

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: PANG XUNQIN (1906-1985) – A CHINESE AVANT-GARDE’S METAMORPHOSIS, 1925-1946, AND QUESTIONS OF “AUTHENTICITY”

Xiaoqing Zhu, Doctor of Philosophy, 2009

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This dissertation has three goals. The first is to chart the artistic life of Pang Xunqin (1906-1985) and his art works from 1929 to 1946. Pang’s metamorphosis from an aspiring young artist in Paris and Shanghai in the 1920s and 30s, into an artist in his own right, a graphic designer, an educator, and a scholar of the history of Chinese art and craft, while ceaselessly trying to renew himself – all this is a record that deserves an art historical recognition.

The second goal is to locate Pang Xunqin in the historiography of Chinese modern art in an attempt to problematize issues of inclusion and exclusion in the historiography of the field. The third goal, which is closely tied to the second, is to utilize post-colonial inquiries to explore myriad issues of non-Western modernism embodied in Pang Xunqin’s case. Such issues include the divisions among the “traditionalists,” the “academic realists,” and the “modernists,” colonial cosmopolitanism in the Shanghai of the 30s, and the appropriation of “primitivism” in the 40s. Attention also focuses on the issues of authenticity and “hybridity,” Western orientalization of the East and self-orientalization by the East in cross-cultural encounters, and identity politics and nationalistic agendas in the construct of the *guohua* (national painting) and *xihua*

(Western painting) divide. The post-colonial methodology employed here helps raise questions regarding the binary construct of tradition vs. modernity, the East vs. the West, the center vs. the periphery, and the global vs. the local.

By placing Pang Xunqin's case in its semi-colonial historical and transnational context and by engaging in dialogue with the recent rich scholarship on cultural and post-colonial critiques, in conjunction with a formal analysis of his paintings and designs, this dissertation offers not only a monographic study of Pang's artistic life but also a critical examination and reassessment of the established art historical narratives of Western-trained artists in the historiography of Chinese modern art.

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1925-1946, AND QUESTIONS OF “AUTHENTICITY”

by

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This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, who have nurtured my initial scholarly upbringing; to Dr. David W. Kistler, who has opened the door for me to all the ensuring possibilities; to my daughter Lia Wang, who has kept me anchored within doors.

Notes to the Reader

All translations are by the author of this dissertation, unless otherwise indicated.

Chinese names appear in Chinese name order with the family name first, e.g., Pang Xunqin, except for authors of English-language publications or authors who write primarily in English, e.g., Shu-mei Shih.

Chinese terms and names are romanized using the pinyin system. Other forms of spelling, if commonly known would be indicated in brackets.

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INTRODUCTION

Our identities are fluid. Belonging is a contested state. Home is a place riddled with vexing questions... As the laborious certainties of the old order continue to fade, and the volume of global conversation increases, ambiguity embraces us.¹ – Caryl Phillips

European thought is at once both *indispensable* and *inadequate* in helping us to think through the experiences of political modernity in non-Western nations, and provincializing Europe becomes the task of exploring how this thought – which is now everybody's heritage and which affects us all – may be renewed from and for the margins.² – Dipesh Chakrabarty

In the summer of 2005, while browsing shelf-by-shelf through the art and design section on the seventh floor of Shanghai Book City (Shanghai tushu cheng), I spotted, on the very top level, a single copy of *Pang Xunqin gongyi meishu sheji* (Pang Xunqin Industrial and Fine Art Designs, Renmin meishu chubanshe 1999). I had to call for the assistance of a salesperson who fetched a ladder to retrieve the volume. Dust-covered and water-stained, this lone copy had possibly occupied that top perch for the six years since its publication, patiently waiting for an owner who would discover its value. To this day, I believe that this serendipity was a sign that in my academic life I would be destined for association with the author and designer of this volume, from whose pages I could unveil the gems.

While carefully striving for objectivity as I craft this dissertation, I must confess, as a historian of Chinese art who focuses in particular on the first half of the twentieth century, a period with which I am familiar through personal experiences of my grandfather's generation, that the trauma and tragedies of that century are still a part of living memories which I cannot totally erase. I cannot possibly write a history that does not reflect evidences of my own "standpoint," or my own *shidai* (time). In this context, I

¹ Caryl Phillips, *A New World Order* (2002), 6.

² Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 2000), 16.

am reminded of two historians of China I highly respect, Timothy Brook and William Rowe, each of whom asserted in his lectures, “Every historian writes the past from the present” and “We are all prisoners of our own shidai (time).”³

Moreover, my own experience as a mainland Chinese living for the past twenty years in a country not of my birth and writing in a language that is not my native tongue has also indelibly shaped where I stand and how I articulate as a scholar of Chinese art history. As art historian Alastair Wright, who has written on Turkish modernism, poignantly iterates, “who stands where? From what position, and in which direction, do they look? We would do well to keep such questions in mind, for any account of non-Western modernisms will necessarily be filtered by our own cross-cultural glances.”⁴ My own perspective has also been affected by my particular academic background, having been trained in English and American Studies for my undergraduate and master degrees and having taught in the humanities area for the past fifteen years. Sidetracking into the art history field, I have always been mindful of my somewhat “unlegitimized” entry to the discipline and my “minority” status compared to other art historians who, from their undergraduate years onward, have been fully baptized and immersed in the “holy water” of art history. My interest in Pang Xunqin and his generation who came to the West for knowledge and returned to China, a path I could have followed, is shaped by my own life experiences, questions I have learned to ask, and answers that I have come to explore.

This dissertation aims to achieve three goals. The first is to chart the artistic life of Pang Xunqin and his art works from 1929 to 1946, and to find the missing pieces. The

³ Timothy Brook’s lecture at the Department of History, University of Maryland, Spring 2006, and William Rowe in his class lecture I attended in Spring 2006.

⁴ Alastair Wright, “Response: Thoughts on Difference in India and Elsewhere.” *Art Bulletin* XC, no. 4 (December 2008): 549.

second goal is to locate Pang Xunqin in the historiography of Chinese modern art in an attempt to problematize his current position and to raise questions about the issues of inclusion and exclusion with regard to the established historiography of Chinese modern art, including its hierarchy and construct. The third goal, which is closely tied to the second, is to utilize the post-colonial inquiries to explore a myriad of issues of non-Western modernism embodied in Pang Xunqin's case. These include the divisions among the "traditionalists," the "academic realists," and the "modernists," colonial cosmopolitanism in the Shanghai of the 30s, the appropriation of "primitivism" in the 40s, and identity politics and nationalistic agendas in the construct of the *guohua* and *xihua* divide. This methodological framework helps us raise questions regarding the binary construct of tradition vs. modernity, the East vs. the West, center vs. periphery, and global vs. local.

Historian of Chinese art Julia Andrews once claimed that "one of the exciting aspects of working in later Chinese painting is that the territory has not yet been mapped."⁵ "The infant state of the field," she believes, provides the "formidable task" of "locating, identifying, and authenticating twentieth-century art objects and documents." Such a task of engaging with the twentieth-century materials has indeed occupied a generation of historians of Chinese art, including Michael Sullivan, Ralph Croizier, Ellen Laing, and Kao Mayching, to name a few of the most prominent. Michael Sullivan's voluminous *Art and Artists of Twentieth Century China* (1996) remains the most comprehensive survey of this period. His recent publication of the *Biographical Dictionary of Modern Chinese Artists* (2006) at the advanced age of 89 testifies to

⁵ Julia Andrews, "Mapping Chinese Modernity," in Maxwell Hearn and Judith Smith, eds., *Chinese Art Modern Expressions* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 302.

Sullivan's indefatigable commitment to the field. Sullivan's *Biographical Dictionary* together with Ellen Laing's *An Index to Reproductions of Paintings by Twentieth-Century Chinese Artists* (1998) serve as essential sources for English-language studies of modern Chinese art.

Julia Andrews's generation has continued on this foundation-building path. Their efforts have elevated the field of modern Chinese art studies to much greater prominence, and their more specialized and in-depth case studies of individual artists or artists' organizations have enriched the field with a more diverse body of materials.⁶ Julia Andrews and Kuiyi Shen's curated Guggenheim exhibition, "A Century in Crisis," has drawn the general public's attention to Chinese modern arts. The catalogue, *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China* which they produced – with its unprecedented scope, encompassing Chinese painting, calligraphy, oil painting, commercial art, modern woodcuts, and works of social realism – provides a comprehensive overview of Chinese art history of the past century.

Recognizing that "Chinese art history has lagged far behind Chinese history and literature in developing a sub-field of modern Chinese studies," Julia Andrews attributes the late entry of modern and contemporary art studies to political and economic circumstances. She challenges the younger generations of scholars to continue their predecessor's efforts to construct the history of twentieth-century Chinese art by insisting on "documentary research" so that we can "clarify basic factual matters and test the accuracy of widely believed legends."⁷ Given the large number of art works that were destroyed or dislocated in the war-afflicted and politically turbulent twentieth-century

⁶ Her publications can be found in her website: http://history-of-art.osu.edu/3_people/profile.php?id=12.

⁷ Julia Andrews, "Mapping Chinese Modernity," in *Chinese Art Modern Expressions* (2001), 303.

China, it is indeed vitally important, she argues, to “locate,” “document,” and “authenticate” twentieth-century art materials.

The first goal of this dissertation is to engage in the “documentary research” that Andrews champions by mapping out Pang Xunqin’s artistic life and tracing the whereabouts of his art works dating from 1929 to 1946. This is an extremely crucial undertaking for many of his works from this period were lost during the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression (1937 – 1945), while others were destroyed by his own hand in the early years of the Cultural Revolution (1966 – 1976).⁸ Among the chief casualties were the art works Pang produced before his retreat to China’s interior in 1937. One of this dissertation’s essential tasks is to document and provide images of Pang Xunqin’s lost art works that have survived by way of photographic reproductions hidden away in the pages of 1930s journals and magazines published in Shanghai. Searching for these reproductions has drawn me to major libraries in Beijing, Shanghai, and Changshu, places where Pang once lived or taught. In the United States, many trips to the Library of Congress and a late summer residency at its Asian Division, thanks to Florence Meason’s Fellowship, have generated significant discoveries. Resurrecting these reproductions from such periodicals has made possible the charting of Pang’s artistic journey from its outset. Discovering these prints by leafing through volumes of these old journals was like plucking shining jewels from deep piles of debris, as one’s heart pounded and hands shook with excitement. Gazing at the faded images of Pang’s works buried in fragile and brittle yellowing pages whose edges are crumbling and lamenting

⁸ Pang Xunqin is not the only artist who suffered enormous losses of his artistic productions; Lin Fengmian is also known to have destroyed a large number of his art works in the 1960s, by flushing them down to a toilet.

the impossibility of viewing their originals, one realizes the indispensability of primary sources for an art historian as well as his and her inescapable responsibility to help uncover them. Without access to the long-gone originals, these reproductions, testaments to history and to their tragic loss, must be relied on and treasured as our primary evidential sources. Thanks to such reproductions, I have recovered most of Pang's lost works in print, making possible the reconstruction of the trajectory of Pang Xunqin's artistic creation and his stylistic development from the late 1920s onward. However, the staggering loss of art works during the last turbulent century and its phenomenal impact on modern Chinese art history must not be ignored.

More than four hundred of Pang Xunqin's original art works, ranging from oil paintings and watercolors to pencil drawings, and including his graphic designs, have survived; most of them are housed at Pang Xunqin's Memorial Museum in Changshu, his hometown. In their permanent collection, the National Art Museum in Beijing and Jiangsu Provincial Museum in Nanjing hold a few significant works dating to the 1940s. None of Pang's oil or ink paintings has been collected by any major American or European museums. Michael Sullivan, the art historian who has tirelessly promoted twentieth-century Chinese art in the West, is perhaps the only Western collector who owns a number of Pang's original works produced during the 1940s in wartime-Chengdu, where Sullivan and Pang became close friends.

The Chinese art historian Tao Yongbai once claimed:

The three most influential figures shaping the historical development of Chinese modern art, I believe, are Xu Beihong, Lin Fengmian, and Pang Xunqin. They were all educated in France. Xu situates himself in his native land, choosing realism to transcend Chinese traditional painting; Lin reconciles Chinese traditional art with Western art to establish a new artistic paradigm, while Pang, on the other hand, locates himself in the world, in

modernity and in the future. He returns to the indigenous, from decorative paintings to arts and crafts designs; he has founded new subject areas and new disciplines.⁹

Both Xu Beihong (1895-1953) and Lin Fengmian (1900-1991) are canonical figures in the history of twentieth-century Chinese art, their names being widely known in China. Yet Pang Xunqin's name has since the 1950s gradually faded to obscurity. Twentieth-century Chinese art history is a turbulent terrain.¹⁰ Pang's lapse into obscurity is centrally connected with how the history of Chinese twentieth-century art has been written and constructed. An active modernist in the early half of that century, a leader in the 30s of the avant-garde group, the Storm Society (Juelanshe), a founding member of China's first arts and crafts institute, and a self-appointed historian of Chinese applied and decorative art history, Pang neither affiliated himself with the realists who were urgently needed by the newly established People's Republic to promote socialist art, nor did he connect with the traditionalists whose ink and water paintings represent the "national essence" (*guocui*) demanded for bolstering national pride. Personally unassuming, Pang acquired neither the historical role nor the art historical recognition he deserved.

Art historian Michael Sullivan first introduced Pang's artistic activities from the 1920s through the 1940s in his *Chinese Art in the Twentieth Century* (1956), a work

⁹ Tao Yongbai, "Dui Pang Xunqin de lishi sikao (Historical Consideration on Pang Xunqin)," *Zhuangshi*, no. 3 (August, 1994), and republished in *Yishu chizi de qiu suo – Pang Xunqin yanjiu wenji* (The Search by an Art Devotee – Collected Essays on Pang Xunqin) (Shanghai: shehui kexue yuan chubanshe, 2003), 283.

¹⁰ Both Chen Ruilin and Li Chu-jin, Chinese art historians, have argued that the primary difficulty in studying Chinese modern art is politics. Chen Ruilin's lecture for Chinese Modern Art seminar, University of Maryland, December, 2003. Thanks to Professor Jason Kuo for sharing with his seminar students Professor Li's notes on the studies of Chinese modern art. Ralph Croizier in his state-of-the-field essay written in August 1990 recognized that one of the main reasons that the field of modern Chinese art had attracted little scholarly attention was the period's being "too politically charged," "too sensitive and difficult for critical scholarship." See Croizier's "Art and Society in Modern China –A Review Article," *Journal of Asian Studies* (August 1990): 587.

which launched twentieth-century Chinese art as a field of study. Sullivan's volume, conceived with considerable assistance from his friend Pang Xunqin,¹¹ had remained the only source on modern Chinese art for nearly thirty years until his protégé, Mayching Kao, completed her 1983 dissertation, titled "China's Response to the West in Art: 1898 – 1937."¹² Under Sullivan's guidance, Kao's dissertation concentrates on a more focused period and supplies valuable primary and archival materials found in libraries chiefly located in the United States and Hong Kong. Kao's concentrated study of the Western-trained artists and of art schools that offered classes on Western painting and drawing techniques provides useful references for art historians who are interested in the East-West artistic exchanges. However, Kao's interpretation of China as being the passive respondent to the Western artistic styles and expressions reflects the then-current Fairbanks' historiography – Chinese modernity is only possible via a shock from the West.

Michael Sullivan's much expanded volume, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (1996), appearing forty years after the publication of his initial book on the Chinese art of that century, is by far the most complete historical overview. In this comprehensive work, Pang Xunqin and his artistic activities have been accorded considerable textual space, not much less than that lavished on the canonical figures, such as Xu Beihong, Lin Fengmian, Liu Haisu (1896-1994), and Wu Zuoren (1908-1997). Sullivan's comprehensive volume explores almost all the major artists, including their regional, stylistic, and institutional affiliations, and it manages to omit little regarding all

¹¹ For the friendship between Pang Xunqin and Sullivan and how Pang was instrumental in the creation of Sullivan's first book on modern Chinese art history, see chapter 5 of this dissertation.

¹² Kao Mayching, "China's Response to the West in Art: 1898 – 1937" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1983).

the major art movements and currents and art institutions active during the entire twentieth-century. Despite its broad scope, this volume's strength is its coverage and treatment of the art of the Republic period (1911 – 1949) and of artists, such as Pang Xunqin, who stood between the East and the West. This foundation-building work is both indispensable for scholars and opens up avenues for in-depth studies and fruitful debates.

Julia Andrews and Kuiyi Shen's co-edited exhibition catalogue, *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China* (1998), incorporates essays written by leading scholars of modern Chinese art. In addition to Julia Andrews and Shen Kuiyi, who co-authored six essays on various periods, Mayching Kao, Christina Chu, and two Chinese scholars, Shan Guolin and Xue Yongnian, each contributes one essay respectively. Four essays focus on the "Innovations in Chinese Painting (1850 – 1950)," Kao's essay concentrates on the "Western-Style" painting movement, and Shen's essay focuses on modern Chinese oil painting from 1920 to 1950. Andrews's essay on the commercial art of the period (1920 – 1950) highlights for the first time the contributions made by design artists to the history of "modernization." As Andrews's essay focuses on the chief woodcut artists/designers in Lu Xun's inner circle, it fails to recognize contributions made by independents like Pang Xunqin.¹³ This edited volume aims at creating a balanced survey of twentieth-century Chinese art despite its obvious emphasis on the "innovation of Chinese painting." However, this 1998 Guggenheim Museum-sponsored block-buster exhibition for which the Andrews-Shen catalogue was conceived brought Chinese modern art to the international center stage. Starting in New York City, the exhibition traveled to Bilbao, Spain, and it was in that

¹³ Pang Xunqin's designs are the focus of chapter three of this dissertation.

distinguished venue that Pang Xunqin's 1936 watercolor painting, *Son of the Earth* (Fig. 1), was first shown outside China. Moreover, a color plate of Pang's work was also included in the aforementioned catalogue. Shen Kuiyi's germane essay titled "The Lure of the West: Modern Chinese Oil Painting" discusses Pang Xunqin's involvement in the Storm Society of the 1930s.

Pang Xunqin's short-lived avant-garde group in 1930s Shanghai and his "fragmented, sexualized, and hallucinatory" imaging of the cosmopolitan in his 1931 *Such is Paris* and *Such is Shanghai* (Figs. 33 and 34) became a departure for discussion in Richard Vinograd's essay "Relocations: Spaces of Chinese Visual Modernity."¹⁴ Employing an analytical and critical approach in exploring issues of modernism, realism, and conceptualism in Chinese art, Richard Vinograd, David Der-wei Wang, and Eugene Y. Wang in their respective essays – in Maxwell Hearn and Judith Smith's co-edited *Chinese Art: Modern Expressions* (2001) – have offered their reading of Chinese modernism as "transitive," "failed," or "conceptual."¹⁵

Following in the footsteps of the literary scholars, Lee Ou-Fan's nostalgic account of Shanghai-centered modernism and Shu-mei Shih's more critical reading and post-colonial critiques of colonial and cosmopolitan modernism,¹⁶ Jo-Anne Birnie-Danzker, Ken Lum, and Zheng Shengtian's collectively-edited catalogue (2004), *Shanghai Modern: 1919-1945*, aims to place Shanghai as the center of both the East-West artistic and

¹⁴ Richard Vinograd, "Relocations: Spaces of Chinese Visual Modernity," in *Chinese Art: Modern Expressions* (2001), 167.

