The rise of refined culture facilitated the cultural atmosphere that revered civilized hobbies and profound knowledge, and imperceptibly infiltrated literary circles of the Northern Song Dynasty. The refined culture dominated the Song Dynasty, and the cultural fashion of respecting elegance and admiring erudition swept the whole academic class of the Northern Song Dynasty. "In contrast to roaming life and natural love of Tang scholars, music, chess, calligraphy, painting, tea, wine, flower and poetry have become indispensable elements for scholar-officials of the Song Dynasty who intoxicated themselves with artistic settings and pursued spiritual amusements that were exuberant with cultural activities and leisurely hobbies. In the Song Dynasty, with consistent elevation of artistic cultivation and development of spiritual civilization, scholar communities began to produce true and profound interest in creation, appreciation and study of cultural products, and acquire gracious spiritual pleasure to chant 'never know old age as we deeply indulge in these hobbies'(Xiong 139). The national power of Song became weaker after its south migration, but this cultural fashion didn't wane at all, and most scholar-officials cherished the patriotic ambition to recover the central territory.

Rooted in this unique historical and cultural background, the autobiography literature in the Song Dynasty has shown some explorations and innovations that are different from previous dynasties, and has exerted far-reaching influences on the development of later autobiography literature. Under the infection of its special historical atmosphere, the Song Dynasty has further developed the graceful quality of autobiography (Ouyang Xiu 1007-72), and added a woman's perspective rarely seen in past dynasties (Li Qingzhao 1084-ca.1151), and even extremely touching patriotism at the end of the Southern Song Dynasty when its state fate declined [Wen Tianxiang, "*Epilogue to The Account of the Compass (Zhi-nan lu houxu, 指南录后序)* 1236-83]. The innovations of graceful hobbies, woman's perspectives and patriotic emotions emerged in Song autobiographies have become special characteristics and coordinate values in Chinese autobiographical literature representing that it has reached a new altitude and a mature period in the Song Dynasty. The autobiography by Wen Tianxiang has added a critical stroke to the universal value of Chinese ancient biography literature.

Wen Tianxiang is an scholar-official who can't be ignored in Song autobiographical history, and who has plucked the most powerful ideological tone on autobiography at the end of the Song Dynasty with spirited and incomparable patriotic sentiment, and has

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK added a critical stroke to universal values missed in Chinese autobiographical literature history. The great unflinching patriotism expressed in the sentence "Since olden days there is no man but suffers death; I'd leave a loyal heart which history glorifies" [Wen Tianxiang, "The Longly Ocean"(过零丁洋, *Guo Lingdingyang*) 271], has brought to Chinese nation convincing patriotic appeal and spiritual force that has lasted hundreds of years with infinite vigor.

This article will focus on some representative works in Chinese autobiographical history by Wen Tianxiang(1236-83), including his famous "Epilogue to *The Account of the Compass*" (*Zhi-nan lu houxu*, 指南录后序), "The Original Preface to *The Account of the Compass*" (*Zhi-nan lu zixu*, 指南录自序), "Song of Righteousness" (*Zhengqi ge*, 正气歌), and other "autobiographical poems". By discussing his thrilling patriotism, powerful narration, meandering expression, appropriate composition, this article also studies the moral heights of autobiographical explorations and innovations of Song scholars in Chinese autobiographical literature history.

Historical atmosphere and causes nurturing patriotic autobiographies at the end of the Song Dynasty

To verify if incidents narrated in Wen Tianxiang's autobiography tally with historical facts is not the core of this article as the value of the historical records in his autobiography has been unanimously recognized by Chinese academia. This article intends to deeply analyze what powerful impacts of Song culture and history exert on Chinese people behind the backgrounds of his autobiographies at the end of the Song Dynasty, how individual life narration and emotional expression of Song scholars have transformed into time-transcending and ultimate universal values - eulogization and demonstration of patriotic sentiments. "Wen Tianxiang has promoted the creation of patriotic literature at the end of the Southern Song Dynasty to a towering position that resounds in the universe and brightens the literatus for hundreds of years."(Zhang Yi 318-319).

Han Zhaoqi summarizes in *History of Biographical Literature in China (Zhongguo Zhuanji Wenxue Shi)*, "Before and after the fall of the Southern Song Dynasty, biographical literature again bursts forth radiant splendors. In the era upheavals when the state was conquered and family ruined, the army and the people in the Southern Song Dynasty, especially official and civil scholars showed their mighty national emotions under the background of fate calamities. The numerous magnificent feats created by national heroes in the patriotic war have supplied most heart-touching materials for

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As a high patriotic benchmark, patriotic autobiographical works of scholars represented by Wen Tianxiang at the end of the Song Dynasty are driven by three main special era conditions and historical reasons:

Conscious transformation from a scholar-officials to a nation-defending generals under the background of disintegrated territory

Cambridge History of Chinese Literature writes, "The national crisis produced a number of 'literati-turned-warriors'. Wen Tianxiang(1236-1283) was the most famous among this group of educated man"(Owen. *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*. Vol. 1 545), and such comment is appropriate and gets to the heart. When the state was conquered and families were ruined, Wen Tianxiang sold out his properties to recruit soldiers for saving the country, and he himself also became a general. He honored what Emperor Li Shimin(598 or 599?-649) had praised Prime Minister Xiao Yu(575-648) in a poem, "A strong wind tells firm grass, and turmoil distinguishes a loyal minister." (Liu Xu, vol.64: 2402) "The invasion by Jin troops pushed the Northern Song Dynasty into downfall, people living in central China into chaos of war, and scholars long living in peace and affluence into bloody battlefields. As Northern Song heavily relied on scholars, these officials dominated the imperial court. ... In the scholarly clique of the Southern Song Dynasty, there is always a mighty tone of military prowess."(Ma Maojun and Zhang Haisha 177) Wen Tianxiang was the most outstanding model of such scholars who had actively undertaken military commanding roles and bravely fought for the survival of the state.