¹⁵ David Der-wei Wang, "In the Name of the Real," and Eugene Y. Wang, "Sketch Conceptualism as Modernist Contingency," in *Chinese Art: Modern Expressions* (2001).

¹⁶ Lee Ou-Fan, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China 1930-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999) and Shu-mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001).

cultural exchanges and of the modernist movements, such as the Storm Society. This volume particularly leads readers to valuable primary sources originating in Germany, France, and Great Britain. Pang Xunqin and his Shanghai avant-garde circle is featured prominently in this work. In their English and German translations, parts of Pang's memoir about his 1929 trip to Germany as well as the Storm Society Manifesto in its entirety are also included here.

Problematizing the China/West binary model of cultural exchanges, literary historian Shu-mei Shih points to “the prominent role played by Japan as the mediating transmitter of Western culture and a potent force in the formation of Chinese modernism,” in her 2001 seminal book, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937*.¹⁷ Echoing Shih's proposition, art historian Richard Vinograd also points out in art historical discussions that “the impact of Japan, though frequently acknowledged, is often submerged.”¹⁸

Aida-Yuen Wong's *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in China* (2006) was a most timely addition to this discursive discussion and reawakened the call for “debunking the myths of Eurocentric modernism and the binary model of cultural confrontation.”¹⁹ Wong's recent contribution suggests a paradigm predilection, in the studies of modern Chinese art, toward a more historiographic and discursive approach, one that has long been underway among literary

¹⁷ Shu-mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937* (2001), 4.

¹⁸ Vinograd, “Relocations: Spaces of Chinese Visual Modernity,” in Maxwell Hearn and Judith Smith, eds., *Chinese Art: Modern Expressions* (2001), 166.

¹⁹ Shih argues that “a central task in any discussion of Chinese modernism” is “debunking the myths of Eurocentric modernism and the binary model of cultural confrontation.” See Shu-Mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937* (2001), 5.

scholars' investigations of Chinese modernism. Proposing a "rethinking of literary history" and "also of historiography," Shu-mei Shih remarked in 2001:

Studying modernism from Republican China, however, necessitates nothing less than a new paradigm for the study of modern Chinese literature, requiring not only a rethinking of literary history, but also of historiography. Historiography as a narrative construction overdetermined by the ideological imperatives of given contexts underlies the production of literary history.²⁰

The monumental volume, *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting* (1998), published both in Chinese and English and collectively edited by eminent art historians Richard Barnhart, James Cahill, and Wu Hung, contains one essay on Chinese twentieth-century painting, a piece revealingly titled "Traditional Chinese Painting in the Twentieth-Century." Written by the well-regarded Chinese art historian, Lang Shaojun, this essay is highly conspicuous for its omission of any paintings rendered in oil, a dynamic part of the twentieth-century Chinese art production,

Such omission of "nontraditional" Chinese art also surfaces in another monumental three-volume publication, one entitled *Later Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, 1800-1950* and based on Robert Hatfield Ellsworth's generous donation in 1987 of his Chinese painting and calligraphy to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ellsworth's entire collection encompasses not a single Chinese painting rendered in oil or in a manner other than "traditional." Such an omission results, in Richard Barnhart's telling words, in "a survey that misrepresents the history of Chinese painting since the nineteenth century."²¹

²⁰ Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937* (2001), 43.

²¹ Richard Barnhart, "A Review of *Later Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, 1800-1950*, 3 vols. by Robert Ellsworth," *Orientation* (October 1988): 68.

Ellsworth was not alone in preferring to collect “traditional” Chinese paintings. Such exclusion of “non-traditional” Chinese painting is also obvious in the Reverend Richard Fabian’s collection. The beautifully illustrated catalogue titled *Between the Thunder and the Rain: Chinese Paintings from the Opium War through the Cultural Revolution, 1840-1979* (2000), includes contributing essays by David Fraser, Claudia Brown, Julia Andrews, and Kuiyi Shen.

The shortage, in Western collections, of the art works produced by the Chinese artists, such as Pang Xunqin, who returned from the West, prevents any serious and in-depth engagement with this aspect of Chinese art history, and this lacuna also underscores a predetermined value judgment with regard to what constitutes “Chinese painting” worthy of collecting. Monographic studies in the English language on the returned-from-the-West Chinese artists pale in comparison to the scholarly efforts lavished on the “traditional” Chinese artists. Xiu Huajing’s Oxford dissertation (1997) under Michael Sullivan’s direction, titled “Shanghai-Paris: Chinese Painters in France and China, 1919-1937,” and Sandy Ng’s 2005 University of London dissertation, “Lin Fengmian (1900-1991): Figure Painting and Hybrid Modernity in Twentieth Century Chinese Art,” are rarities in comparison to the dissertations written in North American universities on the “traditionalists.” Dissertations on Pu Xinyu (Pu Hsin-Yu, 1896-1963), Wu Changshuo (1844-1927), Li Keran (1907-1989), Pan Tianshou (1897-1971), Feng Zikai (1898-1975), and Zeng Youhe (Tseng Yu-ho, Betty Ecke, b. 1923)²² constitute just

²² See Jane Chuang Ju, “The Life and Art of Pu Hsin-Yu (1896-1963)” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1989); Shen, Kuiyi, “Wu Changshu and the Shanghai Art World in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries” (Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 2000); Wan Qingli, “Li Keran (1907-1989) and Twentieth-Century Chinese Painting (Li Keran, Modern Painting, Landscape)” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1991); Yang Siliang, “Pan Tianshou and Twentieth-Century Traditional

a few conspicuous examples. All these artists rendered their works in the Chinese traditional water and ink (*shuimo*) media, their style is primarily calligraphic, and the content is literati, landscape, or bird and flower. In addition, monographic catalogues have also been written on the iconic innovative traditionalists Zhang Daqian (1899-1983) and Huang Binhong (1865-1955).²³

There is scarcely any English scholarly work written on Pang Xunqin. The exceptions are Michael Sullivan's numerous fragments on the artist in his anthologies and a commemorative essay written for the opening occasion of Pang Xunqin's Memorial Museum in Changshu. Other relevant bilingual catalogues include *The Storm Society and Post-Storm Art Phenomenon* (1997); *Juelan, the Storm Art Society and 1930s' Shanghai* (1999), and, most recently, *Hiunkin Pang* (2006), edited by Pang Xunqin's daughter, Pang Tao. This volume includes an essay by Michael Sullivan titled "Hiunkin Pang and Shudy." Catalogues focusing on paintings by Pang Xunqin's talented wife, Shudy, or Qiu Ti (1906-1958), include *Three Generations of Chinese Modernism: Qiu Ti, Pang Tao, and Lin Yan* (1998) and *Schudy* (2006). The last work includes a bilingual essay by art historians Kuiyi Shen and Julia F. Andrews, titled "Schudy: The Storm Society and China's Early Modernist Movement."²⁴

Chinese Painting" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1995); Lin, Su-Hsing, "Feng Zikai's Art and the Kaiming Book Company: Art for the People on Early Twentieth-Century China" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 2003); Melissa Jane Thompson, "Gathering Jade and Assembling Splendor: The Life and Art of Tseng Yuho (China, Betty Tseng Ecker)" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 2001).

²³ See Fu Shen, *Challenging the Past: The Paintings of Chang Dai-chien*, trans. Jan Stuart (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; and Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991); Jason Kuo, *Innovation within Tradition: The Paintings of Huang Pin-hung* (Hong Kong: Hanart Gallery and Williamstown, Mass. Williams College, 1989).

²⁴ This exhibition catalogue showcases works by Pang Xunqin's wife, Qiu Ti; Pang's daughter, Pang Tao; and his granddaughter, Lin Yan.

This asymmetrical representation of Chinese artists in the historiography of twentieth-century Chinese art produced in English reveals a discursive leaning that privileges artists who continue to paint in traditional Chinese media and subject matter. Such a bent excludes artists who, according to the judgment of the reigning historiography, have no claim to the lineage of Chinese tradition, and thus deserve little scholarly attention in Chinese art history. Such exclusion may also underscore a dismissive judgment regarding the artists who painted in mixed media and a conception of their art works as being less authentic or original, and thus less Chinese. This proclivity may also imply a more subtle politically correct precaution particularly exercised by the academics in North American institutions because studies of these Western-educated Chinese artists might be tainted with “European-centrism” suspicion.

With the art-historical construct of twentieth-century Chinese art still in the process of evolving, it is impossible to adhere to a single track of charting, without exploring a range of methodological and theoretical inquiries that have occupied the attention of literary scholars and historians of modern China for the last decade. Concurring with the conviction of the eminent art historian Partha Mitter that “a sound working principle for contextualizing artifacts within society” is “the critical approach combining theory with [the] historical method,” this dissertation moves beyond the mapping of Pang Xunqin’s artistic trajectory. It engages with post-colonial inquiries by exploring issues that are closely related to the history of the Republic era (1911-1949), an art history that has been built on private and public collections, exhibitions, auction houses, and publications. By reassessing the established art historical narratives of Western-trained artists in the historiography of Chinese modern art and by engaging with

the recent rich scholarship on cultural and post-colonial critiques, this study offers an alternative narrative of the modernist movement in China, a movement which has been relegated to the margin of Chinese art history.

Affirming that “the time has come to incorporate the unquestioned gains of postcolonial critiques into the disciplinary framework of art history,” Partha Mitter, art historian of Indian modern art, offers the following statement:

Postcolonial readings “against the grain” have brought into question earlier certainties, challenging patriarchy and colonial dominance, ideas that helped loosen the “dominant” art historical canon and valorize the important contribution made by gays and lesbians, women, non-Western, and other so-called marginal groups, who had hitherto been written out of mainstream art history.²⁵

Applying the postcolonial critiques to Pang’s case and engaging in dialogue with anthropological and literary scholarship, this dissertation explores a number of issues. These include national and cultural identity, identity politics, ethnicity, authenticity, and “hybridity,” in addition to Western orientalizing of the East and internal or self-orientalization by the East in the transnational and transcultural dimensions of encounters. This study also attempts to problematize issues such as artistic hierarchy and canon building, the notion of Chinese avant-garde, the role of the Chinese intelligentsia in their appropriation and appreciation of the native and aboriginal arts, and their utopian goal of integrating arts and crafts with industrial design to build a modern China. The cultural hierarchy manifested in the forms of both Chinese literati elite and Western cultural hegemony should be examined closely in order to understand its dichotomistic paradigm built around the configuration of tradition and modern, East and West, and *guohua* and *xihua*. After all, the intensity and diversity of China’s contacts with the West in the

²⁵ Partha Mitter, “Interventions: The Author Replies,” *Art Bulletin* XC, no. 4 (December 2008): 569.

nineteenth and twentieth centuries is unprecedented. It is imperative to question the interpretive construct in the historiography of modern Chinese art. Postcolonial inquiries into the studies of modern Chinese art will take us beyond the art works into the historical realm that gives rise to and frames these productions. Art works are the only vehicles art historians ride to enter the domain of history that has been shaped by both historical events and the interpretative modes of those events.

By placing Pang Xunqin's case in its semi-colonial historical context, in conjunction with a formal and iconographic analysis of his paintings and designs, this dissertation offers not only a chronological account of Pang's artistic life from the 1920s to the 1940s, but also a critical examination of the existing studies of this period.

In many ways, Pang's artistic life mirrors some key turning points in the first half of twentieth-century Chinese art: the 1920s infatuation with the West, the importation of the West in the early 30s, the reexamination and rejection of the West during the late 30s, and the embracing of the indigenous culture and art in the 40s. Although the dissertation chapters are organized topically, the chronology of Pang's artistic journey from the 20s to the 40s fits in well with each topical case.

Chapter one taps into Pang's formative years as a young artist in Paris (1925-1929) and his involvement and close connection with Parisian Modernism in the late 20s. Pang Xunqin's training at the l'Académie Julian provided him a solid grounding in drafting and sketching from live models. His subsequent experience at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière afforded him the valuable opportunity of being in close proximity to the Parisian avant-gardes and the École of Paris. Evoking the reading of "minor transnationalism," articulated by literary scholars Shu-mei Shih and Francoise Lionnet, as

lying beyond the “binary of the local and the global,” of the majority and minority culture, and of the center and the peripheral, to uncover the invisibility of “horizontal communication amongst minorities,”²⁶ this chapter pays special attention to Pang Xunqin’s artistic exchanges with non-Parisian artists from Eastern and Central Europe, America, and Asia. These “horizontal” encounters with “minority” artists like himself living in Paris between 1925 and 1929 contributed to shaping Pang into the artist, designer, and art educator he subsequently became. Pang seemed to be most comfortable mingling freely with various groups of artists of many nationalities, unconstrained by either national labels or any particular style. Pang’s friendship with the uninhibited Chinese artist Chang Yu placed Pang, by comparison, in the category of individualists who belonged to no collective association or organization.²⁷ His Parisian experience also made him cognizant of his deep connection with his native land, to which he opted to return.

Chapter two turns to Pang Xunqin’s active participation in the Shanghai avant-garde movement between 1930 and 1936. Investigating primary sources and reassessing secondary studies on his Shanghai Storm Society period, the chapter aims at establishing the case for the Storm Society’s close connection with the concurrent global avant-garde movement and the phenomenon of a transnational modernism. Despite the fact that few

²⁶ Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih, “Thinking through the Minor, Transnationally” in Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih, eds., *Minor Transnationalism*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 5-7.

²⁷ In Paris, Pang Xunqin was befriended by artists from many different countries, but did not join any Chinese artist organization. In April of 1929, when in Paris, Liu Haisu organized a “zhonghua liufa yishu xiehui” (Association of Chinese artists staying in France). Neither Pang Xunqin nor Chang Yu were members. Even after Pang returned to Shanghai, he rarely identified himself with any French repatriates or alumni groups such as the “Zhongguo liu fa yishu xue hui” (Chinese Academic Association of Artist Repatriates from France), which was organized by Chang Shuhong in August 1933 and included twenty-three members. Liu Kaiqu, Tang Yimu, and Zheng Ke were among them. *Yifeng* (Art Breeze) 1, no. 8, August, 1933.

of Pang's original art works of this period have survived, many traces of his works remain in the pages of Shanghai art magazines. Efforts have been made to locate his extant paintings, to evaluate the dating of them, and to examine their stylistic evolution.

Historical investigation of the Storm Society has been undertaken by Chinese art historians. Yan Tingsong's dissertation is perhaps the most thorough study thus far of the Storm Society, and Tang Tanyi's master's thesis (2005) focuses on the styles practiced by the Society's members.²⁸ Chinese art historian Tao Yongbai has written short evaluative and analytical essays on the Society's successes and failures. A short section on the Society as a modern/Western/Oil painting phenomenon has been covered in the following three Chinese anthologies: Li Xiaoshan and Zhang Shaoxia's *Zhongguo xiandai huihua shi* (*History of Chinese Modern Paintings*, 1986); Zhu Buoxiong and Chen Ruilin's *Zhongguo Xihua woshinian, 1898-1949* (*Fifty Years of Chinese Western Paintings*, 1986); and Li Chao's *Shanghai youhua shi* (*A History of Oil Painting in Shanghai*, 1995). Nevertheless, most of these studies remain inventorial and often cite similar sources.

Historian Ralph Crozier's "Post-Impressionists in Pre-War Shanghai: The *Juelanshe* (The Storm Society) and the Fate of Modernism in Republican China (1993)" constitutes the single essay in English that traces the rise and fall of this avant-garde group. Although offering some critical posturing, Crozier's essay remains largely evidential. Stephen Schaefer's doctoral dissertation in Chinese modern literature, "Relics of Iconoclasm: Modernism, Shi Zhecun, and Shanghai's Margin (2000)," includes four pages of discussion on the cubist style of Pang's two paintings "Such is Paris" and "Such

²⁸ Yan Tingsong, "Xinxing yishu de kuanglai – Juelanshe (Storm of the avant-garde art – Study of the Storm Society)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Dongnan University, 1999); Tang Tanyi's "se xian, xing jiaocuo de shije – guanyu Juelanshe yishu chouxiang yuyan de (The world interwoven in color, line and form – reflection on the abstract art language of the Storm Society)" (Master's thesis, Shanghai University, 2005).

is Shanghai.” Schaefer posits the stylistic links between these paintings and the fragmented style of contemporary literature.

Setting the Storm Society in the rhythm of transnational avant-garde movements, this chapter offers a critical and more in-depth inquiry into the context of the Storm Society and explores the parallels between the Indian avant-gardes and the Chinese. Contextualizing the Storm Society in the larger debate between “modernists” vs. “realists” and between the “traditionalists” vs. “modernists” in the pre-war Shanghai art world, this chapter aims to delineate the Paris-Shanghai connection, not treating one center as superior to the other but rather each as constituting an essential part of the large tapestry of global and transnational modernism.

Scarcely any scholarly works have been written on Pang’s post-Storm Society period and his artistic and scholarly involvement in the art and design area, and chapter three aims to fill that gap.²⁹ Starting with Pang’s industrial and book-cover designs produced during his Shanghai years and tying them in with the visual and media culture of pre-war Shanghai, the chapter explores the plausible link between Pang’s short visit to

²⁹ The nearly 900-page edited volume *Yishu chizi de qiu suo – Pang Xunqin yanjiu wenji* (An art devotee’s search --- essays on the studies of Pang Xunqin, 2003) is the most comprehensive collection of articles and essays written by his students, colleagues, relatives, art critics, and art historians about his life and his art works. Most of the articles are commemorative in nature, often lacking a critical stand or in-depth analysis; yet they are useful in order to view Pang from the viewpoint of people who knew him personally. Two other two short edited volumes, *Pang Xunqin yishu yanjiu* (Studies on the Art of Pang Xunqin, 1991) and *Pang Xunqin yanjiu* (Studies on Pang Xunqin, 1994), are similar in style to the aforementioned volume, being commemorative and celebratory. There are two biographies on Pang, one authored by his widow, Yuan Junyi, *Pang Xunqin Zhuan* (Biography of Pang Xunqin 1995), and the other written by Sun Ping, *Bainian Jiazou: Pang Xunqin* (Hundreds of Years of the Pang Clan, 2002). It focuses on Pang Xunqin and also traces to its roots Pang’s gentry lineage and their important clan status in the town of Changshu. Prints of the most important of Pang’s works were published in *Pang Xunqin Hua Jin* (The Collection of Paintings of Pang Xunqin) by the People’s Fine Arts Publishing House in 1998. *Pang Xunqin Gongyi, Meishu Sheji* (Pang Xunqin Arts and Crafts Designs), published in 1994, contains prints of most his graphic designs drawn during the 1940s. These two volumes provided my first introduction to Pang’s art works before I began viewing original ones.

the Bauhaus in 1929 and his design style of this period. Shanghai's dynamic visual culture and the Bauhaus-inspired populist ideal of an arts and crafts movement may have converged to inform Pang's modern design style. Most of his original designs from his Shanghai period have subsequently vanished, and few have survived in reproductions in the pages of art magazines. However, by placing Pang's design career in the larger historiography of Chinese modern design in the Republic era, this chapter poses questions as to why Pang's creative contributions to the history of graphic and industrial design have been ignored by the historiography of modern Chinese art.

Focusing on the album of thirty designs Pang produced in the early 1940s, and that are housed in the Changshu Pang Xunqin Art Museum, the chapter demonstrates that his seamlessly constructed synthesis of Chinese traditional and native patterns with modernist geometric forms represents Pang's most sophisticated stage as an artist and graphic designer and epitomizes both his artistic maturity and his idiosyncratic style. This chapter's goal is to establish Pang Xunqin as an advocate and forerunner of the modernist arts and crafts movement in China, a movement that rarely captured the attention of the Chinese literati class and one that was also closely linked with the utilitarian arts and crafts movement of the larger world.