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Special historical backgrounds have produced a lot of patriotic works, "At the end of the Southern Song Dynasty, especially around the downfall of the state, writers with various identities and different experiences have created many patriotic works. Works on patriotic emotions and grief for the conquered motherland have become a major topic of literary ideology, and summarized the development of literary ideology at the end of the Southern Song Dynasty."(Zhang Yi 322) Under this historical background, the value of the autobiography of Wen Tianxiang is reasonably eminent as he is a representative figure to best manifest the patriotism at the end of the Song Dynasty. The unyielding will and action to defend the country have been truly recorded in Wen Tianxiang's autobiography, making it not only an outstanding autobiographical work, but also precious historical data of the Song Dynasty. As one of his most representative autobiographical works, *The Later Preface to the Poetry Anthology of South-Pointing Compass* was written in 1276 when Yuan troops seized Lin'an, the capital of the Southern Song Dynasty, and captured emperor Zhao Xian(1271-1323) and grandma-empress Xie Daoqing(1210-1283). Jacques Gernet, a famous French sinologist, writes about prosperity of Hangzhou, the Capital of the Southern Song Dynasty before it was occupied by Yuan troops in the "Preface" to his "*La Vie quotidienne en Chine à la veille de l'invasion Mongole(1250-1276)*"(*Chinese Daily Life Before Mongolian Troops Invasion*), "In 1276, Hangzhou was seized by Mongolians and the whole China was conquered for the first time in its history. " "The Mongolian invasion was a deathly strike to the great Chinese empire, which was at the time the richest and most advanced state in the world. Before the Mongolian invasion, many aspects of Chinese culture were in their splendid peaks, but this invasion stroke a complete destruction in its history."

Under the historical situation of disintegrated territory, scholar-officials at the end of the Song Dynasty have successfully accomplished the conscious transformation to nation-defending generals with intense monarch-loyal and patriotic senses of duties and missions. They donated their properties, recruited troops, rushed to battlefields, and defended the state with unyielding wills. They placed "merit-winning" in rescuing the nation on top of their value system, and tightly associated their individual life values with the national destiny, and for the national survival they abandoned life for righteousness. As an eminent representative figure possessing both cultural and military expertise, a prime minister with absolute authority, a witness, a participant and a rescuer of the national crisis, Wen Tianxiang's autobiography is quite a necessary result, and has a uniqueness with which other autobiographies can't compare.

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Far-reaching influence of Song Neo-Confucianism on personality construction of scholar-officials

Neo-Confucianism booms in the Song Dynasty, which is a philosophical system combining doctrines from Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, focusing on supplying value adjustment standards for human ideas and actions. It can "indicate natural laws in the deepest part of hearts; it meets moral and political needs at the later part of Chinese feudalism by elevating ethics to noumenon and establishing value standards for the entire society with universality and regulation." (Zhang Yi 338) From the "Hengqu Four-Sentences 横渠四句" by Zhang Zai(1020-1077), i.e., "Establish ambition for the universe, formulate way for the populace, develop doctrines of past sages, and create peace for thousands of generations"(Zhang Zai 320), which are the ultimate pursuits of all scholars, Neo-Confucianism, as a social and ethical philosophy reinforcing feudal ethics, has imposed profound influences on personality construction of Song scholar-officials in terms of ideology and morality. Under this cultural situation, the scholar-official community has established a moral standard and a value system that "takes the betterment of the country as its own duties" [comments of Zhu Xi(1130-1200) on Fan Zhongyan(989-1052)], and has regarded supreme loyalty to the country and the hierarchy between the monarch and ministers as the most important moral principle. Under the influence of these ideas, Wen Tianxiang, Xie Bingde(1226-89) and other patriotic literati persisted in the moral rule that they would die rather than serve the new dynasty, which further influenced their literary development. In *Inscription to Zeng Lu's Poetry at Wuzhai(Ti wuzhai zenglu shigao, 题勿斋曾鲁诗稿)*, Wen Tianxiang wrote, "Poems are acceptable for upright personalities of authors"(The Complete Works of Wen Tianxiang 246). Wen Tianxiang incorporated this ideology into his well-known autobiographical poem *Song of Righteousness*. The far-reaching influence of Song Neo-Confucianism on personality construction of scholar-officials is perfectly materialized in this poem that has been eulogized for a thousand years. The formation of self-image and personality of Wen Tianxiang is deeply influenced by Song Neo-Confucianism. The high integration of its values with neo-confucianism ideas, and the recognition that national interests are superior to all other values, are perfect cases for the deep influence of Neo-Confucianism on personality construction of scholar-officials in the Song Dynasty. Therefore, Mr. Li Zehou says,

Isn't *Song of Righteousness* by Wen Tianxiang an appropriate example of Neo-Confucianism in the Song and Ming dynasties? ... As the Neo-Confucianism in Ming and Song Dynasties have carefully analyzed and effectively practiced its doctrines of 'establishing aspirations' and 'self-cultivation' to 'have sage virtues inside' and 'implement kingly governance outside' for the ideal of 'administering

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the state and governing the world', it has elevated a series of its concepts such as moral constraints, ideological constructions, social duties, historical missions and human will defeating natural powers to the level of ontology, which unprecedented set up the dignity and grandeur of human Ethica subjectivity. (256-267)

Wen Tianxiang's patriotic spirit and Song Neo-Confucianist thoughts contained in his autobiographical poem *Song of Righteousness*, it can clearly prove that Neo-Confucianists in the Southern Song Dynasty helps scholars establish spiritual standards, so that it has elevated their virtues for life pursuits. In the critical time when the nation fell in disasters and barbarian tribes invaded the country, they chose sacrifice for morality, this lofty spirit will be commemorated for thousands of years.