Concentrating on Pang's paintings, in particular the series of *Guizhou Shanmin tu* (Paintings of Mountain Villagers of Guizhou) that he produced in China's interior during the wartime years, chapter four explores how he turned his painterly attention to ethnic and native subjects, his increasingly synthesized style, and issues related to the encounters between the Chinese intelligentsia and the native aboriginal culture.

In 1939, by chance or through circumstances of the early war period, Pang Xunqin, while serving as a research fellow for the Academia Sinica (the Chinese Academy of Sciences) and the National Museum, was given a three-month assignment to collect and record Miao ethnic customs and handicrafts in Guizhou province.³⁰ Traveling to more than eighty Miao villages and becoming fascinated by the intricate beauty and meticulous designs of native crafts, Pang collected over six hundred embroidered pieces and costumes and recorded Miao ethnic customs – specifically their dance and music forms. He did so in two journal volumes which he felt compelled to destroy in 1966 during the Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Importantly, however, his close contact with the Miao people and their crafts served as a catalyst to his stylistic changes of this period. His more Cubist-informed style of the 1930s gave way to more lyrical and curvilinear compositions rendered in shades of grey and green, thereby synthesizing his Chinese sensibility and his modernist techniques.

Pang's romanticized portrayal of the Miao ethnic people reveals his fascination with China's hinterland, a land that remained pure and primitive and untainted by Westernization and cosmopolitanism. Pang was not alone in seeking inspiration from the native culture. Many of his contemporaries turned to either indigenous or ancient Chinese culture. Examples include novelist Shen Congwen's idyllic and nostalgic depiction of his hometown, Xiangxi, Hunan; Wen Yiduo's turn to the classical prose of Chu (500 BC), the root of Hunan civilization; Zheng Zhenyuan's intense interest in Ming and Qing vernacular literature and woodcut prints; and Liang Sicheng's field research on Chinese

³⁰ When major Chinese coastal cities were occupied by the Japanese, many intelligentsia along with many universities and art schools moved into inland provinces of China, including Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou, which were the homes of many Chinese ethnic minorities.

indigenous architecture, specifically remote Buddhist and Daoist temple structures. One common denominator of these intelligentsias, with the exception of Shen Congwen, is that they were educated in the West during the 1920s, returned to China in the late 1920s or early 1930s, rejected the West, and were drawn to the indigenous art and culture in the 1940s.

Taking special interest in Pang's appropriation and synthesis of the Miao ethnic patterns in his art works, this chapter attempts to move beyond the East-West parallels, including the oft-cited comparison to Picasso's and Modigliani's fascination with African masks or Gauguin's infatuation with the Tahiti's "primitivism." Instead, the chapter situates Pang Xunqin's turn to "primitivism" against the backdrop of what art historian Partha Mitter calls "the global fellowship of primitivism," involving Indian avant-gardes, Japanese intelligentsias, and Mexican muralists.³¹ Removed from the Paris-centered construct of "primitivism," this transnational framework of "primitivism" yields useful parallels and common issues of national and cultural identity that challenged non-Western artists upon facing the unprecedented infiltration of the Western cultural knowledge.

Using as an entry point the Third National Art Exhibition *Guohua* (National Painting) Committee's decision to reject Pang Xunqin's *Guizhou Shanmin tu* (ink and color on satin, 1941) from being shown in the *guohua* section,³² chapter five traces the historical construct of *Guohua* (national painting) and *Xihua/youhua* (Western painting)

³¹ Partha Mitter, *The Triumph of Modernism, India's Artists and the Avant-Garde 1922-1947* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2007), 43.

³² Pang Xunqin, *Jiushi zheyang zuo guolai de* (Such was my path) (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1988), 201-202. The *Guizhou Shanmin tu* (Paintings of Mountain Villagers of Guizhou) was inspired by Pang's touring of eighty ethnic villages in Guizhou province between 1938 and 1939, when he was a research fellow for the Central Museum of China. The album was painted in ink and color on satin between 1940 and 1941 when Pang was in Sichuan.

bifurcations and raises questions about categorical inclusion and exclusion of such bifurcation. Charting the Liu Haisu- and Xu Beihong-organized overseas exhibitions of Chinese contemporary art in the first half of the 1930s, especially Liu's self-refashioning as a *guohua* painter in Europe despite his fame as an oil painter (*xihua*) in China, this chapter explores the issue of identity politics in the *guohua* and *xihua* construct as some Chinese artists moved fluidly and freely between these binaries. European audiences' reactions to these exhibitions revealed what Edward Said labeled the "dogmatic views of 'the Oriental' as a kind of ideal and unchanging abstract."³³ As this chapter demonstrates, the acceptance by European institutional authorities (particularly museums and art critics) of *guohua* alone as the legitimate representation of Chinese painting helped assert European cultural hegemony over oil paintings and the role of the "Orient" as the exotic Other. The self-orientalizing choices made by the Chinese exhibition organizers spoke to an unbalanced and unequal cultural power between Europe and China. The Chinese literati elite agenda to showcase *guohua* overseas served as a double-edged sword, to frame themselves as the true heirs of the long-held Chinese literati tradition of *guohua* and to portray themselves as the true patriots of China in the time of national crisis. Pang Xunqin's somber portrayals of the plight of Chinese people (Fig. 1 and 145, for example) slip through the cracks between the cultural hegemony of the West and the artistic and nationalistic authority of the Chinese literati elite.

Mapping modernity for Chinese art history is an enterprise neither one dimensional nor capable of being reduced to a single narrative. Modernity, in some of its aspects, may take a lineal and revivalistic form, such as in *guohua*, while in others, it may

³³ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Vintage Books, a Division of Random House, New York, 1979), 8.

take a disjunctive or divergent form, such as in Western-informed *xihua* extending to *youhua* (oil painting). Pluralistic and multiple narratives of Chinese modernists (temporal or spatial) would produce a collage of colorful patchwork that resembles what art historian Jonathan Hay envisions as “a kaleidoscopic representation of the Chinese past – the only kind of historiographic representation that can do justice to our current evolving state of knowledge.”³⁴

³⁴ Jonathan Hay, “Toward a Disjunctive Diachronics of Chinese Art History.” *Res.* 40 (Autumn, 2001): 107.

Chapter One: Paris – The “Contact Zone” and a Transnational Space (1925-1929)

If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast - Ernest Hemingway, 1950.

Pang Xunqin particularly treasured a mandolin, a memento of his friendship with artists of various nationalities who came to Paris in the 1920s to pursue the common goal of studying art. He carried this instrument next to him during his more than a month-long journey by sea, as he returned to China in December, 1929, after his five-year sojourn in Paris. His mandolin bore the signatures of Parisian artist friends whose native languages ranged from Chinese, French, English, German, Polish, Russian, Italian, Czech, Romanian, Hungarian, and Spanish to Malaysian.³⁵

Pang Xunqin was one of those lucky young men who came to Paris in September of 1925, a time when he was only nineteen years of age. He arrived there after Cubism (1907), Fauvism (1907), Futurism, Dada (1916), and Surrealism (1920) had all swept this fabled city, firmly situating Paris as the “contact zone” for young artists from the world over, in pursuit of new trends in art. It was this mecca which took the life of Modigliani (January 24, 1920), but rendered him immortal, and the place where Fujita acquired his sensational fame. It was the social space where artists, writers, poets, and dancers mingled and the “contact zone” where “cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each.”³⁶

³⁵ Pang Xunqin, *Jiushi zheyang zuo guolai de* (Such was my path) (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1988), 117. Hereafter any reference to this book is abbreviated as Pang’s Memoir.

³⁶ Here I borrowed the “contact zone,” a term coined by Mary Louise Pratt in her essay, “Arts of the Contact Zone” where she refers to the “contact zone” as “the social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today.” *Profession* (Modern Language Association) 9 (1991): 33-40.

Klüver and Martin have asserted that during the years between 1900 and 1930, about 30 to 40 percent of the artists in Montparnasse were not French citizens.³⁷ By 1925, the year Pang Xunqin arrived, foreign artists were among the city's most conspicuously successful artists, as indicated by *L'Art vivant's* top ten list. "At that moment no informed critics would have questioned the prominence in the market and the art press of Lipchitz or Chagall, Soutine or Fujita."³⁸

Pang quickly joined the international group of artists drawn to Paris to study or to revel in the air of that stimulating city. Pang Xunqin enjoyed frequent and close contact with artists from Eastern and Central Europe. When he initially enrolled in the l'Académie Julian, it was a Hungarian student who helped him and kept him company at Julian.³⁹ He frequently benefited from advice given by other foreign artists. A Polish artist, while passing one morning in the Jardin du Luxembourg where Pang was doing his color sketches, frankly pointed out to him, "You are still not the master of your colors, and you should mix every color on your own."⁴⁰ For a while Pang was completely preoccupied with copying and replicating famous artists' works, his favorites being Botticelli and Puvis de Chavannes. A Polish artist cautioned him to learn from these masters but not to be obsessed with them; rather he should paint and establish his own style.⁴¹ His neighbor from Latvia introduced him to many artists from Eastern Europe,

³⁷ Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, "Carrefour Vavin," in Kenneth E. Silver and Romy Golan, eds., *The Circle of Montparnasse: Jewish Artists in Paris 1905-1945* (New York: The Jewish Museum, 1985), 69.

³⁸ Christopher Green, *Art in France: 1900-1940* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 60.

³⁹ This Hungarian student also helped Pang in a fight against a student who uttered racial insults to Pang at Julian. Pang's Memoir, 47.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 55. Pang remembers this encounter quite vividly in his memoir. He recalls that after this encounter, he always mixed his own colors and even gave this advice to his students in his subsequent teaching career.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 58, Manaikaci was the translatory name (perhaps based on its pronunciation) Pang used in his memoir to refer to his Polish friend. The correct Polish spelling is unknown.

and he met artists and musicians from Latvia, Poland, and Russia.⁴² One time, his Czech friend, Lévy, who studied at Ecole des Arts Décoratifs, introduced him to a young American artist who showed his paintings to a highly impressed Pang.⁴³

Given Pang Xunqin's minority status in Paris, like that of his friends from Eastern and Central Europe, America, and Asia, it would come as no surprise that foreign students like Pang and his friends would find more sympathy and common ground with one another than with French counterparts. These foreign students often congregated in the same living quarters and enjoyed frequent interaction after their classes. By focusing on Pang Xunqin's artistic exchanges with other "minority" artists living in Paris, this chapter attempts to shift from the binary of the center and the peripheral, in order to reveal the invisible "horizontal communication amongst minorities" as articulated by literary scholars, Shu-mei Shih and Françoise Lionnet in their co-edited volume, *Minor Transnationalism* (2005). Shih and Lionnet's introduction argues that, "More often than not, minority subjects identify themselves in opposition to a dominant discourse rather than vis-à-vis each other and other minority group. We study the center and the margin but rarely examine the relationships among different margins."⁴⁴ By framing this chapter around the concept of "minor transnationalism" as lying "beyond the binary of the local

⁴² Eastern and Central European artists were clearly present in Paris. Zadkine and Lipchitz (Russian) and Russian Jewess Sonia Terk (Delaunay) arrived before 1914. František Kupka (Czech) chose to settle in Paris, and Karel Teige, a principal figure within Czechoslovakia's most avant-garde movement, *Devětsil*, also opted to resettle in Paris. Toyen and Stryksy presented their so-called "artificialism" to the public in Paris and Prague, while Šíma, the cofounder of the surrealist group, Le Grand Jeu, settled in Paris in 1921. Steven Mansbach, *Modern Art in Eastern Europe from the Baltic to the Balkans, ca. 1890-1939* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 61-70. For further references on the avant-garde artists from Eastern and Central Europe, see Timothy Benson, ed. *Central European Avant-Gardes: Exchange and Transformation, 1910-1930* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2002).

⁴³ This American artist friend invited Pang for coffee at his studio and later showed Pang his paintings, which according to Pang, put him to shame. After this visit, Pang was determined to work harder to improve his skills. Pang's Memoir, 66.

⁴⁴ Shih and Lionnet, "Introduction," in Shu-mei Shih and Françoise Lionnet, eds. *Minor Transnationalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 2.

and the global,” one can argue, in this context, that “the transnational,” can, rather, be “conceived as a space of exchange [Paris, for example] and participation wherever processes of hybridization occur and where it is still possible for cultures to be produced and performed without necessary mediation by the center.”⁴⁵

During the 1920s and early 1930s, the interlude between the two world wars, artists converged upon Paris to be caught up in the rhythms of the latest modern art movements playing out on this transnational stage of modernity. Paris, the contact zone of all the recent modern-art trends, provided a haven for curious minds and eyes. All these artists shared one thing in common, which was to luxuriate in the ambience of the Parisian art world in close proximity with the latest trends of modern art.

L’Académie Julian (1925-1927) – The “Minor Contact Zone”

After arriving in Paris in 1925, Pang first enrolled in the l’Académie Julian, having been introduced by Xu Beihong’s then-wife Jiang Biwei (1898-1978).⁴⁶ By no means was Pang Xunqin among the first generation of Chinese artists to study in France. Earlier repatriates included Wu Fading (1883-1924) and Li Chaoshi (1894-1971), both of whom went to Paris in 1911 and returned to China in 1919. Presumably they had studied at the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts.⁴⁷ The two artists who would cast a large canonic shadow on Chinese art of the twentieth century, Lin Fenmian (1900-1991) and Xu Beihong (Jupoen in French) (1895-1953), both funded by Chinese government

⁴⁵ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁶ Pang’s Memoir, 43. Xu Beihong once studied at l’Académie Julian in 1919, and after Xu’s admission to the Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts (ENBA), he continued to practice figure drawing at the l’Académie Julian until returning to China in 1925. Then Xu came back to Paris in 1926, staying there until 1927 before permanently resettling back in China.

⁴⁷ Many Chinese artists who went to Paris to study may have attempted to enter the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts, but how many of the students had actually been admitted and graduated remains unclear.

scholarships, arrived in Paris in 1919.⁴⁸ The female artist Pan Yuliang (1895-1977) came to Lyon in 1921, also on a government scholarship. Another female artist, Fang Junbi (Fan Tchun-Pi) (1898-1986), who went to Paris at the age of thirteen with her family, had studied at l'Académie Julian and the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts.⁴⁹

L'Académie Julian seemingly provided a perfect place for Chinese students to enter an art academy without the hurdle of an entrance examination. The professors at the Julian came directly from the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts (ENBA). The curricula of the two schools would be identical, both strongly emphasizing foundation building, technique training, and drawing sketches from live models.⁵⁰ Students could benefit from the teaching of the Julian's ENBA faculty, but without having to subject themselves to the ENBA's rigorous entrance exam. This opportunity was particularly valued by foreign students whose French might not have been adequate to pass that ENBA exam. Upon arriving, they could immediately commence taking art classes at the Julian. L'Académie Julian welcomed foreign students. According to Catherine Fehrer's study on the school, between 1868 and 1939 more than fifty percent of the students studying there were foreigners, largely American, English, German, and Swiss.⁵¹ Five Chinese students are included in the student list compiled by Fehrer: Xu Beihong (Jupoen), Fang Junbi (Fan Tchun-Pi), Chang Shuhong (Dzang Su-Hong in French spelling) (1904-1994), Liao

⁴⁸ Kao Mayching, "China's Response to the West in Art: 1898-1937" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1983), 100-103.

⁴⁹ Her name is listed as Fan Tchun-Pi in Catherine Fehrer's *The Julian Academy, Paris, 1868-1939* (New York: Shepherd Gallery, 1989), no pagination.

⁵⁰ For the curriculum emphasis, see Pang's Memoir, 45-46, and Catherine Fehrer's "History of the Julian Academy," in *The Julian Academy, Paris, 1868-1939*, 1-5.

⁵¹ See Catherine Fehrer's compiled "Introduction of the List of Students" from *The Julian Academy, Paris, 1868-1939*, no pagination.

Xinxue, and Pang Xunqin (Hiunkin Pang in French spelling).⁵² Pang Xunqin was also listed in the men's ateliers of the academy, whose archives were discovered in 1982-83, at the École Supérieure d'Arts Graphiques in 31 Rue du Dragon, the original location of l'Académie Julian. Today the archives of the men's ateliers are stored at the Archives Nationales de France.⁵³

Most students used l'Académie Julian as a stepping stone to enter the ENBA, which represented prestige, perhaps even privilege, and became, ultimately, the most recognized label of credentials for an academically trained artist of the time. Many Chinese students had attempted to enter the ENBA; however, the total number of such students who actually graduated from there remained problematic. Xu Beihong and Fang Junbi were enrolled in the ENBA in 1920; Lin Fengmian entered in 1921, after studying at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts Dijon for half a year; and Pan Yuliang is said to have studied there as well.⁵⁴ It is believed that Lin was the only one who received an ENBA diploma.⁵⁵

Pang Xunqin spent about a year and half at the Julian Academy, where he built a solid foundation of drawing and sketching skills.⁵⁶ His description of his Julian classes parallels Fehrer's finding in her research into the academy's curriculum, which placed a strong emphasis on building technical skills through drawing and methodical sketching

⁵² All five names are listed in Catherine Fehrer's "Introduction of the List of Student" from *The Julian Academy, Paris, 1868-1939*, no pagination.

⁵³ Catherine Fehrer's "History of the Julian Academy," in *The Julian Academy, Paris, 1868-1939*, 1-5.

⁵⁴ Xiu Huajing, "Shanghai-Paris: Chinese Painters in France and China, 1919-1937" (Ph.D. dissertation, Oxford University, 2000), 104. Xiu's dissertation does not confirm whether these four artists had graduated with a diploma from the ENBA. Archival studies are needed to confirm their graduation. They may have all enrolled at the ENBA at the one time or another.

⁵⁵ For studies on Lin Fengmian, see Zheng Chao, ed., *Lin Fengmian yanjiu wenji* (Zhengjiang, Hangzhou: Zhongguo meishu chubanshe, 1995); "Ronghui zhongxi de tansuo (Searching the path of synthesizing China and the West)," in *Duoyun* 53 (1999): 7-215; Lang Shaojun, *Lin Fengmian* (Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2002); Sandy Ng, "Lin Fengmian (1900-1991): Figure Painting and Hybrid Modernity in Twentieth Century Chinese Art" (Ph.D. dissertation., School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2005).

⁵⁶ Pang's Memoir, 49, 62.

from cast and live models. Anatomical proportion and modeling volume and space were basic skills students needed to acquire at the academy. Teachers usually came once or twice a week from the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts to correct and make comments on students' work. The French academic tradition, one that traced back to the Neoclassical establishment of Jacob David and Ingres and that focused on a "true to nature" model, was perpetuated at the Julian Academy and dominated its curriculum. Nevertheless, teachers seemed to be more tolerant at the Julian than at the ENBA of the students who were attracted to contemporary trends, including Post-impressionism, Fauvism, or even Cubism.⁵⁷

Above all, the aspect of the Julian experience that left the deepest imprint on Pang Xunqin was his interaction with his fellow students, most importantly the other foreign ones. He recalled that quite a few more experienced students offered help when he first enrolled. Students were encouraged to exchange ideas and correct one another's work. The open, democratic, and friendly atmosphere Pang experienced at Julian eventually would carry over into his own classroom after he became an art teacher himself.⁵⁸

The roster of the Academy of Julian included some famous students who would later become key figures in the twentieth-century art world. John Singer Sargent (1856 – 1925) studied there from 1875 to 1876, living at 73 rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs. He was listed as a prize-winning student in one of the Julian's booklets and in 1911 as an

⁵⁷ Since the Julian Academy was a fee-paying institution for "élève libre" (free students), professors might have been less obligated to influence students' inclination to try new methods and techniques. Students seemed to have more liberty at the Julian than at the ENBA to divert from the academic tradition. Fehrer's "History of the Julian Academy" in *The Julian Academy, Paris, 1868-1939*, 1-5.