Perfect integration of flourishing patriotic literature and expression of individual personality at the end of the Song Dynasty

Patriotic upsurge and personality manifestation are closely integrated at the end of the Song Dynasty, "In reigns of Emperor Xiaozong(reigned from 1162 to 1189), Emperor Guangzong(reigned from 1189 to 1194) and Emperor Ningzong(reigned from 1194 to 1224), it developed into a billowy tide that dominated the Chinese literary realm." (Wang Xiaoshu Vol. Song and Yuan: 148-149) "If one says that the integration of patriotism and personality is a tradition in Chinese literary history, it was formally established in the Song Dynasty." (Wang Xiaoshu Vol. Song and Yuan: 150) The highly integrated monarchy-loyal and patriotic behavior and personality of famous scholars at the end of the Song Dynasty such as Wen Tianxiang, Zhang Shijie(?-1279), Lu Xiufu(1236-1279), Xie Bingde, Fang Fengchen(1221-1291), Xie Ao(1249—1295) and Zheng Sixiao has been long praised by later generations, among whom Wen Tianxiang is most esteemed. This comes from his exceptionally famous autobiography and his prominent personality. Zhu Dongrun (1896-1988) discusses in *Evolution of Chinese Biography and Narration Literature (Zhongguo Zhuanxu Wenxue Zhi Bianqian)*, "All the biographies focus the most on narration of personality.... It is natural to discuss biographies from the view of personality." (Zhu Dongrun 198)

The autobiography of Wen Tianxiang is a model for perfect integration of patriotism and personality in the Song Dynasty, but its specialty doesn't absolutely lie in the expression of the universal theme of "patriotism", but in the irreproducible totem of "virtue-establishment" that transcends time and possesses permanent values after his loyalty and nation-defending virtue and spiritual merits are integrated into this theme. In the autobiographic history of the Song Dynasty, before Wen Tianxiang, Li Qingzhao also

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expressed her patriotic emotions in *Preface to the Collection of Inscriptions on Bronze and Stone*, but applied metaphors at the end in the mouths of Emperor Xiao Yi(508-555) of the Liang Dynasty(502-557) and Emperor Yang Guang(569-618) of the Sui Dynasty(581-619) to express her grief and sorrow for the disintegrated territory and destroyed living styles of Northern Song scholars for enjoying antiques and other fine hobbies. After Wen Tianxiang, Zheng Sixiao also expressed his patriotism in *Biography of Hermit Single-Mindedness* in an aloof and proud manner and a scholarly image of being firmly loyal to the previous dynasty to manifest his missing and sorrow for the perished old state.

Why Wen Tianxiang's autobiography has become an insurmountable peak for patriotic autobiographies? In addition to Wen Tianxiang's unique tough image and heroic spiritual virtues integrated into the poem that perfectly combines his patriotism and personality, another critical reason is that his autobiography has effectively reflected the orthodox literary doctrines and representative characteristics of the literature at the end of the Song Dynasty. "At the middle and late periods in the Southern Song Dynasty, the orthodox literary thoughts were established which advocate rationalism but depreciate artistry, stress argumentation but belittle rhetoric, believing that exploring reasons and cultivating integrity as the essence for writing articles, and suggesting 'study Confucianist secrets in the form of poetic metaphor and transition'. The literary values of poetry and prose are completely replaced by moral values."(Zhang Yi 340)Wen Tianxiang has never "belittled rhetoric", but he has perfectly applied rationalism, argumentation and cultivation of integrity in his autobiography to manifest the ideological orientation and value adjustment at the end of the Song Dynasty so that his works have time characteristics and historical meanings.

It is this perfect alliance between every unique personality presentation and the patriotic theme that furnishes autobiographies at the end of the Song Dynasty with spiritual images full of massive historical senses and rich styles. As a great writer of patriotic autobiographies in the Song Dynasty, Wen Tianxiang has transformed his unique self-personality depiction into classic autobiographies that perfectly combine patriotism and personality, for which reason his works are regarded as ultimate models for patriotic literature by later generations.

Identification and self-fashioning in Wen Tianxiang's autobiography

Wen Tianxiang's main famous autobiographies include “*Epilogue to The Account of the Compass(Zhi-nan lu houxu)*”, “*The Original Preface to The Account of the Compass(Zhi-*

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nan lu zixu), “*Song of Righteousness*” (*Zhengqi ge*), and other “Poetry as Autobiography”. Wen Tianxiang is a famous national hero in Chinese history, one of the “three talents at the end of the Song Dynasty”. He was awarded the first scholarship title in the imperial palace exam when he was 20, and became prime minister with integrity and talent, upright virtues, and awe-inspiring personality. Unfortunately, he lived at the end of the Song Dynasty with a disintegrated territory, a turbulent and treacherous era. *Cambridge History of Chinese Literature* introduces him to the world, “The national crisis produced a number of ‘literati-turned-warriors’. Wen Tianxiang(1236-1283) was the most famous among this group of educated man.”(Owen. *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*. Vol. 1545)

If one wants to understand the autobiography by Wen Tianxiang, analyzing its title is the first important step. “Compass” (343) in *The Poetry Anthology of South-Pointing Compass* is extracted from the poem *Yangtze River*(*Yangzijiang*) by Wen Tianxiang, which reads “My heart is just like a magnetic needle, which will not rest until it points the south”, implying his heart always be loyal to the Southern Song Dynasty as a magnetic needle permanently points the south. The second meaning of this title comes from the fact that the Southern Song is in the south, while Yuan is in the north. The two directions don't only imply localities, but also two opposing dynasties. Therefore, Wen Tianxiang referred to the Yuan Dynasty as “North” in *Epilogue to The Account of the Compass*” (*Zhi-nan lu houxu*) and “*The Original Preface to The Account of the Compass*” (*Zhi-nan lu zixu*). It is a marvelous metaphor to compare heart as a magnetic needle, making “Compass”(Zhi-nan) an inherent attribute corresponding to a natural patriotic emotion. The certainty that a magnetic needle points south without being influenced by circumstance changes ensures that Wen Tianxiang can cleverly and effectively incorporate his firm patriotism into an image of a magnetic needle, which is really a classic model for “portraying an image to thoroughly deliver messages”. Therefore, Wen Tianxiang titled his poems *The Account of the Compass*” (*Zhi-nan lu*) which he composed on the southward roads after he escaped in Jingkou, and titled poems *The Later Account of the Compass*” (*Zhi-nan hou lu*) which he composed after he was captured by Yuan troops and escorted to the jail in Dadu (Beijing, the capital) of the Yuan Dynasty, both referring to this meaning. Many works in the collection imply this South-North meaning. The preface to *The Offshore War on February Sixth* collected in *The Later Account of the Compass*” (*Zhi-nan hou lu*), this poem also uses the North-South opposition concept to symbolize Song and Yuan troops. When he was ordered to death, Wen Tianxiang still remembered to kowtow to the south, so it is clear that “South” was the symbol of the imperial sovereignty and the past nation in his eyes. Therefore, “Compass”(Zhi-nan) contains rich meanings and represents the permanent loyalty to his motherland without a bit of change. It centrally reflects his

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patriotic spirit and national integrity, and is the "core" of his works in the later phase.

The famous autobiography of Wen Tianxiang was created three years before the downfall of the Song Dynasty and became a famous article for about one thousand years. "The state misfortune is poets' fortune as they can easily achieve excellent verses"(Zhao Yi 105) is certainly the main cause, but what shouldn't be ignored is the individualized spirit of Wen Tianxiang incorporated into his autobiography, during which a critical element is the identification of himself - a top scholar-official and "the best-scholar premier" at the end of the Song Dynasty to exert every effort to save the nation out of its crisis. Wen Tianxiang has striven to assume and play this role, which finally evolved into a national hero image that shone with sad bloody rays for a thousand years.

Existing historical literature on his words and deeds has supplied sufficient positive evidence, "At the beginning, Boyan(1236-1295) tried to threaten him, but Tianxiang replied, 'I, the best-scholar premier, only need a patriotic death! If Song survives, I survive; if Song dies, I die. Even sharp knives and boiling cauldrons are placed everywhere around me, I will not fear. So, how do you threaten me?' Boyan was moved." (Liu Yueshen 489) "The emperor (Kublai Khan,1271-1294) sent a message to him, 'if you serve me as you did Song, you can be the prime minister.' Tianxiang replied, 'I was the best-scholar premier of Song, and now Song is subjugated, I have no choice but to die.'" "I assumed the premier of Song when it needed rebirth; now Song perished, I can't live but die soon."(Liu Yueshen 494) "Tianxiang was jailed in Dadu for three years, and the Emperor knew he would never surrender....summoned him and asked, 'What is your will?' Tianxiang replied, 'I have been favored in Song as the premier, so how can I serve another court? I will die, this is it.'"(Toqta et al. 12539-12540) From the above records, we can clearly see Wen Tianxiang was highly dedicated to and cherished his identity of the "best-scholar premier".

Despite all these, what Wen Tianxiang really valued for the identity of "the best-scholar premier" was absolutely not the power, position and wealth that he enjoyed as the prime minister of the Song Dynasty. Zheng Sixiao(1241-1318) recorded in *Heart History(Xin Shi)*,

Kublai Khan repeatedly sent traitor Liu Mengyan(1219-1295) to persuade him to submit to Yuan, who forwarded Kublai Khan's words, 'Tartar won't be competent to be my premier, only you are quite qualified for the work, so if you surrender, you will be the premier.' Tianxiang replied, 'You prefer life to integrity, but I honor virtues over death. We are extremely different about life and death, so how can you persuade me? The Song can be recovered, but you are too treasonous to see

Even before Wen Tianxiang was executed, Kublai Khan sent a message, "If you surrender, you will be my premier, or you will be killed.' Tianxiang replied flatly, 'Never!' and followed with sharp censure. " (Zheng Sixiao 128) Therefore, he showed great loyalty and patriotism that was touching earth and heaven.

Wen Tianxiang was whole-heartedly devoted to the Song Dynasty, and would defend the country without daring any danger or losing his power, so "serving another court" to be a premier for an alien state would be absolutely impossible for him. Therefore, his self-identification, or "self-verification" and "self-symbolizing", can be completely summarized with the term "best-scholar premier of Song". The three elements in "the best-scholar premier of Song" - the Song Dynasty, the best scholar, and the premier, must be complete, and can be meaningful when all of them are integrated. It implies his promise and mission to the country as a top scholar-official and a peerless hero, and "the best-scholar premier of Song" is a unique "single-morpheme word" only created for him in a special historical period.

Under the identification of the "best-scholar premier of Song", the creating of self-image has always focused on the righteous virtues of loyalty to the emperor and the nation, which is most clearly reflected in the well-known *Song of Righteousness(Zhengqi ge)*. In the preface to *Song of Righteousness(Zhengqi ge)*, he described the extremely bad environment in the jail to set off his unyielding integrity and powerful will,

I was confined in a earthen room of a northern courtyard. The room was eight chi wide and deep about thirty chi. There was only one small window so the day seem short, and the room was dirty and dark. In the summer time, all gases rose: rain water from four sides floating the bed and the tea table was the water gas; walls half coated with mortar under steam and soaking was the earth gas; sudden heat after rain without sufficient ventilation was the sun gas; cooking under the eaves intensifying the heat was the fire gas; corrupt rice granaries sending out bad odor was the rice gas; tightly packed prisoners sending out sweat and foul smell was the human gas; manure, injured bodies and corrupt mice sending out mixed odor was filthy gas. In these gases, it was rare for anyone to fall ill. I was weak but lived in it peacefully for two years without catching a disease, possibly because I had cultivated something right. But what was it that I had cultivated? Mencius said, 'I'm good at cultivating a righteous gas.' The jail cell had seven gases, but I had one thwarting them, so what gas could hurt me? Righteousness was a positive gas and I composed *Song of Righteousness(Zhengqi ge)* to commemorate it. (375-376)

In *"The Self's Perfect Mirror: Poetry as Autobiography"*, Stephen Owen raised the concept of "Poetry as Autobiography", and made profound and multi-leveled discourse on "Self" identification in "Poetry as Autobiography", "Considering poetic autobiography in its Chinese context,...Let us say that poetic autobiography begins in apology, in the need to 'explain oneself.'" (Owen. *The Self's Perfect Mirror: Poetry as Autobiography* 75) "A poet inscribes his identity in a poem just as all humans inscribe identity in their lives. This identity is role surrounded by rich echoes of complication, contradiction and desire, echoes which always remind us that the self is more than its role." (Owen. *The Self's Perfect Mirror: Poetry as Autobiography* 87) Wen Tianxiang's poems have supplied most perfect and typical text evidence to the opinion of Stephen Owen.