⁵⁸ Pang's Memoir, 45-49.

“illustrious former student.”⁵⁹ Henri Matisse (1869-1954), after moving to Paris in 1891, briefly became a student of Bouguereau at the Academy, until disappointment with his teacher’s style prompted him to move to Moreau’s more progressive studio.⁶⁰ Henry Tanner (1859-1937), the first African American to study at the Julian, remained there for five years, from 1889 on. He established himself as a “noticeable” artist and settled in Paris, after assessing America’s artistic atmosphere as being too racially biased. Fernand Leger (1881-1955), who eventually turned to Cubism, also briefly studied at the Julian in 1903.⁶¹

Many Japanese artists were also Julian products at the turn of the twentieth century. Pang remembered being assisted by two Japanese students when he first enrolled. The Japanese students who studied at the Julian and at the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts returned to Japan, where, applying the French academic models, they established a similar academic curriculum at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. That institution attracted many Chinese students between 1910 and 1930.⁶² Initiated by Kuroda Seiki (1866-1924) in late 1896, the Tokyo School of Fine Arts’ Oil Painting Department, which paralleled the institution’s *Nihonga* department, firmly established *Yōga* (foreign painting) as a major discipline. Kuroda Seiki went on to educate a generation of Japanese artists who were steeped in the French academic and impressionistic style. Many Chinese students

⁵⁹ Catherine Fehrer’s “History of the Julian Academy,” in *The Julian Academy, Paris, 1868-1939*, 1-5.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² For the Japan and Paris connection, see Shuji Takashina, J. Thomas Rimer, and Gerald D. Bolas, *Paris in Japan: The Japanese Encounter with European Painting*, exhibition catalogue (St. Louis: The Washington University Press, 1987), 50; Christine M. E. Guth, Alicia Volk, and Emiko Yamanashi, *Japan & Paris: Impressionism, Postimpressionism, and the Modern Era* (Honolulu: Honolulu Academy of Arts, 2004); Gennifer Weisenfeld, *MAVO: Japanese Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1905-1931* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Irmtraud Schaarschmidt-Richter, ed., *Japanese Modern Art Painting From 1910 to 1970* (Edition Stemmler, Zurich and New York: The Japan Foundation, 2000).

with lesser financial resources opted for Japan rather than Paris to study oil painting or western art. The Tokyo School of Fine Arts was their destination of choice.⁶³

Invited by his French reporter friend in 1928, Pang attended the opening of a Japanese painting exhibition sponsored by the Japanese government. The ceremonial opening ribbon was cut by the then-French president, Gaston Doumergue (1924-1931). Pang was most impressed by the bright mineral colors featured in some of the exhibition's paintings. This exhibition provided a catalytic moment for Pang, who thereupon decided to return to China, his native soil. He realized that "only the native soil on which seeds were planted and sprout, would also nurture the seeds to grow, mature and reach their fruition."⁶⁴

As suggested earlier, Chinese students who sought out Paris at the beginning of the twentieth century normally first enrolled at l'Académie Julian as a preparation for entering the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts. Xu Beihong (Péon) and Fang Junbi exemplified this pattern. Upon his Parisian arrival in 1919, Xu first studied at l'Académie Julian and a year later was admitted to the ENBA, after passing the rigorous entrance exam. Pang Xunqin may have intended to follow Xu Beihong's path by entering the ENBA after the Julian, but that plan was strongly opposed by his friend Chang Yu or San Yu (1900-1966), a free-spirited Chinese artist from Sichuan whom Pang met after arriving in Paris. Chang Yu, who came to Paris in 1920, never attended any official

⁶³ The first Chinese student to study at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts was Li Shutong. See Liu Xiaolu, *Shijie meishu zhong de Zhongguo yu Riben meishu* (Nanning: Guangxi Meishu Chubanshe, 2001), 241-265. For the list of Chinese students who studied at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, see Yoshida Chizuko, *Kindai Higashi Ajia bijutsu ryūgakusei no kenkyū: Tōkyō Bijutsu Gakkō ryūgakusei shiryō* (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2009).

⁶⁴ Pang's Memoir, 85-86

academy, and claimed he learned his art on the streets of Montparnasse.⁶⁵ Chang persuaded Pang to attend the Académie de la Grande Chaumière rather than continuing on to the ENBA. It was his experience at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière of Montparnasse that prompted Pang to change course; it steered him from being a follower of academism to becoming an experimentalist with different modes of modernism and headed him towards the path of avant-gardes.

Montparnasse and the Académie de la Grande Chaumière

“People flocked here from all over the world, either to study (the academies did a flourishing trade) or to breathe the air of Montparnasse.”⁶⁶ The avant-gardes gathered here after the First World War. They came together in cafés and in different independent academies.⁶⁷ The “Atelier Gauguin” (No. 8 Rue de la Grande Chaumière) and the “Atelier Modigliani” on the other side of the boulevard are located along the way to the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. The young Pang Xunqin must have passed these famous studios countless times on his way to the Académie de la Grande Chaumière, located at 14 of Rue de la Grande Chaumière. He might have rubbed shoulders with artists who have come to define the age of modernism: Chagall, Archipenko, Soutine, Leger, Lipchitz, and Fujita, all listed as the most noticeable artists in Paris by *L’Art vivant’s* in 1925.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ For references on Chang Yu, see *China – Paris: Seven Chinese Painters Who Studied in France, 1918-1960*, exhibition catalogue (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 1988), 103-115; Rita Wong, *Chang Yu (Sanyu) you hua quan ji* (A complete collection catalogue of Sanyu’s oil paintings), catalogue raisonné (Xindian Shi : Guo ju ji jin hui in association with the University of Washington Press, Seattle, 2001); Leslie Jones, “Sanyu: Chinese Painter of Montparnasse,” in *Res* 35, (Spring 1999): 224-39.

⁶⁶ Raymond Nacenta, *School of Paris: The Painters and the Artistic Climate of Paris since 1910* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1960), 22.

⁶⁷ Valérie Bougault, *Paris Montparnasse: The Heyday of Modern Art, 1910–1940*, 131-2.

⁶⁸ Green, *Art in France: 1900–1940*, 65.

In addition to providing space and models, the fee-based, independent Académie de la Grande Chaumière also offered classes taught by renowned artists. Bourdelle's well-known weekly sculpture classes had been available since 1906 when the Académie was founded.⁶⁹ Without knowing his identity, Pang Xunqin often bumped into this senior sculptor, a student of Rodin, and once the master even invited him to sit in on his classes.⁷⁰ Feeling intimidated by other students who had studied sculpture much longer, Pang ceased attending Bourdelle's class after three days and gave up on sculpture. Finally, one day in 1929, after spotting a picture of Bourdelle on a newspaper obituary page, Pang made the connection between the kindly old gentlemen he often ran into at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière and the famous sculptor. Bourdelle's unassuming manner left a deep impression on Pang.⁷¹

The Académie de la Grande Chaumière attracted artists who were seeking an alternative to the more formal academic method characteristic of both the Julian and the ENBA. Hungarian-born, Indian female artist Amrita Sher-Gil (1913-1941) enrolled at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière in Paris in 1929, the year Pang was leaving the city.⁷² They may not have met in Paris; both chose to return to their homelands, Amrita in 1933. Both were sympathetic toward the suffering endured by their people. Pang painted the

⁶⁹ Académie de la Grande Chaumière was founded by Castelucio in 1906. In addition to the Académie of Julian and the Académie de la Grande Chaumière, there were other fee-paying independent academies in the Paris of the 1920s. The well-known ones include Académie Colarossi (10, Rue de la Grande Chaumière), Académie de Fernand Leger (86, Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs), Académie Matisse (33, Boulevard des Invalides), and Académie Ranson (7, Rue Joseph-Bara). Valérie Bougault, *Paris Montparnasse: The Heyday of Modern Art, 1910–1940* (Paris: Éditions Pierre Terrail, 1997), 202-3.

⁷⁰ Pang's Memoir, 79-80.

⁷¹ Green, *Art in France, 1900-1940*, 62.

⁷² Born to an Indian father, a Sikh nobleman, and a mother, an opera singer from a cultivated Hungarian-Jewish-German Catholic family in Budapest, Amrita Sher-Gil enrolled at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière at age of sixteen and later was admitted to the ENBA. For further reference to this fascinating Indian artist, see Partha Mitter, *The Triumph of Modernism: India's Artists and the Avant-garde 1922-1947* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2007), 45-65, and Vivan Sundaram, *Re-take of Amrita* (New York: Sepia International and The Alkazi Collection, 2006), with an introduction by Wu Hung.

Son of Earth (Fig. 1) in 1934, evoking the plight of drought victims in Chinese villages, and Sher-Gil, “drawn to the desolate vision of an Indian village in winter,”⁷³ conceived the *Hill Men and Woman* (Fig. 2) in 1935. Perhaps sharing a basically similar training at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière and having lived in Paris as minorities, these two artists’ painting styles, strikingly resonated with each other; both painted elongated figures and a melancholy sentiment permeates both paintings.⁷⁴

The artist who exerted the greatest influence on Pang Xunqin and his painting style during his Parisian years was no doubt the uninhibited and unorthodox Chang Yu from Sichuan. Pang admitted to being influenced by Chang Yu.⁷⁵ He of course heeded Chang’s advice not to go on to the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts after finishing at the Julian. After the spring of 1927, Pang spent the next two years (1927-1929) at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière where he joined Chang Yu to make live sketches almost every afternoon and some evenings. His friend, Pang recalled, was well known at la Grande Chaumière. Whenever he appeared, many people would gather around to watch him paint. If the model’s gesture or pose were good, Chang would sketch them, usually taking only ten minutes to finish a piece. Sometimes Chang also painted people who were sitting around him. Especially favoring women and their entire bodies, Chang would sometimes transform people around him, whether men or women, old or young, into female nudes. Nobody protested; on the contrary they all liked his nudes.⁷⁶ After observing Chang Yu using Chinese brushes to do his live sketches, Pang began following

⁷³ Partha Mitter, *The Triumph of Modernism: India’s Artists and the Avant-garde 1922-1947* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2007), 47.

⁷⁴ For more parallels drawn between Amrita Sher-Gil and Pang, see chapter four of the dissertation.

⁷⁵ Pang Memoir, 76.

⁷⁶ Pang’s Memoir, 74-77.

his example by similarly utilizing Chinese ink brushes to sketch. “But I mostly sketched males, ten minutes a piece, because I felt I could exaggerate and distort more freely when sketching male figures,” Pang recalled.⁷⁷ None of his line sketches of male figures have survived, and only a few of his female nude sketches are extant on the pages of Shanghai magazine publications of the early 1930s. The original works were either lost in World War II or otherwise destroyed in the 1960s.⁷⁸

Of Pang’s few nude sketches to survive in photographic form, a noteworthy one was published in the October 1932 issue of *Xiandai (Les Contemporanie)*. This was a literary journal which was best known for translating contemporary literary works from the West, chiefly from France, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Shi Zhechun served as its chief editor and a major contributor from 1932 to 1935, promoting modern literature in Shanghai.⁷⁹ This particular sketch of a female nude figure (Fig. 3) reveals Pang’s deft skill and his ability to capture the elegant contours of the female body with merely a few strokes. Pang clearly conveyed the model’s somewhat bashful manner. He had no intention of provoking a strong erotic feeling, in the manner of Chang Yu’s female nudes whose lower parts – the pelvic area and thighs – were often greatly inflated to make an erotic statement (Fig. 4). By contrast, Pang chose to portray his female nudes

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Pang Tao, ed., *Hiunkin Pang*, 28. According to Pang Tao, Pang Xunqin’s daughter, almost all Pang’s paintings and sketches from the 1920s were either lost in 1937 when the family had to move to inland of China to evade the occupation of Japanese troops in cities like Beijing and Shanghai, or in some instances, these works were destroyed by Pang himself in 1966.

⁷⁹ For Shi Zhechun’s role in the history of Chinese modern literature and the historical and literary significance of the *Xiandai* journal in China’s cosmopolitan modernity, see Shu-Mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001).

in a graceful, conservative, yet somewhat melancholy manner, which would come to define his nude sketching style in the 1930s.⁸⁰

During the 1920s, in his early years as a young artist, Pang was still in the stage of emulating other artists, especially Chang Yu. Pang's *Nude Sitting in a Straw Chair* (Fig. 5) echoes Chang Yu's sketch of *A Sitting Nude* (Fig. 6), as evidenced by its inflated lower body, large feet, and tiny head. The simple linearity by which Pang outlined the opulent contours of the sitter is reminiscent of Chang Yu. By contrast, however, Pang's sitter is sinking into a Chinese straw chair which is situated in a precarious space delineated by the sharp contrast between the light orange background and a triangularly shaped floor of blue, thereby conjuring up a composition of geometric forms including rectangles, triangles, ovals, and circles piling up on top of one another. The female figure's buttocks sink into the straw chair; the colors of her skin and of the chair merge into one, making her buttocks less visible, and thus subtly erotic. Compared to Chang Yu's more conventional cross-legged nude, Pang's sitting nude appears to be more abstract and distorted, thanks to the apparent weight of her large legs pulling down the entire composition. This is perhaps the most erotic female nude Pang had ever painted. He himself possibly had some reservations about this painting, according to Pang Tao, his daughter. One day in 1944, Pang Tao recalled, as Pang was sharing his works with some guests, he did not pick up this one to show. When Pang Tao asked him why, he responded, "It is not mine." Pang Tao interprets her father's refusal to share this work with his guests as revealing Pang's ambivalence about his work that bore influences of

⁸⁰ Pang continued his contact with Chang Yu after returning to China. Chang Yu sent his paintings for some of the exhibitions held by Juelanshe (the Storm and Stress Society) spearheaded by Pang between 1932 and 1935 in Shanghai. After the war, Pang and Chang Yu had lost contact.

others, and being “not his own (bu shi wo de).”⁸¹ This painting does call to mind Matisse’s flat composition and blocks of colors and Chang Yu’s linear outlines and inflated shapes. Nevertheless, his *Nude Sitting in a Straw Chair* represents a particular stage in Pang’s apprenticeship, as he absorbed and appropriated the concurrent stylistic trends he encountered.

In 1929, Pang sat down at the La Coupole café to meet with a well-known art critic in an effort to promote his own paintings in Paris. This white-haired gentleman initially acknowledged that many of Pang’s friends had recommended the artist to him and spoke admiringly of his talent. Responding to his query about Pang’s age upon arriving in Paris, he replied “nineteen.” “Have you studied the art of your own country?” Pang shook his head. As he prepared to open his portfolio, the art critic stopped him, saying; “you were a child when you arrived in Paris. Without looking at your paintings, I can imagine what your paintings must have been influenced by.” The art critic may have correctly characterized Pang’s early style. However, his quick conclusion underscored an inherent bias and cultural distrust toward Asian artists. It also implied the Western or the French hegemonic claim of the ownership and the originality of avant-garde styles, thus refusing and illegitimizing the non-European artists’ participation in the domain. This kind of *othering* identity politics was not unique to Pang’s experience. The aforementioned Indian artist, Sher-Gil – the exotic daughter of an Indian Sikh nobleman and a mother, an opera singer from a cultivated Budapest family – was, despite her half-European heritage, known in Paris as the “little Indian princess.” When Sher-Gil made

⁸¹ Pang Tao, ed., *Hiunkin Pang*, 28.

her decision to return to India, her French teachers supported her decision, “conceding that she was *temperamentally* [emphasis added] better suited to India than the West.”⁸²

Most of Pang’s paintings from the Parisian years were given away when he left the city or were lost during the subsequent turbulent years. It is difficult to find adequate physical evidence of his paintings produced during this time in order to posit his stylistic development or his association with any particular modern trend. Despite these limitations, we can, however, engage in informed speculation about his style on the basis of both his own textual descriptions in his autobiography and the few remaining photographic evidences of his early paintings.

Evidently, Pang’s primary output from this time was portraiture, either self- or of others. The only surviving one is an oil on canvas at the Changshu Pang Xunqin Memorial Museum, simply titled *Portrait* (Fig. 7). It depicts an elderly bespectacled Parisian female in a contemplative mood. The portrait reveals Pang’s well-developed sketching skills by his having captured the sitter’s essential features and mood. With a few outlines and scattered dabs of color, her facial features are vividly delineated; her age is betrayed via her double chin and lined forehead and the deep frown between her eyebrows, all revealing her hard and burdened life. The intensity of her stare, animated by the artist, provides evidence of her strong personality, a stubborn, no-nonsense type. During his Parisian years, Pang produced many portraiture sketches for friends and for his landlady and her relatives.⁸³ This portrait may have been part of this group of sketches. It is perhaps a rough sketch of the artist’s landlady, Mrs. Van Denboschu, since he was

⁸² Partha Mitter, *The Triumph of Modernism: India’s Artists and the Avant-garde 1922-1947* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2007), 47.

⁸³ Pang’s Memoir, 94.

occasionally asked to paint her relatives. Very likely Pang may have sketched her as well. Nevertheless, the identity of the sitter remains a mystery.

Another portrait of a French woman is identified as *J.A.B. Seniorita* (Fig. 8). It was perhaps painted between 1927 and 1929 in Paris. A black and white photograph of this portrait was published in the October, 1932, issue of *Les Contemporaines* in Shanghai. Who was J.A.B. Seniorita? Pang did not mention this name in his autobiography. The style of this portrait has more affinity with Fauvism because of its blocks of colors. However, in the absence of a colored print, it is hard to imagine what colors he utilized for her skin tones and her clothing. She has dark hair tied back, making her look more like a Spanish woman than a Parisian, and her dark colored vest contrasts sharply with her pale skin tone. Her sleeveless, low-cut vest and a large left earring suggest her erotic unconventionality. Her eyes are the best rendered feature, speaking to her serious manner and her deep concentration. Her tightly sealed and heavily colored lips subsume her exotic, yet unyielding façade. Highly realistic, this portrait provides evidence of Pang Xunqin's solid training in "true to life" realism. Simultaneously, however, the deliberately flattened figure suggests Pang's affinity with the contemporary mode of representation. Compared to the previous portrait, whose paints were applied more loosely and sketchily, his portrait of *J.A.B. Seniorita* appears more finished and its colors more evenly layered, and the woman's voluminous body is more anchored in the space.

Inspired by the *Volga Burlak's Song*, the well-known Russian folk song he heard in a Paris movie theater, Pang created an oil painting titled *Barge-Hauler, Qianfu* in Chinese. He had seen boatmen hauling boats on the banks of the river in his hometown,

Changshu. Inspired by both his reminiscence of those hometown boatmen and the Russian folk song, he painted this subject before he had heard of and been exposed to the work of the Russian painter Ilya Yefimovich Repin (1844-1930) and his famous painting of the *Burlaks on Volga* (1870-1873). Pang was quite proud of this painting which hung in his Paris apartment sometime before 1926 and 1927.⁸⁴ A young American painter, introduced by Pang's Czech friend, was impressed by the work, and he subsequently invited Pang to his apartment to have coffee and show Pang some of his own paintings, something which affected Pang deeply. Pang felt inadequate and undisciplined compared to this young American painter who was far more prolific than himself.⁸⁵

In the spring of 1927, Pang was bed-ridden for nearly a month by a severe illness.⁸⁶ A small oil composition titled *Death*, subtitled “only death could eliminate all the pains,” was conceived during his recovery, perhaps out of a sense of desolation or desperation.⁸⁷ Pang recalls in his memoir that *Death* was a non-figurative painting, containing forty-five degree triangles, which he characterized as mountain-shaped patterns (*shan wen*) reminiscent of lines of dog teeth, projecting both upward and downward. The painting also featured swirls starting with a black dot in the center with lots of weaving patterns moving diagonally from the center. According to Pang, the mountain-shaped lines and zigzag weaving lines suggest the unpredictable and precarious upward-downward pattern of life, all of which would disappear as life draws to a close. He used white to represent the endless emotions and constant thoughts swaying through

⁸⁴ Pang's Memoir, 64, it was perhaps painted between 1926 and 1927.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 66. Pang was impressed by this young American artist, who according to him, worked very hard in Paris, producing a large number of sketches, pen drawings, and oil and water color paintings which Pang saw in his studio.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 70 – 71. Pang described vividly how his landlady, a poor working-class woman who had lost her own son due to an illness, nursed him back to health.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 80.

his mind because Pang believed that white color alone could accurately depict our inexhaustible thought and emotion. This abstract painting caught the attention of many of his friends; some referred to the painting as a “budding” of “philosophic surrealism.”⁸⁸

Surrealism was the latest new trend in Paris as evidenced by the *Manifeste du Surréalisme* published in 1924 and the opening of the first group exhibition of the Surrealists at the Gallery Pierre in November of 1925.⁸⁹ In 1927, Surrealism was still at the height of its momentum. In his *Death* painting, Pang was perhaps attempting to experiment with this latest stylistic trend which focused on expressing, in Andre Breton’s words, a “pure psychic automatism.” By embracing the enigmatic and mysterious world that was defiant of reason, Pang’s *Death* perhaps fit into that world seamlessly. Not surprisingly, Pang’s friends who perhaps were all experiencing some doses of surrealism at the time, flocked to his studio to see this particular work, among them a German poet, Günter Eich, and a French journalist, Fernande Marceau.⁹⁰

Günter Eich, Pang’s German poet friend, was an instrumental figure in his last Parisian years. As Pang remembered, in 1928, they sometimes spent three or four evenings together weekly, one composing in lines and the other in words. Günter Eich frequently offered Pang a few lines of a poem as an inspiration or as a topic which he could then capture in his sketches. Pang considered this as an excellent inspiration for a

⁸⁸ Pang used in his memoir, 80, the phrase: zheli xing de chaoxianshi zhuyi.

⁸⁹ Fraquelli Simonetta, “Montparnasse and the Right Bank: Myth and Reality,” in *Paris, Capital of the Arts 1900-1968* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2002), 110.

⁹⁰ Pang’s Memoir, 81. On September 24, 1984, six months before he passed away in March 1985, Pang wrote in his notebook: “some names must be remembered: Günter Eich, Van Denboschu, Guido Woltfarth Terlen, Fernande Marceau, E. O. Frith, Mme. Meron, Andre Jeanne, Rosemary Abina, Bedard Lewy, Miallis Mennon (India).” Pang Tao, ed., *Hiunkin Pang*, 9, 12.

quick sketch. Baudelaire's poetry was their favorite and most quoted work.⁹¹ Pang immensely enjoyed this practice; unfortunately, none of the sketches seem to have survived.⁹²

A surviving and recently surfaced watercolor, titled *Mother and Son* (Fig. 9), most likely painted between 1928 and 1929, provides a rare insight into Pang's experimental evocation of Cubism.⁹³ If Pang tried out Surrealism in his painting, *Death*, and then for the painting *Mother and Son*, the cubic composition is the most conspicuous. Pang repeatedly identified Picasso as his most admired artist, although not because of his paintings, but rather because of Picasso's audacity in rejecting his own previously developed styles and in his constant search for new modes of expression.⁹⁴ *Mother and Son*, a gift to a Parisian friend, attests to Pang's understanding of Cubism; he deconstructed a familiar subject, the traditional Western Madonna icon, and reconstructed a cubic alternative to shift and challenge our perception.

Dan Franck in his *The Bohemians* pictured the life at Montparnasse in this way, "In the twenties, life in Montparnasse resembled a *son et lumière* show, filled with

⁹¹ Günter Eich became a well-known poet after the World War II. For more on Günter Eich, see Matthew Philpotts, *The Margins of Dictatorship: Assent and Dissent in the Work of Günter Eich and Bertolt Brecht* (Oxford: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003) and G. R. Cuomo, "Opposition or Opportunism? Günter Eich's Status as Inner Emigrant," in N. Donahue and D. Kirchner, eds., *Flight of Fantasy* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005), 176-87.

⁹² Pang's Memoir, 87 and *Pang Xunqin Wenxuan* (2007), 89. He considered this practice which honors the ability to respond quickly to a theme to be essential for students studying design. Pang became familiar with Baudelaire's poetry and its importance in spearheading French modernity. Günter Eich and Pang spent Pang's last Christmas (1928) in Paris together.

⁹³ It must have been created after he entered the Académie de la Grande Chaumière in 1927, and it was a farewell gift to a friend, according to the signed message written by Pang himself in French. The translation is, according to Pang Tao's source: "It is our fate that we meet and it's our fate that we have to be apart. The painting is dedicated to our friendship and will always belong to Miss Janette Tauchaux." Pang Tao, ed., *Pang Hiunkin*, 13.

⁹⁴ Pang's Memoir, 86

friends, social occasions, extravagant balls and parties.”⁹⁵ Pang seemingly enjoyed this kind of Bohemian Parisian life. He often frequented movie theaters and on occasion attended operas and concerts which offered cheaper tickets to artists. He also liked to hang around in coffee shops and bars doing sketches while enjoying a glass of red wine or a cup of coffee and a croissant.⁹⁶ *The Café* (*Kafei dian*, Fig. 10), published in the periodical, *Nanhua wenyi* (Culture and Art of Southern China) 1932, may have epitomized Pang’s experience with the cafés and bars.⁹⁷ The original painting did not survive, and the extant black and white reproduction can hardly do justice to the quality of the work. Pang Xunqin’s daughter, Pang Tao, remembered a painting, about 150 cm x 100cm in size, that hung in their house in Chengdu while they were living there during the war (1940-1945). Many visitors to their home had seen the painting.⁹⁸ She recalled that quite a few figures were depicted in the work. Kiki (Jiji by Pang Tao), the famed muse for the artists of Montparnasse, was in the middle, sitting on the lap of a male artist, and Pang Xunqin put himself at the back of the crowds.⁹⁹ In this black and white reproduction, nine figures are discernable, six men and three females. A female with Kiki’s characteristic hair style, is dressed in a low-cut vest with her pale white arms exposed; she sits on the lap of a man, her left arm touches the edge of a coffee table, and her right arm embraces the man’s shoulder. She occupies the central plane of the painting, and the male slightly to the left resembles the Japanese artist Fujita, identifiable by his signature mustache.

⁹⁵ Dan Franck, *The Bohemians: The Birth of Modern Art, Paris, 1900–1930* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001), 333.

⁹⁶ Pang’s Memoir, 78, 81.

⁹⁷ *Nanhua wenyi* (Culture and Art of Southern China) 1, no. 15 (August 1, 1932): no pagination.

⁹⁸ Pang Tao remembers that the painting was destroyed in the 1960s. *Pang Xunqin yanjiu wenji* (2007), 862.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

Fujita was perhaps the most visible Asian artist in the Paris of the twenties. His liaison with Kiki, who acted as his model, resulted in a voluptuous painting featuring Kiki in the reclining pose of Manet's *Olympia*. Titled *Reclining Nude with Liberty-Print Cloth* (1922), the work instantaneously became the talk of the town.¹⁰⁰ Pang must have rubbed shoulders in coffee shops of Montparnasse with Fujita, who would be no stranger to the Asian expatriates in Paris. He was the one Asian who had achieved a seat in the L'École de Paris and made himself famous in the Parisian world of art.

Pang was often mistaken by Parisians as Japanese, a misidentification he found annoying.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, Pang's painting featuring Kiki and Fujita as the key protagonists epitomizes the familiar Parisian scene in Montparnasse with which he came to identify himself. In this painting, a man who resembles Pang himself is sitting at the far right corner; he seems to be smoking a cigar. A female figure sits across his coffee table, drinking a cup of the beverage. Next to Pang, a bartender dressed in a white tuxedo is taking an order from a customer whose profile seems to be subtly reminiscent of Picasso. Sitting alone in the middle ground next to Kiki is a man with a bow tie. His chin is supported by his left arm which is leaning on a coffee table, a typical melancholy gesture. In the foreground, a female is leaving the café or the canvas; only her upper body from the waist up is depicted and she seems to be walking away from the scene. Behind

¹⁰⁰ Valérie Bougault, *Paris Montparnasse: The Heyday of Modern Art, 1910–1940*, 125-129.

¹⁰¹ Pang mentioned a few times in his memoir as he ran into Kees van Dongen on the streets of Montparnasse, he was often mistaken as Japanese. 79-80. Possibly, because of Fujita's fame, Chinese artists in Paris were readily identified by Parisians as Japanese. Due to the long history of cultural encounters between China and Japan dating back to the 7th century, the Chinese had traditionally regarded themselves as the "teachers" of the Japanese; however, when the Japanese government exerted military aggression against Chinese territories in the late 19th and the early 20th century, the Sino-Japanese relationship became more antagonistic and increasingly complicated. The Chinese attitude toward being misidentified as Japanese reflects a mixed feeling of humiliation and contempt toward Japanese military dominance in Asia and also an inherent view of cultural supremacy held by most Chinese over Japan.

her, slightly to the right, a coffee table obstructs a small bearded figure looking in the direction of the departing woman. In this deliberately flattened and patterned composition in which figures are piled up vertically, Pang Xunqin has staged a Parisian drama of artists: the loner, the melancholy, the dilettante, and the spectator in a café.

Cafés or bars were places where Montparnasse artists gathered to converse about their art or any subject that interested them and, most importantly, to interact with other like-minded artists, poets, dancers, singers, or art critics and art dealers.¹⁰² Le Dôme was known to be the gathering place for academia artists, whereas La Coupole attracted mostly the avant-gardes, with Picasso, Kees van Dongen, Kisling, and Utrillo often being seen there. Modigliani, Ortiz de Zarate, and Kiki frequented La Rotonde, making it “the artistic hub of Montparnasse.”¹⁰³ In Hemingway’s words; “Montparnasse for this purpose means the cafés and the restaurants where people are seen in public.”¹⁰⁴

Pang retained fond memories of Parisian cafés. “A cup of coffee and two pieces of croissant could pass as a meal for a poor artist,” his memoir recalled.¹⁰⁵ Pang painted numerous paintings of Parisian café scenes, of which none of the originals has survived. A black and white reproduction of the same subject that has survived on a page of *Yishu xunkan* (*L’Art* 1932) attests his fondness of the café scenes.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Pang recalls that in a social gathering he once run into Fernard Léger who approached Pang, intending to sketch a portrait of Pang. Pang, aware of his fame, agreed to pose for him, but Léger wasted three pieces of paper and more than an hour before finally sketching out a profile of Pang which hardly impressed him. In return, Pang took ten minutes to finish a sketch of Léger in profile. Léger was quite impressed by Pang’s deft sketching skills and surprised to know Pang was only an art student. Pang’s Memoir, 77.

¹⁰³ Bougault, 131-2, and Pang’s Memoir, 72.

¹⁰⁴ Ernest Hemingway, “Introduction,” in Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, ed., *Kiki’s Memiors*, trans. Samuel Putnam (Hopewell, N.J.: The Ecco Press, 1996), 49.

¹⁰⁵ Pang’s Memoir, 78.

¹⁰⁶ *Yishu xunkan* (*L’Art*) 1, no. 3, September 21, 1932.

The Café (Fig. 11 and 12) features a profiled female bartender leaning on a counter, while behind her, towards the right corner, sits a lone figure of undeterminable gender. It is interesting to note that the lone sitter in the left corner is reminiscent of the one also sitting in the left corner in the previously discussed painting, *The Café*. Off to the left of the bartender, on the back wall, hangs a small framed painting, and the floor is patterned, punctuated by dark and light square shapes. The deliberately flat composition and decorative patterning hints at Fauvism.

As Pang recalled in his memoirs, in 1928 a small café opened on Rue St. Michel behind the Luxembourg Garden. The seats were lined up like train seats, one behind another; the establishment could accommodate six or seven couples. Pang was a frequent visitor there and often was greeted by a male bartender. Pang and his German poet friend Günter Eich also frequented a nearby café on Rue Monge, near where Pang lived. They usually stood to drink their coffee rather than pay more to sit down. Cafés or bars were places that poor artists of Montparnasse frequented to escape their cold, dark, and often inadequate studios. Although Pang's *The Café* is colorless in its printed version, its composition recalls Manet's painting of *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* (1882). Both of them depict a female bartender serving drinks to her customers; Pang's bartender is in silhouette, while Manet's confronts her viewers.¹⁰⁷ However, Pang's more sketchy finished product exudes a sense of desolation and despair.

A Sad Song (Fig. 13 and 14), another black and white sketch surviving only in print, depicts a couple in a bedroom.¹⁰⁸ The woman is nude, sitting on a chair, her breasts

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 81.

¹⁰⁸ *A Sad Melody (Beiqu)*, 1920s was published in *Shidai huabao (Time Pictorial)* 3, no. 4, October 16, 1932. A few other sketches of nude figures by Pang can be found in Pang Tao, ed., *Hiunkin Pang*, 13.

and her pubic hair conspicuously visible. The contours of her shoulders and hip were deliberately amplified with a swelling stroke. A gramophone, situated on the right side of a table behind the nude woman, is perhaps playing a sad song, thus perhaps, inspiring the title. On the left side of the table sits an empty wine glass. In the opposite side of the room is a man whose head is drooping onto his left arm, which is leaning on a high counter top. His eyes are somewhat closed, perhaps affected by the “sad song” playing on the gramophone. Two vaguely discernable figures who resemble hotel concierges are in the background, standing behind a counter. The setting for this painting is unknown. It must have been quickly sketched, given its abbreviated details and roughness. The sentiment of desolation and despair looms large in the room despite the economy of lines and colors characteristic of Pang’s work.

Both *The Café* and *A Sad Song* must have been painted between 1927 and 1929, Pang’s last two years in Paris. This was a time when Pang continued to mingle with other expatriate artists, but at the same time he also interacted with ordinary Parisians. One of them was an engineer named Guido Woltfarth Terlen whom he met at Asnières. Terlen introduced Pang to the impoverished section of the Latin Quarter where he saw desperate prostitutes and drunken workers in the so-called “underground cafés.” These two paintings may have been autobiographical, reflecting Pang’s own desolation at a time when he was increasingly overwhelmed by a flood of avant-garde currents connected with L’École de Paris and simultaneously struggling in search of his own visual voice.¹⁰⁹ He was torn between staying in Paris or returning to China.

¹⁰⁹ Pang’s Memoir, 89-90.

It seems that he reached his decision to return to his homeland after attending a performance by a French dancer who, inspired by Hindu dance, held forth on a stage heavily perfumed with incense.¹¹⁰ “As the dancer turns,” Pang wrote in the 1940s, “the fragrant perfume permeates in the air, intoxicating and reminding me of the aroma of Chinese sandal wood and the scent of my hometown. The sound of her ankle bells recalls the bell swaying gently in the wind on my hometown’s pagoda and the sound of oars swaying by hometown boat girls. The sound of a flute is piecing my heart like a snake. If the land underneath my feet were the land of China, I would prostrate as if a child fell into the embrace of his mother. If the soil underneath my feet were Chinese soil, I would hold it in my palm, smell the fragrance. . . . I miss home, I miss the motherland.”¹¹¹

This sensual performance inspired his painting titled *A Step of Indian Dance*. Pang remembered that the dancer’s every movement was choreographed in a form of “structural beauty (*zaoxing mei*).”¹¹² He was attempting to realize this “structural beauty” in a visual language, in order to graphically convey a sense of the sound, the rhythm punctuated by the dancer’s ankle bells, and the accompanying drums. In 1928 Pang sent this painting to the Autumn Salon, which, however, rejected it.¹¹³

Like most of Pang’s other paintings, *A Step of Indian Dance* perished without trace during the years of war and political upheaval. But some stylistic clues to the nature of that lost painting are suggested by a surviving black and white photograph of another of Pang’s paintings inspired by that evocative subject, dance: his *Spanish Dance* (Fig. 15),

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 84, Pang remembered the French dancer’s name in his memoir and transliterated her name into Chinese as Ni’aotai yiaujia. The French spelling for her name is yet to be found.

¹¹¹ Reprinted in *Pang Xunqin wenxuan* (2007), 85. The original was published in *Huaxi wanbao*, April, 26, 1944. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.

¹¹² Here, *zaoxing* in Pang’s original Chinese connotes building (*zao*) a composition of geometric shapes (*xing*) to convey a sense of beauty.

¹¹³ Pang’s Memoir, 85.

which is dated 1931.¹¹⁴ It was shown at Pang's first solo exhibition in Shanghai and purchased by then-famous restaurant owner of Guansheng Yuan, Xi Guansheng.¹¹⁵ This painting survives in print in the *Liangyou Pictorial*, November issue of 1932. In this rendition, Pang captured the essence of the Spanish tango pose. The dancer, so Pang remembered, is covered in an elaborate shawl painted in bright red with huge flower motifs. A huge peony-like red flower is pinned to her hair above her right ear. She is turned slightly, with her right shoulder being raised up in tandem with her tango step to the forward right. Her exotic pose and alluring and flirtatious demeanor, typical of a tango dancer, was encapsulated by Pang in a few broad strokes and patches of provocative colors. The billowing lace along the border of the dancer's shawl suggests her quick and abrupt movements.

Dance performance was an important part of the contemporary Parisian ambience, for Paris was where the modern dance movement took shape. It was spearheaded by the infamous Isadora Duncan, the so-called mother of modern dance, who was then living in Paris. A breakaway from the classical ballet formalism, Duncan's idiosyncratic choreography sought to reduce dance movements to a few spontaneous gestures and postures, much like the modernists' hallmarks of minimalism and pure and free expression.¹¹⁶ Picasso once designed "huge skyscraper-like Cubist constructions" as the costumes for Diaghilev's modernism-inspired performance of *Parade*.¹¹⁷ Pang Xunqin also occasionally designed costumes for Parisian dancers, and one of the outfits he

¹¹⁴ *Spanish Dance*, published in *Liangyou* 71, November, 1932.

¹¹⁵ Pang's Memoir, 85. When Pang Xuanqin last saw the painting of the *Spanish Dancer*, it hung on the wall of Guansheng Yuan at Hankou during the war in 1940.

¹¹⁶ Pang recalled in 1943 having read Duncan's autobiography during the early 1930s or late 1920s. *Pang Xunqin Wenxuan*, 46, originally published in *Zhongyang rebao*, Chengdu, September, 12, 1943.