The positioning of these "Poetry as Autobiography" about Wen Tianxiang's identity of the "best scholar premier of the Song Dynasty" has repeatedly stressed his image as a national hero, making it unforgettable to readers. So, are the true "self" of Wen Tianxiang and the "role" he depicted in his poems completely consistent? In fact, previous studies haven't found any apparent deviations.

As an important study subject of the international sinology, many overseas sinologists have never stopped inquiring the difference between true "selves" of poets and their literary images. After Stephen Owen studied "Poetry as Autobiography" of Tao Yuanming(352 or 365-427) and Du Fu(712-770), David McMullen from the University of Cambridge reviewed Du Fuⁱ, and Ronald Egan from Stanford University also challenged the true self and her literary image of Li Qingzhao(1084-1155)ⁱⁱ. However, as to Wen Tianxiang, it seems hard to be a practical subject as its identification and self-shaping in his autobiographic works have never deviated from historical facts. The permanent position of the national hero image of Wen Tianxiang in history is closely related to his true identification of firmly observing his identity as the "best-scholar premier of Song" in his autobiographies.

Wen Tianxiang's great righteousness and firm will was undoubtedly full of great heroic spirit as the "best-scholar premier of Song". It is his unique identification and individual personality that makes his autobiography transcend other biographies in the Song Dynasty and reveal the supremacy of scholarly spirit at the end of the Song Dynasty with its lofty spiritual state, solemn and powerful integrity.

Narrative strategies and language styles in Wen Tianxiang's autobiography

If one summarizes Wen Tianxiang's autobiographies with one single tag of patriotism are too generalized, as besides the central idea of patriotism his autobiographies also have many special narrative methods and creative skills different from those of previous dynasties. His narrative strategies are superb and subtle, and his language styles contain striking personality, showing cleverly intertwined narrative skills, contrasting and interrelated language styles.

Perfect triple polyphony presentation of state, individual and self

The unique value of Wen Tianxiang's autobiographies lies in the diverse text implications through profound and sincere self-analysis. While Wen Tianxiang created the "self" image as a national hero with firm patriotism and dauntless resistance spirit, he also expressed his "self" as a lonely individual at the end of the Song Dynasty, his sense of weakness and guilt because he couldn't rescue his country and family. The "polytonal" narration and creation of diversified "self" have added massive and solemn styles to his works. In Wen Tianxiang's autobiographies, the creation of "self" is not achieved through plain narration and simple piling of historical facts and individual experience, but through the relations between the state and himself. By subtle narration of the relations, "self" is endowed with profound and rich implications.

In *Evolution of Chinese Biography and Narration Literature*(*Zhongguo Zhuanxu Wenxue Zhi Bianqian*), Zhu Dongrun(1896-1988) states,

The responsibility of a biographer is to narrate all facts and give reasonable explanations. He is not only responsible for art, but also for historical facts. His pen should not depict a fixed, finished and perfect person, but a unique, evolving and not very perfect life. (208). Even if the narration of a great person wants to inspire people's positive desire, we would expect it a climbable summit, but not a lofty and unapproachable snow-capped mountain. (198)

The most famous autobiography of "*Epilogue to The Account of the Compass*"(*Zhi-nan lu houxu*)by Wen Tianxiang can most effectively reflect this biographical creation idea. At the end of "*Epilogue to The Account of the Compass*"(*Zhi-nan lu houxu*), Wen Tianxiang sorrowfully expressed his regret for the "imperfection" of life that was hard to pacify,

Alas! My life is fortunate, but what can it achieve? Being a minister, I witnessed my monarch was humiliated, so I felt shameful even if I died; being a son, I didn't well care about my parents' corpses, so I felt disgraceful even I died. I wanted to apologize to the emperor, but he didn't allow; I wanted

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to regret to my mother, but she didn't allow. So, I begged pardon in front of tombs of my ancestors. Even if I can't save the country when I'm alive, I will attack the enemy as a ghost after I die, which is righteous; with heaven spirit and ancestral protection, I repaired my weapon, joined the imperial army, fought as a pioneer to avenge the humiliation of the imperial court and restore the prosperity at the beginning of the empire. "I can't survive together with the enemy", "I must try my best till I die", these are also righteous. Ah! Those like me will always die a worthy death. In the past, I was fearless to die in wildness, and I was not shameful with righteous integrity; but I couldn't excuse myself in front of the monarch and my parent, what will they say about me? I was really unexpected that I successfully returned back to the south and saw the emperor again. Therefore, I wouldn't have any regret even if I die immediately! I wouldn't regret! (312)

Even though Wen Tianxiang was a great hero with righteous integrity and firm loyalty to the state and the monarch, he had both shame and regret to the state and his family. He didn't portray himself a perfect person, and recorded his life with magnificent events, recurrent risks and disasters. This colorful description produces a vivid and impressive "self" in "*Epilogue to The Account of the Compass*" (*Zhi-nan lu houxu*), and successfully avoids monotony and flatness of his persona by not constantly focusing on narration of grand events.

The reason why Wen Tianxiang's autobiography is so awe-inspiring is closely related to his perfect triple polyphony presentation of about the state, individual and self. In addition to the amazing integration of national interest and individual mission, the complex and subtle psychological revelation at the life-or-death choice between the state and the individual also makes the "self" creation in the autobiography significantly true and impressive. By correctly treating the state-individual relation, he chose to live a shameful live at the national crisis to wait for dim chance of rescuing the nation, expressing his heart-touching courage and spirit, when his "self" image was complexly and circuitously reflected in this tough life-or-death choice. Han Zhaoqi points out, "In the eyes of Wen Tianxiang, to die bravely for the country is surely his duty, but it would be more valuable to tenaciously live to fight enemies until his last breath. This knowledge of righteousness about life and death is consistent with the spirit described by Sima Qian(145 B.C.-90 B.C.) in *The Self-written Preface to Records of the Historian by Taishigong*(*Taishigong Zixu*). For the circumstances of Wen Tianxiang, living is more difficult than death. Living needs more courage than death. "*Epilogue to The Account of the Compass*"(*Zhi-nan lu houxu*)is a very impressive work in which the author successfully created a self-image of a firm patriot with soul-stirring narrations."(314).