¹¹⁷ Jack Anderson, *Dance* (New York: Newsweek Books, 1974), 83.

designed was adopted by a well-known Moulin Rouge dancer.¹¹⁸ The creators of modern dance and modern art often collaborated. In the 1920s, the big star was the exotic African-American Josephine Baker, whose African-inspired dances took Paris by storm. Modern dance has absorbed and assimilated aspects of Indian, Egyptian, and African dance forms. Josephine Baker's African-inspired 1925 performance in the prestigious Theater des Champ Elysées caused a sensation in Paris and her dancing group La Revue Negre was invited to perform at the closing ceremony for the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes* on November 7, 1925.¹¹⁹ Pang had attended that exposition in October, upon arriving in Paris.¹²⁰ Whether he attended the exposition's closing ceremony is not known, but Pang must have been aware of the popularity of Baker's jazz-infused dance that captivated the city. Pang saw quite a few dance performances, particularly the French dancer Niaotai yiaojia's. Her India-inspired performances had sparked Pang's imagination and even inspired his interest in studying the history of traditional Chinese Han dance.¹²¹ His exposure to the Parisian dance scenes may have been at the root of his subsequent interest in dance and dance history, for in the 1940s, while in the Chinese hinterland, he created a series of paintings featured Tang-style dancing figures performing with their long ribbons in a linear fashion that was inspired by Dunhuang murals (Fig. 16 and 17).¹²²

¹¹⁸ Pang's Memoir, 69.

¹¹⁹ Simonetta Fraquelli, "Montparnasse and the Right Bank: Myth and Reality," in *Capital of the Arts 1900-1968* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2002), 109-110.

¹²⁰ Pang had arrived in Paris in September of 1925, just in time to view the exposition, which impressed him immensely and initiated his interest in modern design. Although unconfirmed, it is unlikely that he attended the closing ceremony, but he could have been aware of the sweeping popularity of Baker's jazz-infused dance in Paris.

¹²¹ *Pang Xunqin Wenxuan*, 46, originally published in *Zhongyang rebao*, Chengdu, September, 12, 1943.

¹²² *Pang Xunqin Wenxuan*, 46, originally published in *Zhongyang rebao*, Chengdu, September, 12, 1943.

Pang wrote that his interest in Tang dance was not coincidental; he had read Duncan's autobiography more

It was Mary Wigman's farewell dance performance that brought Pang Xunqin to Berlin in late 1929.¹²³ This is how Pang remembered Wigman's dance in his memoir a half century later: "Barefoot and unadorned, clad in a long robe, she began to dance like the early sun that has risen above the horizon. All living beings on earth now came to life. The drumbeats quickened; the dance movements changed from an expression of gentle emotions into an expression of strength."¹²⁴ Such Duncan-like modern movements inspired Pang to paint the now-lost *Wigman Dancing* in the style of "structuralism," and in 1932 it still hung in the lounge of his studio on Rue Marcel Tillot (Xingang lu), Shanghai.¹²⁵ Pang's interest in dance continued way into the 1940s.

Pang Xunqin's Berlin visit in 1929 had brought him to visit the Bauhaus-inspired architecture in the suburbs, and he toured a few private residential structures featuring its utilitarian style. Pang commented, "The use of flat rooftop provided a great deal of freedom for the overall design. Inside, the décor represented a complete break from tradition. The development of the steel and glass industries meant that a lot of glass was used, bringing about a radical change in the interior lighting of a building, and altering the relationship between interior and exterior."¹²⁶ Pang was well aware of the importance of the Bauhaus in the history of modern design, and perhaps his idea of establishing a Bauhaus-type design school in China took a root during this visit.

than ten years earlier and had seen Mary Wigman's dance in Berlin and many performances of the French dancer Ni'aotai yiaojia. He even wished to study the lost history of Han dance.

¹²³ Pang's Memoir, 111. "I went to Berlin primarily for Mary Wigman's farewell performance," quoted in Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, and Zheng Shengtian, eds., *Shanghai Modern: 1919 – 1945* (Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2004), 254.

¹²⁴ Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, and Zheng Shengtian, eds., *Shanghai Modern: 1919 – 1945*, 256.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 256, and "The ultimate fate of the painting is now unknown to me," in Pang's Memoir, 112.

¹²⁶ Pang's Memoir, 112, and Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, and Zheng Shengtian, eds., *Shanghai Modern: 1919 – 1945*, 256.

While in Berlin he visited the National Gallery, where he viewed works by his favorite artist, Paul Klee (1879-1940). Pang's initial exposure to Klee occurred in Paris, where he attended a gallery show featuring the artist's works. It is only natural that Pang was drawn to Klee's style. Pang was familiar with Klee's association with the Bauhaus and the avant-gardes of his time. At the gallery, Pang also viewed paintings by Lovis Corinth (1858-1925) and Oskar Kokoschka (1886-1980). Corinth's painting of his mother (1909) especially impressed him.¹²⁷

At the National Gallery, Pang also explored the ancient Greek and Egyptian collections. The linear execution of the drawings on Greek vases left a deep imprint on him. In the 1940s, when wartime conditions deprived him of painting tools, Pang adopted a similar kind of linear execution using Chinese brushes to draw Dunhuang-inspired Tang dances (Fig. 18). He also designed a vase in the shape of Greek amphora, but in this instance decorated with two figures of Chinese archers quoted from Han ceramic motifs (Fig. 19). Another German cultural site, Cologne Cathedral, made him aware of the stylistic, structural, and decorative differences between the French and the German Gothic cathedrals.¹²⁸

Both Pang's exposure to classical Western art in Paris and Berlin and his experience of living in the midst of Montparnasse avant-gardes were instrumental in shaping his development into the artist he would become. As Pang's predecessor Chagall tellingly observed, "No academy could have possibly taught me what I discovered by

¹²⁷ Pang's Memoir, 115, and Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, and Zheng Shengtian, eds., *Shanghai Modern: 1919 - 1945*, 258.

¹²⁸ Pang's Memoir, 114 – 6.

soaking up Paris with its exhibitions, galleries and museums.”¹²⁹ Pang Xunqin began immersing himself in museums, salons, and exhibitions as soon as he arrived in Paris.¹³⁰ He sketched after Sandro Botticelli (1445-1510) and Pierre Puvis de Chavannes (1824-98) at the Louvre and attended numerous salon shows.¹³¹ Although mostly drawn to the Renaissance artists, particularly Botticelli, Pang Xunqin did not follow the path of academic realism; rather he experimented with the avant-garde inclined Symbolism, Surrealism, Cubism, and Fauvism.

The uninhibited avant-garde Chang Yu, who cast more direct artistic influence upon Pang, did not persuade Pang to stay in Paris.¹³² In contrast to Chang Yu, who perhaps felt more at home in Paris than his home country, Pang, sentimental by nature, could never bring himself to sever his umbilical cord with the “motherland,” and Pang was destined to return to her arms. To some extent, his sentimental and idealistic nature also paved the way for his tragedy: the painful experience of his later years when the “motherland” he could not live without was unable to return the kind love he lavished upon her. Yet, to the end, Pang remained a pure idealist. On the other side of the Atlantic, Chang Yu’s choice to lead an expatriate life in Paris and his inevitable disassociation with China did not bring him glory or fame either. Perhaps it is the tragedy of this generation of Chinese artists like Pang and Chang, who lived a marginalized life, whether defined by geography, culture, or artistic style.

¹²⁹ Chagall, quoted in Valérie Bougault, *Paris Montparnasse: The Heyday of Modern Art, 1910–1940*, 114.

¹³⁰ Pang’s Memoir, 60.

¹³¹ Ibid., 57.

¹³² Pang visited Chang Yu’s spacious, but empty studio. He wrote in his memoir that sketches of portraits and nude figures were piled up and pushed to one corner. Some of the sketches were done in pen, but most of them were drawn with the Chinese brush. Pang thought Chang’s unique linear delineation was better than that of Tsuguharu Fujita, who was then extremely famous in Paris. However, Chang Yu was a struggling artist and sometimes he would run out of money to buy oil paint. Pang’s Memoir, 60-2.

Pang spent the Christmas of 1929 and the New Year of 1930 on a ship returning to China, in the company of his treasured mandolin bearing the names of his friends from all over the world. He docked in Shanghai in January 1930.

Chapter Conclusion

Upon leaving Paris, Pang's artistic style was still immature, bearing the marks of the then-contemporary styles that he had absorbed and digested. He had, however, built up a repository of resources that he could later decide to preserve or to discard. The corpus of such early drawings, sketches, and oil paintings documents Pang's versatility and the solid nature of his training, and the variety of styles and the evidence of Fauvism, Cubism, and Surrealism in his work testifies to his interest in the avant-gardes and his experimental inclination. Although his choice of subject matter is limited mainly to portraiture, nudes, dancers, and café scenes, the materials are capable of demonstrating his alignment with the *École of Paris*, whose followers similarly focused on painting Parisian scenes, particularly the cafés, the dancing halls, and the nudes. Pang went to Paris as a student and remained a student, ever absorbent and acutely open-minded to the endlessly fluctuating scene of the Parisian art world. At the same time he was keenly aware of the missing elements, the rich artistic tradition of his home culture, without which, he could never have become whole or grown to maturity.

One day in October, 1929, when Pang announced to his expatriate friends at one of their gatherings his decision to return to China, the room fell to silence. It was his Czech friend, Lévy, who shouted, "All right, you go back to China, I go back to Prague. In the future, you would ship Chinese art works to Prague; I would transport works of

Czech artists to China; it is a deal.”¹³³ The silence was broken by laughter. Recalling this farewell episode with considerable nostalgia in 1944, during World War II, when China was still deeply entrenched in the Sino-Japanese War, Pang wrote, “We all linked our hands tightly together in a circle; among us were French, German, Polish, Russian, American, Chinese, Czech, and Malaysian. Experiencing this camaraderie, anybody would believe in the original love of humanity and the interconnectedness of all cultures.”¹³⁴

Framed around the “minor transnationalism” mediated by Pang Xunqin’s experiences in Paris, this chapter attempts to move beyond the binary of the center and the peripheral. As literary scholars Shih and Lionnet have argued,

The Minor transnationalism is perhaps the mode in which the traumas of colonial, imperial, and global hegemonies as well as the affective dimensions of transcolonial solidarities continue to work themselves out and produce new possibilities. Beyond the nostalgic and the melancholic, these solidarities point to ways of becoming more engaged with present and future promises of transformation through active participation in the production of local knowledge and global cultures.¹³⁵

Pang resembled many Asian and Central and Eastern European artists who came to Paris in the 1920s and 1930s and who eventually returned to their home countries to find the other missing elements and simultaneously extended the vibrant artistic spirit of avant-gardes to other parts of the world. The group of Chinese, Japanese, and Indian avant-gardes, in contrast to the ones who were imbued with the academic tradition of European art, returned home with their interpretations of “modern” art and avant-gardism, thereby opening up multiple centers of avant-garde arts: in Shanghai, Tokyo, Calcutta,

¹³³ From Pang Xunqin’s essay titled “An Antique Chair,” written for *Huaxi wanbao* (Evening paper of Huanxi), April 26, 1944. Reprinted in Pang Tao, ed., *Pang Xunqin wenxuan* (Selected essays of Pang Xunqin) (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2007), 86.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Shih and Lionnet, “Introduction,” in Shu-mei Shih and Françoise Lionnet, eds., *Minor Transnationalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 21.

and Bombay, to name the few most conspicuous places.¹³⁶ This global expansion of avant-gardism did not take the form of center-radiating-to-the peripheries, as argued by Partha Mitter in his seminal book *The Triumph of Modernism: India's Artists and the Avant-garde*. The global expansion of avant-gardes is characterized by each center's weaving their own patterns into the large tapestry of global modernism and avant-gardism. Pang Xunqin played a significant role in contributing to this tapestry and came to define the Shanghai-style of metropolitan avant-gardes.

¹³⁶ Partha Mitter, *The Triumph of Modernism: India's Artists and the Avant-garde 1922-1947*, 10-13.

Chapter 2 – From Paris to Shanghai - Metropolitan vs. Colonial Modernism: Pang Xunqin and the Juelanshe (The Storm and Stress Society), 1930-1935

Shanghai is a place that we all admire. Although we are not given a chance to live in Paris, which is a city of art, at least, in China, we have to be in Shanghai, which is the hub of the newly emerging art. It has a vibrant spirit, and one can easily experience all kinds of new excitement. – Ni Yide, 1932.

Identity Crisis (1930-1932)

This photo (Fig.20) taken in October 1932 shows a group of smartly dressed young men in trendy Western suits looking, in art historian Michael Sullivan's words, as if "they had just stepped off the boat from Marseilles".¹³⁷ These were the original members of the Juelanshe (the Storm and Stress Society) posing for their inaugural exhibition in Shanghai. Notice that the only member who is not dressed in a Western suit is Pang Xunqin; he is wearing a Chinese long gown (*chang pao*) as he stands in the far left corner, smiling and unassuming. The fact is that in this group Pang is the only one who had actually walked away from Marseilles after a four-year sojourn in Paris and returned to Shanghai in 1930.¹³⁸ Pang Xunqin in his *chang pao* seems in this photo to contrast sharply with what Ni Yide (1901-1970), the Juelanshe's co-founder, had described as his initial impression of Pang. Ni noted, "After Pang returned to Shanghai, he preserved the look of a Parisian artist, with his dark velvet coat, slightly lopsided hat, hands in his trouser pockets, disheveled long hair and pipe always clamped in his mouth."¹³⁹ Pang's Parisian look described by Ni Yide is perhaps preserved in this 1929 self portrait (Fig. 21). Here, Pang's hat is lopsided, he is wearing a dark coat, and his

¹³⁷Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 63.

¹³⁸ Pang Xunqin spent the Christmas of 1929 and the New Year of 1930 on board a ship going to China, presumably arriving Shanghai in early January, 1930. *Pang Xunqin Wenxuan*, 211.

¹³⁹ Ni Yide, "Yiyuan jiaoyou ji (Traveling notes in the garden of art)," *Qingnian Jie* 8, no. 3, (October 1935): 66. The English translation is from Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, and Zheng Shengtian, eds., *Shanghai Modern: 1919-1945* (Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2004), 237.

hands are partly in his coat pockets. He indeed wears an air of Paris. The velvet hat was a gift from a French duke, an old aristocrat, who, according to Pang, intended to contract with Pang to paint for him and promote his paintings for sale. Although Pang rejected the duke's offer, he retained the hat.¹⁴⁰ The painting was presumably completed in 1929 when Pang was still in Paris.¹⁴¹ A year later, 1930, Pang returned to his hometown, Changshu, a small idyllic lake town in Jiangsu province, about a two-hour boat ride from Shanghai. In his hometown, he painted an entirely different self-portrait (Fig. 22), one in which he personified himself as a Chinese Confucian scholar, holding a book. This iconic scholar portraiture is, to some extent, reminiscent of a self-portrait by the late Ming painter Shi Tao (Fig. 23).¹⁴² Pang Xunqin's self imaging as a Parisian bourgeois (Fig. 21, 1929) on the one hand and as a Confucian scholar (Fig. 22, 1930) on the other might suggest his contemporary ambivalence and the fragility of his identity. These two identities, one he grew to camouflage in the West and the other he was so eager to embrace after his return, could not have been more contradictory and irreconcilable at this point of Pang's life. It seemed he was determined to merge or hybridize them.

As soon as Pang Xunqin returned to his hometown Changshu in early 1930, he set aside his foreign books and immersed himself in the thread-bound books on Chinese art theory and history. He also examined Ming and Qing paintings borrowed from family libraries and his relatives' collections. He took off his Western suit, put on his Chinese

¹⁴⁰ Pang's Memoir, 82. Pang Xunqin refused the duke's offer. It was then common in Paris that an artist would work for a contractor who would control the artist's entire production and sales, and even, to a degree, dictate the artist's style of painting to suit the market.

¹⁴¹ Most likely this self-portrait was painted in 1929 in Paris. In his memoir, Pang remembers that the first oil painting after acquiring his own studio at his landlord's house in Asnières is a portrait of himself wearing a wide-brimmed black velvet hat. Pang's Memoir, 95.

¹⁴² The reproduction of Shitao's self-portrait can be found in Jonathan Hay's *Shitao: Painting and Modernity in Early Qing China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 116.

chang pao, and picked up his Chinese brush, using Chinese ink on rice paper to practice Chinese paintings. None of his Chinese-style paintings from this period has survived. He did mention one painting of “a Chinese beauty (*meiren tu*)” that was given to a relative, but later stolen. It was during this time that Pang created the aforementioned portrait of himself dressed in a Confucian scholar’s attire.¹⁴³

Pang immersed himself in catching up on Chinese classical writings about art. He kept detailed notes of his readings, which were subsequently published as *Xunqin’s Random Writing* in 1932 after he moved to Shanghai.¹⁴⁴ His notes freely cited Xie He (479-502) and Guo Ruoxu (Northern Song, 11th Century), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), and Pablo Picasso (1881-1973). A believer in Kant’s idea that “the subliminal beauty of art is the absolute freedom,” Pang championed the art of self-expression and artistic candor in his writings. He acknowledged the value of realist art of the past but questioned its validity in the age of photography. He believed artists should possess both the passion and the technical skills necessary for their art.¹⁴⁵ Although some of his thoughts were random and at times relatively naïve, they reflected his fundamental beliefs in artistic freedom and self-expression. Pang was also at ease moving from the topic of Western classical music to that of poetry, from poetry to dance, and from Greek philosophy to Greek vases. At the same time, he cited extensively from Guo Ruoxi’s *Tuhua jianwen zhi* and Wang Lutai’s (Wang Yuanqi 1646-1715) *Yuchuang manbi*.¹⁴⁶ Quoting Wang Lutai’s assertion that “copying paintings is no better than observing paintings (*lin hua bu ru kan*

¹⁴³ Pang’s Memoir, 118. According to Pang, this painting was destroyed by his own hand in 1966. In the 1960s, Pang destroyed many of his own paintings for fear of being branded a counter-revolutionary or suspected as a Western spy.

¹⁴⁴ “Xunqin’s *sui*bi (Xunqin’s miscellanea notes)” was published in four consecutive volumes in *Yishu Xunkan* (L’Art) or (Art Trimonthly) 1, no. 1, 2, 4 and 5, September to October, 1932.

¹⁴⁵ *Yishu Xunkan* 1, no. 4, (October 1, 1932), 11.

¹⁴⁶ Wang Yuanqi, written in the 18th century.

hua),” Pang asserted that “we might as well fully embrace the influences from overseas, letting them be harmonized with our sensibilities and distilled by our temperament, out of which would come our writings and creative works.”¹⁴⁷ This had been the guiding principle for Pang Xunqin in his own work.