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Then, Wen Tianxiang wrote in “*The Original Preface to The Account of the Compass*”(Zhi-nan lu zixu),

I experienced countless risks and sufferings on the road that couldn't be completely recorded... The nation was ill-fated, and human efforts were vain. It was nothing for one person's perplexity, but national misfortune was overwhelming. Alack!... Willpower is something that the heaven can test but can't reverse. Do I have some expectations?"(312)

In view of narrative strategies, this paragraph has three transitions and contrasts:

The first is the transition and contrast relationship between "I experienced countless risks and sufferings on the road that couldn't be completely recorded" and "The nation was ill-fated, and human efforts were vain. It was nothing for individual perplexity...". The first sentence is the narration of countless risks and difficulties, while the second describes the mental dilution and undervaluation of personal pains to form strong transition and contrast with tragic solemnity.

The second is the transition and contrast relationship between "It was nothing for one person's perplexity" and "But national misfortune was overwhelming. Alack!", in which "one person" and "national misfortune" constitute a new relation between individuals and the state. When "self" was helplessly placed into the dual dilemma between "one person's perplexity" and "national misfortune", Wen Tianxiang again clearly expressed the relation between the state and individuals with "It was nothing for one person's perplexity, but national misfortune was overwhelming. Alack!". "Countless risks and sufferings" became "nothing" in his eyes, while "but" and "alack" has definitely expressed the permanent ultimate value of the state over individual interests. Therefore, his mental pains didn't come from tragic individuals but from occupied state and disintegrated territory.

The third transition and contrast relationship is between "National misfortune was overwhelming. Alack!" and "Willpower is something that the heaven can test but can't reverse. Do I have some expectations?". The sorrow and helplessness for moaning the territorial occupation and the later strenuous uplift by encouraging himself with the great mission of "heaven shall entrust critical duties to him" constitute another transition and contrast. This expressed his ardent expectations and determinations for saving the country. With ingenious narrative strategies and three transitions and contrasts, Wen Tianxiang successfully created his glorious "self" as a powerful and courageous national hero in the progressively enhanced narration of the relations between the state and individuals.

Elaborate construction of relations among time, space and narration

In terms of narrative strategies, Wen Tianxiang's autobiographies are special and have surpassed works of previous dynasties. This is mainly reflected from his elaborate construction of relations among time, space and narration. As an important historical material at the end of the Song Dynasty, "*Epilogue to The Account of the Compass*" (*Zhi-nan lu houxu*) by Wen Tianxiang has identified his personal experience and historical facts. Wen Tianxiang's narrative strategies are the key to transform historical facts into a classical literary work well-known for hundreds of years through his exquisite narration.

Wen Tianxiang has carefully arranged and cleverly integrated time and space flow and shift of historical facts he personally experience, his personal feelings and value judgment into the most refined narration, making his autobiographies appropriate in narrative rhythms and degrees, and giving readers a sense of impressive grandeur and manner when reading the entire work. In "*Epilogue to The Account of the Compass*" (*Zhi-nan lu houxu*), Wen Tianxiang used 18 parallel sentences successively with 18 "death", and each ends with "death" except for the last parallel sentence. This is rarely in Chinese ancient poems and articles. These 18 parallel sentences all refer to the risks and hardships that Wen Tianxiang experienced, constituting dense temporal flows and spatial shifts, and the compact narrative rhythm brings out vivid images of his journey and dangerous situations.

"Ah! It was countless that I nearly died! I might die when I slandered the enemy Khan; I might die when I rebuked traitors; I might die many times when I stayed with enemy chiefs for twenty days and debated with them; I might die on the way to Jingkou when I brought a knife and tried to commit suicide repeatedly; I might die through getting drowned when I passed enemy warships for about ten Li and pursued by patrol vessels; I might die in desperation when the garrison commander of Zhenzhou drove me out; I might die if I met Yuan sentries when I passed Guazhou Yangtze River bridge to Yangzhou; I might die outside of Yangzhou city when I couldn't go forward or backward; I might die when I stayed in Guigongtang village and thousands of enemy cavalymen passed by my door; I might die when enemy rangers compelled me in Jiajiazhuang; I might die when I went to Gaoyou at night and strayed to a moor; I might die at dawn when I hid in a bamboo grove and dozens of calvary rangers passed; I might die in Gaoyou when I was almost captured under the want posters; I might die when I walked by scattered corpses and my boat traveled in succession with an enemy patrol ship; I might die when I went to Hailing and Gaosha for any dangers; I might die every day when I passed by Haian and Rugao for about three hundred Li and often met enemy troops;; I might die when I was rejected at Tongzhou; I rode on a small boat navigating through terrible waves, but I gave no thought to death!"(312-313)

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In this narrative paragraph, time and space switched quickly with rolls of paintings flashed by, presenting dramatic and thrilling narrative effects. At its end, Wen Tianxiang sighed about his perilous journey, and regretted that he couldn't save the nation out of destruction, "Alas! Life and death was something occurred overnight. Death was alright, but nobody could ever endure my terrible situations and precarious incidents. How sorrowful it is when all pains have gone and I have to recall them!"(313)

The maneuver for narrative temporal speed is closely related to textual structure, but "the incorporation of a specific historical outlook can also impact the narrative temporal speed."(Yang Yi 100)

Yang Yi(1946-) argues in *Chinese Narratology(Zhongguo Xushixue)*, "Narrative rhythm formed by textual density and temporal speed is a narrative strategy for a writer to explore heaven-human laws and ancient-present changes under temporal wholeness." (Yang Yi 101). This hair-raising and danger-lurking experience revealed heaven-human laws by Wen Tianxiang with unique narrative strategies and rapid temporal-spatial transiting operations for dramatic historical and life events. In fleeting and fluctuating temporal-spatial changes, his autobiographies contained a stable and constant "theme" - a nation-saving aspiration that ran through and kept unchanged in his life, which showed superb narrative strategies.