Through an introduction by Wang Dilang, an artist from his hometown, Pang joined the local art group, the *Xuguang* Painting Society, which was established in Changshu in the fall of 1929, and led by Wen Zhaotong (1909-1990), his hometown compatriot.¹⁴⁸ Pang participated in the inaugural exhibition of the Xuguang Painting Society in 1930, submitting a self-portrait, thickly painted with pallet knife and brush (Fig. 24).¹⁴⁹

Nevertheless, Pang Xunqin found it difficult to enter the Chinese art world with which he had little prior contact. He felt rather lost and even began to question his decision to return.¹⁵⁰ Worried about Pang’s unemployed status, his mother intervened. She obtained in 1930, through a family connection, a letter of introduction from Mr. Cai Yuanpei (1868-1940), then chancellor of Peking University and director of the national universities consortium, to help Pang seek employment at the Hangzhou National

¹⁴⁷ Pang Xunqin in “Xunqin’s *suibi* (Xunqin’s miscellanea notes),” written in May of 1930 and published in *Yishu xunkan* (L’ Art or Art Trimonthly) 1, no. 2, (September 11, 1932), 11. I thank my friend Hong Kun for her assistance in translating this passage by Pang Xunqin, whose original in Chinese is “我们不妨尽量接受外来的影响，凭他们在我们的神经上起一种融和的作用，再滤过我们的个性来著作，来创造。”

¹⁴⁸ *Xuguang* Painting Society, a local Changshu art group, was established in 1929 and continued to organize exhibitions and publish their local journal *Li Xue* until 1947. Wen Zhaotong in *Pang Xunqin yanjiu wenji*, 213.

¹⁴⁹ Wen Zhaotong remembers that the painting was 100 cm in height by 60 cm in width and was painted in a kind of post-impressionistic style. Pang continued to send his paintings to all the seven exhibitions of the Xuguang painting society from February, 1930 to April 1936, after he moved to Shanghai. *Pang Xunqin yanjiu wenji*, 97-98 and 211-212.

¹⁵⁰ Pang’s Memoir, 119.

Academy of Art presided over by Lin Fengmian.¹⁵¹ After arriving at Hangzhou and at the door of Lin Fengmian's house one day in June, 1930, a hesitant and reluctant Pang Xunqin decided on the spot not to enter; instead, he jumped on an incoming bus and left. Had he gone into Lin Fengmian's house that day and become an instructor at the academy, twentieth-century Chinese art history would, perhaps, have written off a self-fashioned avant-garde.¹⁵²

Pang then realized that for a person like himself who had studied oil painting or *Xihua* in the West, his sole available career path was to teach in one of the national or private art academies. These were the Peking Art Academy (Beiping Yizhuan, established in 1918), the Hangzhou National Art Academy headed by Lin Fengmian (1928), and the art department (1929) headed by Xu Beihong at the Nanking Normal College, which was affiliated with the National Central University.¹⁵³ All of them had strong ties with Cai Yuanpei, perhaps the most prominent cultural arbiter and reformer in the Republic era.¹⁵⁴

Art Academies and the Institutional Landscape of the 1930s (1926-1936)¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ The Hangzhou National Art Academy, founded in 1928, was initiated by Cai Yuanpei who was a mentor to Lin Fengmian. Lin Fengmian was appointed as the academy's first president.

¹⁵² Pang's Memoir, 119-120. There were also three private art schools. Two were in Shanghai: the Shanghai Art Academy, established by Liu Haisu, and Xinhua Yizhuan (Western Art Academy), headed by Wang Yachen, its principal. The other private art school was in Suzhou, established by Yan Wenliang, also a Parisian returnee.

¹⁵³ Pang's Memoir, 119-120.

¹⁵⁴ Cai Yuanpei was the first term Minister of Education appointed by Sun Yat-san in 1911. After this post, Cai served as the chancellor of Peking University (1916-1926) and the director of the national university consortium (1926-1936). Cai had tirelessly advocated Western learning and "art education as a substitute for religion" since the early 1910s

¹⁵⁵ For the studies in the English language on the subject of art education and art academies in the Republic period, see Mayching Kao, "China's Response to the West in Art: 1898-1937" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1983) and her "The Beginning of the Western-style Painting Movement in Relationship to Reforms in Education in Early Twentieth-century China" in *New Asia Academic Bulletin* 4 (1983): 373-397.

The institutional landscape of art academies up to the time Pang Xunqin returned to China was intrinsically connected to Cai Yuanpei, a leader in the New Cultural Movement (1911), a Kantian thinker, and a strong believer in “aesthetic education as substitute for religion.” Well traveled in the West and having spent three years (1908-1911) at the University of Leipzig in Germany, Cai Yuanpei had studied philosophy, aesthetics, and experimental psychology.¹⁵⁶ Schiller’s, Kant’s, and Hegel’s theories all variously influenced Cai’s proposal in 1912 for “aesthetic education.” Cai, a firm believer in and promoter of the importance of aesthetic education and the “universality of beauty,” advocated that “cultivation of one’s emotion in aesthetic education would elevate one’s noble nature and help eliminate one’s self-centeredness.”¹⁵⁷ Cai was directly responsible for founding the Peking National Art Academy, a project which he had proposed to the warlord Duan government, and in his inaugural speech given on April 15, 1918, Cai recommended expanding the existing curriculum to include a sculpture department for encouraging the study of western art.¹⁵⁸ Cai also lobbied for national scholarships to underwrite students to study art in Europe.¹⁵⁹ In 1919, the first generation of art students sponsored by the government scholarships proposed by Cai Yuanpei left for Europe; among them were Lin Fengmian, Xu Beihong, and Pan Yuliang, the first female art

¹⁵⁶ Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, and Zheng Shengtian, eds., *Shanghai Modern: 1919-1945*, 224.

¹⁵⁷ Cai first proposed his famous phrase “aesthetic education as a substitute for religion (Yi meiyu dai zongjiao shu)” in *Xin qingnian* (New Youth) 3, no. 6, August 1917 and in “Replacing Religion with Aesthetic Education,” a lecture delivered in 1917, to the Shenzhou Scholarly Society.

¹⁵⁸ Cai Yuanpei, “Commencement Speech at the Founding of the National Art Academy,” April 15, 1918. *Cai Yuanpei Quanjì*, vol. 3, 148.

¹⁵⁹ Cai Yuanpei was also directly responsible for sponsoring Xu Beihong’s Paris studies in 1919.

student on a government scholarship.¹⁶⁰ All of them would go on to shape early twentieth-century Chinese art.

The Hangzhou National Art Academy

In 1930, when Pang Xunqin made his abortive trip to Lin Fengmian's residence to seek employment at the Hangzhou National Academy of Art, Lin Fengmian had been the Academy's president for the two years since its inception (1928). One of the canonic figures in the history of the twentieth-century Chinese art, Lin Fengmian was then thirty-one years old, and Pang was twenty-four.

Lin's elevation to the presidency of the Hangzhou National Academy of Art had been recommended by Cai Yuanpei. He had met Lin in Paris in 1924 and, quickly recognizing Lin's artistic talent and potential, had subsequently taken Lin under his wing.

Lin Fengmian spent nearly six years (1919-1926) in Europe, mostly in Paris, partly under the tutorship of the sculptor Hubert Yencesse (1900-1987) at the *École des Beaux-Arts* at Dijon and later at the Parisian atelier of Andre Claudot (1892 -1982) and Fernand Piestre Cormon (1845-1924).¹⁶¹ In May of 1924, Lin met Cai Yuanpei, then the chancellor of Peking University (1916-1926), who was spending a self-imposed exile in Europe in protest against the corrupt warlord government.¹⁶² Cai Yuanpei attended the *Exposition Chinoise d'art anciet et moderne*, an exhibition held at the Palais du Rhin,

¹⁶⁰ The government scholarship was inadequate to cover even the basic living expenses for these students. They had to rely on other sources to sustain their studies. Pan Yuliang had some support from her husband who was then a government official in China. Both Lin and Xu lived in Germany for a period of time to take advantage of lower living cost there. Thanks to Professor James Gao for reminding me to include this note.

¹⁶¹ There have been extensive studies on Lin Fengmian both in English and in Chinese, and the scholarly books and articles written about him are too numerous to list here. I have primarily relied on a collection of essays written about Lin Fengmian in the special issue of *Duoyun* (Art Clouds) 53, (2000).

¹⁶² Cai was spending his time in Europe, Belgium, Germany, and France from 1923 to 1926, absorbing Enlightenment ideas.

Strasbourg, jointly organized by the Société chinoise des Arts décoratifs à Paris and the Association des artistes chinois en France, of which Lin was a member.¹⁶³ There were forty-two pieces of Lin's work on display, including fourteen oil paintings and twenty-eight watercolors, more than those of any other participating artist.¹⁶⁴ Cai was an enthusiastic supporter of this exhibition; he delivered an introductory article for the catalogue, in which he endorsed the exhibition and lauded Lin Fengmian's works, especially his *Groping* (Fig. 25) or *Mosuo*.¹⁶⁵ In this monumental painting, *Groping* (1923/4), which was four to five meters long and two meters in height where assembled key Western intellectual and artistic geniuses associated with the enlightenment tradition, ranging from the Greek poet Homer, Dante of Italy, Shakespeare of England, Goethe of Germany, and Hugo of France, to Tolstoy of Russia, Christ, Michelangelo, and Galileo.¹⁶⁶ *Groping*, which must have deeply resonated with Cai, reminded him of his own favorite painting, Raphael's *School of Athens*, which he had viewed during his visit to Italy in 1916. Cai Yuanpei was so impressed by this fresco that he subsequently produced an article titled "Raphael" for *Dongfang Zaizhi* (Eastern Miscellany) in which he detailed the painter's life and his artistic lineage and particularly made the effort to identify the major figures in Raphael's painting.¹⁶⁷

Yet, Lin Fengmian's rendition of the pantheon of great Western geniuses perhaps owed a greater debt to Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres' *Apotheosis of Homer* (1827), a

¹⁶³ The source for the French and English title for the exhibition comes from Craig Clunas, "Chinese Art and Chinese Artists in France 1924-1925," *Arts Asiatiques* 44, (1989): 100.

¹⁶⁴ Lang Shaojun, *Lin Fengmian* (Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2002), 46.

¹⁶⁵ Craig Clunas, "Chinese Art and Chinese Artists in France 1924-1925," *Arts Asiatiques* 44, (1989): 100.

¹⁶⁶ Yang Zheng, *Yishu pinlun*, February 9, 1924. Yang reported interviewing Lin and seeing this painting in person. From Lang Shaojun, *Lin Fengmian* (Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe 2002), 47, note 1.

¹⁶⁷ Cai wrote an essay titled "Raphael" in 1916, relating to Raphael's life and the historical significance of this painting. Cai Yuanpei's "Raphael" was originally published in *Dongfang Zaizhi* (Eastern Miscellaneous) 13, no. 7-9, 1916, and republished in *Cai Yuanpei Meixue wenxuan*, 172-173.

work which Lin must have frequently observed at the Louvre. Ingres' *Apotheosis* was, in both composition and conception, a direct neoclassical reconstruction of Raphael's *School of Athens* (1510-1512). Lin Fengmian's visually expressive reiteration of Western humanism resonated with the humanistic spirit so well articulated by Cai Yuanpei in his essay on Raphael and the *School of Athens*. After viewing Lin's paintings, Cai Yuanpei praised Lin as a talented young artist with a fresh mind.¹⁶⁸ The life-long friendship, grounded in respect and trust between Lin Fengmian and Cai Yuanpei, took root in 1924 and lasted until Cai's death in 1940.

As soon as Lin Fengmian returned to China in 1926, he was offered the position as head of the Beiping National Art Academy (founded 1918); Lin's candidacy was highly recommended by Cai Yuanpei to the Ministry of Education, which eventually appointed Lin to the post. Lin was only twenty-six years old when he assumed this post. Lin Fengmian was subsequently recommended by Cai to head the organizing committee to establish the Hangzhou National Art Academy and to lead the academy upon its founding in 1928. Lin's presidency lasted from 1928 to 1938.

Had he chosen to stay at Lin's Hangzhou Art Academy, Pang Xunqin might have found there an atmosphere more agreeable than at any other academy. A graduate of the *École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts* (the ENBA), Lin Fengmian was well versed in academic realism. He began, however, to realize its limitations while still a student at the ENBA. He turned to Matisse and Modigliani for sources of inspiration.¹⁶⁹ His own style underwent a remarkable change; he painted distorted and tormented figures, echoing the

¹⁶⁸ Lin Wenzheng. "Cai Yuanpei qizhong Lin Fengmian," in Zheng Chao and Jin Shangyi, ed., *Lin Fengmian lun* (Studies on Lin Fengmian)(Zhejiang meishu xueyuan chubanshe, 1990), 2.

¹⁶⁹ David Wang, "In the Name of the Real," in Maxwell Hearn and Judith Smith, eds., *Chinese Art Modern Expressions* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 35.

German expressionism and French fauvism in the early 20s. His art theory advanced Cai Yuanpei's advocacy of "aesthetics in substitute of religion." But he added that art was above religion: "artistic expression, free and emotionally eloquent, is unlike the stoic formality of religion....Art eases all the suffering of life."¹⁷⁰ Lin Fengmian at other times wrote: "artistic beauty, like a glass of wine, ought to have an invigorating power to alleviate someone's weariness after a day's labor."¹⁷¹ After Lin became the president of the Hangzhou National Art Academy, his art theory and pedagogy matured. He advocated building foundational skills for his art students as well as promoting artistic freedom. He encouraged his students to explore different styles and search for their own style. His pedagogy of "tiao he zhong xi," "to modify and synchronize Chinese and Western art," was perpetuated by his students at the Hangzhou Art Academy, and he himself sought to develop such a synthesis through his experimentation in colors and composition. Pang Xunqin would have encountered greater sympathy for his more modernist-inclined style at the Hangzhou Academy had he chosen to stay there. However, suspicious of any institutional confines after just returning from his Bohemian life in Paris, Pang at this point was still determined to remain independent and set his own path.

Xu Beihong – The Art Department of Nanking National Central University.

As Lin Fengmian rose to shining stardom in the world of Chinese art academies, another ENBA-trained artist, Xu Beihong, was on his way back to China. The newly established art department at the National Central University in Nanking was in need of a director, and Xu Beihong (1895-1953) assumed the post in 1928. Indispensable to the

¹⁷⁰ Lin Fengmian, "Zhi quanguo meishu jie shu," in Shui Tianzhong and Lang Shaojun, eds., *Ershi shiji zhongguo meishu wenxuan* (Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1996), 163.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 164.

founding of the art department affiliated with the National Central University (then the National Fourth Sun Yat-sen University) was the blessing of Cai Yuanpei, the current director of National Universities Consortium. Cai supported a proposal to establish an art department in Nanking, the capital of the Republic government.¹⁷² Xu Beihong had just arrived in Peking in 1927 after a nearly nine-year sojourn in Europe (1919-1927). After Xu's brief administrative service at the Beiping Art Academy, he was on his way to the National Central University to head the art department, where he began adopting the ENBA curriculum with its strong emphasis on foundational skill building and drawing from live and sculpted models.¹⁷³ Xu's fame and his solid training in academic realism attracted many students to his tutorship, and soon Nanking became a magnet for students and professors who preferred and intended to specialize in academic realism. Xu's oil paintings convey a strong sense of the French academic tradition which was waning by the time he studied there.¹⁷⁴ Art historian Michael Sullivan noted that when Xu "came to the West at the age of twenty-four, his eyes were closed to all European painting after 1880, and he never opened them again. Living in the Paris of Picasso and Matisse, he

¹⁷² The art department at the Jiangsu Fourth Normal College merged with the art department at the National Central University in 1927, and Li Yishi, also a repatriate from Paris, was appointed by Cai to direct the department at the Central University. Three majors, painting, handicraft, and music, were initially offered. Xu Beihong, returning from Paris in 1927, became the second-term director of the art department.

¹⁷³ Xu Beihong was the first government-sponsored Chinese student to study art in Europe, where he stayed from 1919 to 1927, moving between Paris and Berlin. After returning to China in 1927, he was appointed director of the National Beiping Academy of Fine Arts by Cai Yuanpei. He soon resigned to direct the art department at the National Central University in Nanking, 1928.

¹⁷⁴ Xu Beihong first studied with Jean Dagnon-Bouveret (1852-1929), a follower of Corot at L' Ecole des Beaux Arts, to which Xu was officially admitted after passing a series of rigorous exams. At the ENBA, he received formal academic training. In 1921, Xu studied under Arthur Kampf (1864-1950), who was then the president of the Academie des Beaux Arts, Berlin, and a painter of military subjects, genres, and portraits. Kampf produced propaganda paintings for the Nazi government in the 1930s.

seemed totally indifferent to them, while to anything more avant-garde he was even more hostile.”¹⁷⁵

The Discursive Debate between the two Xus and the National Art Exhibition, 1929

In April of 1929, less than two years after Xu Beihong’s return to China, the first National Art Exhibition sponsored by the Ministry of Education opened in Shanghai. The organization for the exhibition had commenced in 1928. Cai Yuanpei was one of the board members of the organizing committee. The Hangzhou National Art Academy presided over by Lin Fengmian was a major contributor to the exhibition. Held in Shanghai’s *Puyutang* (Hall of Populating Education), the exhibition consisted of 354 art works which were divided into seven categories, including a *Xihua* (Western painting) category.¹⁷⁶

The paintings in the impressionist and post-impressionist manner that were included in the exhibition provoked a vehement attack by Xu Beihong on modern art. In his letter, titled “Perplexed,” to the exhibition journal, *Meizhan*, Xu charged that, “Monet is mediocre, Renoir is vulgar, Cézanne is shallow, Matisse is inferior.” In a blunt sweeping stroke, he wrote off all the Western artists who had moved away from academic realism, castigated fellow artists who worked in the post-impressionist style, and pronounced academic realism the sole legitimate style for oil painting. His verdict: “The only distinction between true art and false art is the former’s being a truthful reflection of reality and the latter a distortion of reality.”¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China*, 72.

¹⁷⁶ Zhao Li and Yu Ding, ed., *Zhongguo youhua wenxian* (Documents on Chinese Oil Painting, 1542-2000) (Hunan: Meishu chuban she, 2002), 551-68.

¹⁷⁷ Two of Xu’s debates were originally published in *Meizhan*, April, 1929. The debates have subsequently been reprinted numerous times in different sources. The written debates I have relied on are reprinted in

Xu Beihong's hostile attack against the modernists prompted a critical response, titled "I Too Am 'Perplexed,'" from Xu Zhimo (1896-1931). This Cambridge-educated poet of the New Cultural Movement was one of the exhibition's organizers.¹⁷⁸ In his gentlemanly mannered, and eloquent piece, Xu Zhimo argued that "the autonomy of artistic creation" is more important than the "order of mimesis" and the need for formal experimentation and the flux of "creative imagination."¹⁷⁹

Xu Beihong was fairly well-connected before leaving for Paris in 1919.¹⁸⁰ However, after his perplexing attack on artists who embraced styles other than academic realism, his fame and prominence elevated him to celebrity status in China's art arena.

This polarized debate between the two Xus divided the Western-trained artists into two camps, one of them headed by Xu Beihong, the upholder of academic realism, and the other by Xu Zhimo and Lin Fengmian, who championed artistic autonomy and self-expression.¹⁸¹ Beginning with this high-profile debate between the two Xus in 1929 and thereafter, the two rival camps competed for political and institutional power and control in the art world of China throughout the twentieth century.

Earlier in the century, Western art had appealed to educated modernizers because they viewed its realistic technique as being connected with scientific progress, which was

Zhongguo youhua wenxian (Documents on Chinese Oil Painting, 1542-2000), 557-62. Much scholarly discussion has been generated by the two Xu's debate. See David Wang, "In the Name of the Real," and Eugene Wang, "Sketch Conceptualism as Modernist Contingency" in Maxwell Hearn and Judith Smith, eds., *Chinese Art Modern Expressions* (2001), 29-59 and 111-13.