In addition, in *Epilogue to The Account of the Compass(Zhi-nan lu houxu)*, Wen Tianxiang cleverly employed "manuscript" in "*The Account of the Compass*"(*Zhi-nan lu*) to relate relevant time, places, personal experiences to the article, combining the poetic draft, time and space into a trinity, and summarized its profound purpose to express aspiration with poems naturally, Wen Tianxiang did not only direct his poetic manuscript values to eternity, but also direct his spiritual integrity to establishing three immortal virtues of "literary model", "meritorious model" and "virtuous model" through his poetic creation, state-rescuing deeds and loyal doctrines. With this metaphorical correspondence, he successfully directed his "self" spiritual values to eternity.

Artful integration of three styles - Energe-absolute, despondent and melancholy-solemnity

One major feature of Wen Tianxiang's autobiographies are their "energe-absolute" in style. In *Song of Righteousness(Zhengqi ge)*, he wrote, "This gas is so powerful that it will valiantly survive thousands of years. It is as glorious as the sun and the moon that belittle life and death"(375), which is a typical case. However, it is not the only style of Wen

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Tianxiang's autobiographies. In fact, his autobiographies have artfully integrated the three styles of energy-absolute, despondent and melancholy-solemnity raised by Tang and Song poetic field.

Sikong Tu(837-908) wrote in *Twenty-Four Styles of poetry-Energy-absolute(Ershisi Shipin· Xionghun)*:

Expenditure of force leads to outward decay,
Spiritual existence means inward fulness.
Let us revert to Nothing and enter the absolute,
Holding up strength for Energy,
Freighted with eternal principles,
Athwart the mighty void,
where cloud-masses darken,
And the winter blows ceaseless around,
Beyond the range of conceptions,
Let us gain the Center,
And there fast without violence,
Fed from an inexhaustible supply.(3)

Sikong Tu listed "energy-absolute" the first of *Twenty-Four Styles of poetry(Ershisi Shipin)* because it is not only an key poetic concept but also a spirit admired by scholars at that time. He wrote in *Twenty-Four Styles of poetry-Despondent(Ershisi Shipin· Beikai)*:

A gale ruffles the streams
And trees in the forest crack;
My thoughts are bitter as death,
For she whom I asked will not come.
A hundred years slip by like water,
Riches and rank are but cold ashes,
TAO is daily passing away,
To whom shall we turn for salvation!
The brave soldier draws his sword,
And tears flows with endless lamentation;
The wind whistles, leaves fall,
And rain trickles through the old thatch.(39)

Yan Yu(around 1195-1264) also states in *Canglang's Poetic Commentaries-Poetic Analysis(Canglang Shihua·Shi Bian)*, "Poetry has nine styles-lofty, ancient, profound, far, long, energy-absolute, abstraction, melancholy-solemnity, sadly moving."(7) "energy-

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absolute” and "abstraction" are identical terms exactly the same as in *Twenty-Four Styles of poetry*(*Ershisi Shipin*). Tao Mingjun(1894-1960) makes analysis in *Notes on Poetic Theory*(*Shi Shuo Zaji*) on Yan Yu's "energe-absolute" and "melancholy-solemnity": "What is energe-absolute? Where cloud-masses darken, and the winter blows ceaseless around.... What is melancholy-solemnity? It is like reed instrument Hu-Jia plays military music, powerful tunes that are full of hearty and vigorous force. "(9-10) When interpreting "energe-absolute", Tao Mingjun directly quoted the sentence from *Twenty-Four Styles of poetry-Energe-absolute*(*Ershisi Shipin-Xionghun*), but gave his own understanding to "melancholy-solemnity". In view of *Twenty-Four Styles of poetry*(*Ershisi Shipin*), *Canglang's Poetic Commentaries*(*Canglang Shihua*), and Tao Mingjun's notes, Wen Tianxiang's autobiographies have integrated **energe-absolute, despondent and melancholy-solemnity** styles.

His most famous "Poetry as Autobiography" *The Lonely Ocean*(*Guo Lingdingyang*):

I studied hard the classics, rose to serve the state
And fought against odds for four years with might and main.
Like wafting willow-down is war-torn country's fate;
It sinks or swims as duckweeds beaten by the rain.
The frightful Reef once frightened us to lose our breath;
The Lonely Ocean makes us feel lonely and heave sighs.
Since olden days there is no man but suffers death;
I'd leave a loyal heart which history glorifies.(349)

The first, second and third couplets are in despondent styles, narrating his life experiences by contrasting national disintegrated land and turbulence and his personal promotion and frustration so as to set off the sad atmosphere. The last couplet makes a sharp turn with energe-absolute and massive power, and brilliantly depicts his vehemence and courage with imposing verve and enormous grandeur.

Shed Tears Seeing Sparse Hair and Beard in the Mirror(*Lan Jing Jian Xu Ran Xiaoluo Wei Zhi Liuti*) is another important documentary work Wen Tianxiang created in jail in addition to *Song of Righteousness*(*Zhengqi ge*), which shows a manner integrating multiple styles:

I drafted like a little feather for thousands of miles,
All windy images in front of eyes made me full of hatred.
My tears are simply like the blood in a cuckoo's throat,
My beards are like the yak-tail flag on Su Shi's rod.
Today I only wait for a death,

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But I just regret for my failure of efforts.

A green mountain can be my burial place,

While in dream I often held a knife to kill the enemy.(373)

This poem was created in 1280, the second year when Wen Tianxiang was captured for the second time and was detained in the jail in Dadu(the capital of The Yuan dynasty). It expressed Wen Tianxiang's intense feelings about fleeting time, old appearance, inner resentment and frustrated aspiration when he looked at a mirror in the jail. The first couplet starts the whole poem in a melancholy-solemnity manner, and the second and the third couplets describes rapid passage of ages, his regret and pain for not being capable for realizing his sate-restoring aspiration with despondent style. The last couplet describes his upright and fervent momentum of a sorrowful hero by integrating energe-absolute and melancholy-solemnity styles.

In addition to his autobiographic poems, *Epilogue to The Account of the Compass(Zhi-nan lu houxu)* is the most typical autobiographic article of Wen Tianxiang, in which these three styles are also clearly integrated. This is most reflected in the last but one paragraph which is the core of the whole article,

Even if I can't save the country when I live, I will attack the enemy as a ghost after I die, which is righteous; with heaven spirit and ancestral protection, I repaired my weapon, joined the imperial army, fought as a pioneer to avenge the humiliation of the imperial court and restore the prosperity at the beginning of the empire. 'I can't survive together with the enemy', and 'I must try my best till I die' are also righteous. Ah! Those like me will always die a worthy death. In the past, I was fearless to die in wildness, and I was not shameful with righteous integrity; but I couldn't excuse myself in front of the monarch and my parent, what will they say about me? I was really unexpected that I successfully returned back to the south and saw the emperor again. Therefore, I wouldn't have any regret even if I die immediately! I wouldn't regret!(313)

In this paragraph, Wen Tianxiang's awe-inspiring patriotic and nation-defending promises are narrated with inner monologues, where his firm will, red heart, righteous integrity are strikingly exhibited. His deep love to the motherland and great national spirit of indomitable courage are resoundingly and powerfully revealed in his firm promises in "even if I can't save the country when I live, I will attack the enemy as a ghost after I die" and "avenge the humiliation of the imperial court and restore the prosperity at the beginning of the empire". Other narrations have perfectly depicted his vehement virtues as a hero of a troubled time in the melancholy-solemnity manner of "risk my life for the

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national calamity, and treat death as returning home"(Cao Zhi 413)

Subtle integration of three styles of energy-absolute, despondent and melancholy-solemnity endows Wen Tianxiang's autobiographies with such spirit and quality that are revered for their unique manners and exceptional standards in hundreds of years. For this very reason, *Epilogue to The Account of the Compass(Zhi-nan lu houxu)* by Wen Tianxiang is more well-known and widely influencing than contemporary and subsequent famous biographies with the same theme of patriotism and loyalty - *Biography of Hermit Single-Mindedness(Yishi jushi zhuan)* by Zheng Sixiao at the end of the Song Dynasty, *Biography of Mr. Painting-caul-scarf-on-forehead(Hua wangjin Xiansheng Zhuan, 画网巾先生传)* by Dai Mingshi(1653-1713) in the Qing Dynasty, and therefore it is the historically famous master work of Wen Tianxiang. For the same theme of expressing national spirit, patriotic sentiment and reminiscence of the past state, Hermit Single-Mindedness under Zheng Sixiao's pen is an aloof and proud colonial scholar full of helpless sighs, and Mr. Painting-caul-scarf-on-forehead and his servant under Dai Mingshi's pen is a stubborn old fogey. By contrast, the "self" under Wen Tianxiang's pen is a nation-saving hero with unique solemnity and supreme integrity that endow him with a supereminent image that is completely different from other patriotic biographies in Chinese ancient time.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, as a national hero admired by people for a thousand years and one of the three celebrities at the end of the Song Dynasty, Wen Tianxiang and his works are both highly respected in Chinese history. The autobiographies written by Wen Tianxiang at the end of the Song Dynasty have added a critical stroke to patriotic theme of Chinese ancient autobiographic literature.

The birth of his autobiographies are rooted in the national crisis of disintegrated territory after Yuan troops invaded at the end of the Song Dynasty, in which the tragic situations of the broken nation and families forced scholar-officials to consciously transform into state-saving generals and devote themselves to state-defending wars. As the right prime minister at the end of the Song Dynasty, Wen Tianxiang made a model in donating his properties to raise troops for protecting the emperor. The Neo-Confucianism of the Song Dynasty exerted especially prominent effects on personality construction of scholar-officials at the national crisis, who took national interests as their duties and sincere loyalty to the country and monarch-minister principle as the supreme doctrine that

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK transcend their personal moral standards and value systems, and who perfectly interpreted their historical missions and social responsibilities as scholar-officials. When faced threat and seduction, they chose devotion to the country so that their lofty spirit and integrity are revered for hundreds of years by surpassing time and space. The close integration of patriotic surges and personality manifestation has facilitated massive and grand literary tides at the end of the Song Dynasty, and has become the dominant literary theme at the end of the Song Dynasty. Therefore, a literary tradition of integrating patriotism and personality has been established in Chinese literary history.

As Wen Tianxiang's autobiographies were born on the basis of these historical elements, they possessed inherent massive historical and cultural deposition. Furthermore, the identification of Wen Tianxiang as the "best-scholar premier of Song" was deeply rooted in his heart so that he successfully constructed his identity in his autobiographies with a "self" of prominent loyalty and integrity, making his self-image brilliant with lofty integrity and personality.

He has effectively employed superb composing skills and rich writing styles to elevate and develop high autobiographic standards of inner spirit and righteousness. In the leadership of patriotism, he has made some unprecedented new explorations in narrative strategies and creative skills with careful textual construction to unite three tunes of state, individual and self, three-dimensions of time, space and narration, and three styles of energy-absolute, despondent and melancholy-solemnity for intertwined narration and contrasting artistic styles.

In short, Wen Tianxiang has subtly incorporated spiritual virtues of righteousness and loyalty throughout his autobiographies, and has strategically endowed his "self" of the "best-scholar premier of Song" with moral implications and spiritual values that transcended numerous generations and spread all regions. Therefore, he has elevated the creation of patriotic literature in the Song Dynasty to a grand and magnificent status rarely seen in Chinese history - "Establish aspiration for heaven and earth, establish social principles for all people, inherit great doctrines of ancient sages, and create peace for thousands of generations".(Zhang Zai 320) He has added a critical stroke to Chinese ancient autobiographies - patriotism, an element of universal value. He has perfectly integrated patriotism with personality that was unprecedented in Chinese literary history.

ⁱ For details, see David McMullen (UK): *Recollection Without Tranquility: Du Fu, Imperial Gardens and the State, Asia Major*. 14(2001): 3.

ii For details, see Ronald Egan: *The Burden of Female Talent: The Poet Li Qingzhao and Her History in China*, Cambridge(Massachusetts) and London: Harvard University Asia Center Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2013.

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