¹⁷⁸ The literary scholar David Wang summarized Xu Zhimo's poetic style: "Colors, lines, and sensory images fascinated Xu Zhimo, who was under the spell of English symbolism during his stay in Cambridge, around 1922, and constituted for him the primary appeal of art. With a similar propensity he tried to capture in poetry the fleeting senses and sensibilities in an exquisite form of language." David Wang, "In the Name of the Real," in Maxwell Hearn and Judith Smith, eds., *Chinese Art Modern Expressions* (2001), 33.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 33-34.

¹⁸⁰ Xu met Kang Youwei (1858-1927) in 1916 while still a struggling artist after he had just moved to Shanghai, and Kang helped him find some employment. Xu began to write essays on art between 1917 and 1918 and met Cai Yuanpei in 1918. David Wang, "In the Name of the Real," 39.

¹⁸¹ Xu Zhimo died in a plane crash in 1931, thus prematurely ending his leadership in the modernist camp.

seen as a force for rejuvenating Chinese traditional painting, a body of work which was at this point regarded as stagnating and a mere slavish imitation of earlier masters. It was the realism and the progressive quality of the West that struck early modern thinkers, such as Chen Duxiu (1879-1942) and Cai Yuanpei, as a useful solvent for the obscurantism of the old culture.

However, spurred by the advent of more students returning from Europe and Japan where modernism was in vogue and by Lin Fengmian's leadership at the Hangzhou National Academy of Art - "an incubator for modernism"¹⁸² – the modernists were gaining momentum in Shanghai and Hangzhou between the late 1920s and until the time of Xu Beihong's return. In the end, however, Chinese history witnessed the triumph of Xu Beihong's camp of realists. From the eve of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-45), realism had swept the field of twentieth-century Chinese art and literature, and both the national identity and the historical crisis were defined in its terms. After the war, realism being close in line with the Communist Party's cultural policy that "art serves the mass of people" and that "art should be understood by ordinary people," Xu Beihong's mimetic realism evolved into the canon of social realism, of institutional power, and of ideological apparatus in China.¹⁸³ On the other hand, Lin Fengmian's political non-commitment and formalistic aesthetics proved to be impotent in a time of national crisis which called for active social participation of visual and literary artists. According to David Wang, "the

¹⁸² David Wang, "In the Name of the Real," 35.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 37.

realist-modernist tension indicated a clash of different aesthetic principles, but also of rival personalities, institutions, and ideologies.”¹⁸⁴

Xu Beihong’s solid training and utilization of Western sketching techniques, his unapologetic position in promoting his methodology, his active self-elevation, and his close ties with Kang Youwei (1858-1927) and Cai Yunpei, two of the most highly regarded intellectual patriarchs, firmly turned Xu from a reformer of Chinese traditional art into an intransigent art establishment. Under his auspices, a generation of Chinese realists contributed to establishing the canon of social realism in the new Communist China. The institutions associated with his camp are the pre-1949 art department at the National Nanking University and, after the founding of the People’s Republic (1949), the Central Academy of Fine Art in Beijing.¹⁸⁵

The Storm and Stress Society – Juelanshe (1932-1935)

The modernist-realist discursive debate and rival tension set the stage for the newly returned artists like Pang Xunqin and Ni Yide, who met in the summer of 1931 at the Shanghai Art Academy (Shanghai Meizhuan) where Pang served as a substitute teacher of sketching.¹⁸⁶ Ni Yide, an art critic, writer, and theorist, had returned from

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 47. After 1945, Lin resigned from the directorship of the Hangzhou Academy and moved to Shanghai; he subsequently led a reclusive life for the next four decades, until the 1980s. In the 60s, Lin destroyed most of his paintings by flushing them into a toilet.

¹⁸⁵ Xu Beihong died in 1953. However his influence in the history of Chinese modern art is still felt today. The Central Academy of Art in Beijing, the political center of PRC, still produces students who profess in realistic art while the National Academy of Art in Hangzhou, tracing its lineage to Lin Fengmian, produces, in comparison to the Central Academy of Art in Beijing, more students who specialize in designs with inclination to conceptual art forms.

¹⁸⁶ Shanghai Art Academy or Shanghai Meizhuan was founded by Liu Haisu (1895 – 1994) in 1912, when Liu was barely seventeen years old. It was the first private independent academy to offer oil painting and drawing classes using living models. The controversy about using live models for painting has been referred to in almost all the literature on Chinese modern art. Here I am referring to the source from *Zhongguo Youhua wenxian* (Documents of Chinese oil painting) and Julie Andrews, “Luoti hua lunzheng ji xiandai zhongguo meishu shi de jangou” from *Haipai huihua yanjiu wenji* (Studies on Shanghai School Painting) (Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2001), 117-150. Pang met Liu Haisu in Paris in 1929 when Liu

Tokyo where he had studied Western modern art under Fujishima Takeji (1867-1943) at the Western-style Painting section of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts from 1927 to 1928, a time when Fauvist currents were running strong in Japan.¹⁸⁷ As early as 1929, Ni promoted Fauvism, Surrealism, and Dadaism in his writing.¹⁸⁸ Pang, on the other hand, after aborting his plan to seek employment at the Hangzhou Art Academy in the summer of 1930, moved to Shanghai that fall, hoping to continue his bohemian free-spirited artistic life without any institutional tie. Desiring to recreate a Parisian-style atelier, Pang found himself associated with three like-minded young artists, Zhou Zhengtai (C. T. Chow, ?-1936), Tu Yi (?), and Hu Daozhi (?), all of them returning students from Japan. They formed a small *Taimeng huahui*, in French, the *Societe des Deux Mondes* – a society of two worlds. This was a Parisian-style salon providing a public space for showing their works to one another, mingling, and debating the most current modern art trends. The *Societe des Deux Mondes* lasted only a few months, being forced to close due to one member's suspected connection with the leftist movement.¹⁸⁹ Despite this failed attempt to organize an art atelier and society, Pang did not easily give up on this scheme. After meeting the like-minded Ni Yide, both of whom were discontented with the

was on his European tour. Liu wrote a letter to Wang Jiyuan to introduce Pang; Wang was the interim president of Shanghai Art Academy when Liu was in Europe. Pang's Memoir, 118, 127.

¹⁸⁷ Fujishima Takeji studied in Paris and with Fernand Cormon at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. He was influenced by Cézanne and closely associated with Kuroda Seiki and Shūji Takashina. See J. Thomas Rimer with Gerald D. Bolas, eds., *Paris in Japan: The Japanese Encounter with European Painting* (Tokyo: the Japan Foundation and Washington University in St. Louis, 1987), 98-99.

¹⁸⁸ Ni Yide began to publish in literary journals as early as in the 1920s before going Japan. His publications after returning to Shanghai in 1928 included "Sources of Modern Paintings," "How to appreciate Western-styled Paintings," "On Surrealism," "Cubism and its Creators," "Studies on Fauvism," and "The Spirit of Modern Paintings." Most of these essays were originally published between 1929 and 1935 in the journal *Yishu Xunkan* (Art Trimonthly) and *Qingnianjie* (Youth World), 1931 to 1935.

¹⁸⁹ Zhou Taizheng was involved in the contemporary activities of the Communist Party in Shanghai. Zhou perhaps joined the Communist Party while in Japan. Pang's studio was smashed and he was briefly detained. Zhou Taizheng was arrested. After this incident, Pang returned to his hometown where he continued to be involved in the local art group, only to return shortly to Shanghai in the fall of 1930 to be a substitute teacher of sketching at the Shanghai Art Academy. Pang Memoir, 123.

Chinese art world dominated by only a few establishments, Pang and Ni began to discuss the possibility of setting up an independent art society and establishing their own journal. The first organizing committee, consisting of only five members, met on September 23, 1931, at the Meiyuan (Plum Garden) Restaurant. *Juelanshe* was the name they devised for their society, and they planned to launch their first group exhibition in January of 1932.¹⁹⁰ Financial hurdles and the ensuing Japanese invasion of the northeast of China forced them to delay their plan. Their second committee meeting, held on January 6 of 1932, drew twelve members. At this session, they decided to postpone the first exhibition to April 1932, and Pang Xunqin, Ni Yide, and Wang Jiyuan (1895-1974) were named standing committee members. On January 28, 1932, the Japanese armies attacked Shanghai, and the launching of the *Juelanshe* and of its first collective exhibition were further postponed, to October 1932.¹⁹¹ Eventually, *Juelanshe* attracted a group of recently returned young artists from Paris and Tokyo, united by the desire to thrust themselves into China's art scene like an engulfing wave, thereby breaking the tide and shaking up the complacency of the art world.¹⁹²

The English Title for *Juelanshe* - The Storm and Stress Society

The Storm and Stress Society was the English title chosen by *Juelanshe* members, most likely at the request of Pang and Ni Yide. The English title appeared in print in the 1932 November issue of *Liangyou* magazine, which included a photographic print of eight paintings shown at the society's first exhibition (Fig. 26). Given Pang Xunqin's

¹⁹⁰ Pang Xunqin, "Juelanshe xiao shi" (a brief history of *Juelanshe*), *Yishu xunkan* (L'Art) 1, no. 5 (October, 1932), 9. The first five members were Pang Xunqin, Ni Yide, Chen Dengbo, Zhou Duo, and Zeng Zhiliang.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. In addition to the aforementioned five members of the society, seven new members joined at the second meeting; they were Ms. Liang Baibo, Duan Pingyou, Yang Taiyang, Yang Qiuren, Zhou Taizheng, Deng Yunti, and Wang Jiyuan.

¹⁹² *Juelan She*, the Chinese name for the Storm Society. *Juelan* literally means "unstoppable giant wave or breaking tide."

close association with Günter Eich, the German poet with whom Pang had met almost daily during his last year in Paris, Pang must have been familiar with the early 19th century German Romanticism movement, known as the *Sturm und Drang*, spearheaded by young Goethe and Schiller. Pang greatly admired Goethe, and he had been treated to a meal seated on a chair once occupied by Goethe at his friend Kurt von Tuffas' home, which Pang visited during his Berlin trip. Mrs. Tuffas, Kurt's mother who entertained Pang and had spoken the farewell words that continued to resonate with him: "Be like Goethe who had done so much for our Germany. Be like him; love your country and make contributions to your country."¹⁹³ Mrs. Tuffas, a proud and dignified lady, came from a family that had once entertained Goethe for dinner. It is perhaps only a historical coincidence that the *Juelanshe* members decided to use the phrase "Storm and Stress" as their English translation of *Juelanshe*.¹⁹⁴ Yet Pang's reverence for Goethe suggests the possibility that he was responsible for the English title for *Juelanshe* and that he and his like-minded fellows might have had the 19th century *Sturm and Drang* movement in mind when naming their society.¹⁹⁵ Another possible link was the famous German

¹⁹³ Pang wrote in 1944, remembering fondly his visit to Mrs. Tuffas, mother of his friend Kurt von Tuffas whom Pang met in Paris. Kurt repeatedly asked Pang to visit his home once he was in Berlin. Mrs. Tuffas treated Pang to a very simple meal in a formal dining room where the family had once entertained the great writer Goethe. Pang Xunqin, "Gulao de yizi (An Old Chair)" in *Huaxi ribao* (Huaxi Daily), April 26, 1944, and Pang's Memoir, 114.

¹⁹⁴ *Liangyou*, November, 1932, published works from the first exhibition of *Juelanshe* in which the Storm and Stress Society is printed on the top of the page. Refer to Fig. 27.

¹⁹⁵ Renato Poggioli in his *Theory of the Avant-Garde* recognized Goethe's *Sturm and Drang* movement as the first true avant-garde "movement" preceding all that followed. Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Gerald Fitzgerald (Cambridge, MA.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), 18. This small group of Chinese avant-gardes in the 1930s might have consciously made a connection with the forerunners of avant-gardism. The Storm Society is the common English equivalent to *Juelanshe* in Chinese. In the society's advertisements for their annual exhibition between 1932 and 1935, the Storm and Stress Society was used as their English title label. No reference was found thus far to indicate that the group borrowed the title directly from the "*Sturm and Drang*," the name associated with the 19th century German literary movement. However, it should be no surprise that *Juelanshe* members were familiar with the *Sturm and Drang* movement, for both Schiller's and Goethe's works were translated

expressionist prints exhibition titled *Der Sturm* that swept Tokyo in March 1914. The exhibition was co-organized by the musician Yamada Kôzaku and Saitô Kazô, the latter, a professor at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts where Ni Yide was schooled between 1927 and 1928. In actuality, *juelanshe* was born on the eve of the Japanese occupation of Shanghai, with a cloud of uncertainty shrouding the air, making it historically unfavorable to the birth of this new “avant-garde” group.¹⁹⁶

The society’s appearance was described by Pang Xunqin as being “like small stones tossed into a pond. At the time, the sound of stones falling into the water can be faintly heard and the small splashes break the quiet surface of the water. However, the stones quickly sink to the pond bottom and the water surface returns to its original

into Chinese in the early 20th century and widely read among the intellectual youth after May 4th of 1919. Given the beliefs promoted by the *Sturm and Drang* movement, the Chinese Storm and Stress Society would have found it an inspiring source for their ideals: freedom, creativity, and individuality against the conventional society. Further research may reveal a more clear connection or pin down a more direct link between the names of these two movements which do share similar aspirations.

¹⁹⁶ Being aware of the Western origin for the label “avant-garde” and its multiple connotations, I have adopted this term chiefly for the following reasons. The Storm and Stress Society was organized to challenge two aspects of establishments: the long-held tradition of Chinese art and the West-informed realism that was gaining political and social currency in the early 1930s. The Society’s counter-establishment spirit qualifies its avant-garde function. In terms of the Society’s Manifesto and its heated rhetoric, the Storm and Stress Society joins the global group of avant-gardes, the Dada in Paris, the Mavo in Tokyo, and the Indian avant-gardes in Calcutta. The group-oriented structure consisting of mostly young people in their twenties and its media-centered approaches through publications and widely publicized exhibitions also share commonalities with the avant-garde groups throughout the world. The various styles, whereby mostly informed by Western-oriented and Japan-mediated Post-impressionism, Cubism, Surrealism, or Dadaism appropriated by the Storm and Stress Society members, suggest a sharp rupture from the tradition of Chinese art. Such a rupture reveals the group’s proclivity for experimentation and radical subversion of the establishment. For my use of the term avant-gardes, I have consulted Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Gerald Fitzgerald (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968); Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984, first edition 1974); and Rosiland E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1986). For the non-Western avant-gardes, see John Clark, “The Avant-garde,” in his *Modern Asian Art* (Sydney: Craftsman House and Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 217-236. Gennifer Weisenfeld, *MAVO: Japanese Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1905-1931* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Tang Xiaobing, *Origins of the Chinese Avant-Garde: The Modern Woodcut Movement* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2008); and Partha Mitter, *The Triumph of Modernism, India’s Artists and the Avant-Garde 1922-1947* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2007).

calmness.”¹⁹⁷ Writing retrospectively in the eighties, Pang might have attempted to downplay the significance of the society in light of its avant-garde inclination and its relation to the avant-garde developments in the West. Even in the post-cultural revolution political climate, Pang was still extremely cautious about endorsing this movement with much historical currency.

He was, however, an enthusiastic participant when the society was first launched. Pang opened a solo exhibition running from September 15 to September 25, 1932 at Zhonghua xueyi she (Society of Chinese Art Study), as a preparation for the Juelanshe’s first collective exhibition to be held in the same venue in October.¹⁹⁸ He published his miscellaneous notes on art beginning in the first issue of *Yishu xunkan* (*L’Art*) in September, 1932, and continuing for four issues.¹⁹⁹ The potent cultural ferment of Shanghai modernity and the cultural ambience of the 1930s were at least favorable toward this young avant-garde group, and their emergence was hailed by the Shanghai media.²⁰⁰ Though their birth was hard and slow, the cry was loud and clear.

The Manifesto

The *Manifesto* of the Storm and Stress Society was first pronounced in 1932, and publicly disseminated in the October 1932 issue of *Yishu Xunkan* (*L’Art*).²⁰¹ This was the

¹⁹⁷ Pang’s Memoir, 36.

¹⁹⁸ Announced in the inauguration issue, *Yishu xunkan* 1, no. 1 (September 1, 1932): 15.

¹⁹⁹ *Yishu xunkan* (*L’Art*), a tri-monthly journal began to publish Pang Xunqin’s miscellaneous notes on art from September 1, 1932, the first issue, and continued them in the second (September 11, 1932), fourth (October 1st, 1932), and fifth issue (October 11, 1932).

²⁰⁰ In addition to *Yishu xunkan*, *Shenbao*, on September 22, 1932, published a short article on Pang Xunqin’s solo exhibition, written by Hong Mo and commented on by Zhou Shoujuan. *Liangyou* (The Young Companion) publicized photo prints of some of the works shown at the second Juelanshe exhibition. See Fig. 27 and *Liangyou*, no. 82, November, 1933.

²⁰¹ *Yishu xunkan* was an art journal associated with the Muse Society which included members such as Pang Xunqin, Ni Yide, and Fu Lei, a well-known translator of French literature who also promoted Pang Xunqin’s works. Their motto was “Carry forward the existing culture, express the spirit of the time.” Zhu

pioneering art journal created as a venue for artists and art critics to discuss both Chinese and Western art theories and introduce new Western art movements to their peers.²⁰² The journal was broad-based, being associated with the less radical group, the *Muse Society* (*Moshe*) of which Pang and Ni were members.²⁰³ Pang Xunqin and Ni Yide discussed establishing their own journal, but because of their limited financial means and lack of social connections for securing sponsorship, they resorted to borrowing the space from *Yishu Xunkan*. A storm's roar, no matter how thunderous, would not be heard in the absence of a public venue. Juelanshe's manifesto was announced to the public on October 11, 1932, and their passion and determination to "shake up the art world of China and promote their new art" permeates the words of the document (Fig. 27).

環繞我們的空氣太沈寂了，平凡與庸俗包圍了我們的四周。無數低能者的蠢動，無數淺薄者的叫囂。

The air around us is too still, as mediocrity and vulgarity continue to envelop us.
Countless morons are writhing around and countless shallow minds are crying out.

我們往古創造的天才到哪裏去了？我們往古光榮的歷史到哪裏去了？我們現代整個藝術界只是衰頹和病弱。

Where are the creative talents of the past? Where are the glories of our history?
Impotence and sickness are what prevail throughout the entire artistic community today.

我們再不能安於這樣妥協的環境中。

No longer can we remain content in such a compromised environment.

我們再不能任其奄奄一息以待斃。

Boxiong and Chen Ruilin, ed., *Zhongguo xihua wushi nian: 1898 – 1949* (Fifty years of Western paintings in China: 1898 – 1949) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1989), 301-302.

²⁰² The journal started in September of 1932 and discontinued after January of 1933; only twelve issues were published. However, the main body of the published articles focuses on various aspects of modern art, e.g., Ni Yide's "Discussing the spirit of Modern Paintings," "The Resources of Modern Paintings," "Theory of Structural Art," "Talks on how to appreciate Western Paintings," and Fu Lei's "The Apprehension of Modern Chinese Art." Although most of the articles only scratched the surface of Western modernist movements, and the authors' understanding of these movements was limited by Ni's lack of direct experience with the West. He knew the West second-hand through the interpretations of Japanese sources.

²⁰³ According to Croizier, Pang personally confirmed to him in his interview of Pang on July 1, 1983 that Juelanshe members had been too poor to support a journal. Ralph Croizier, "Post-Impressionists in Pre-War Shanghai: The Juelanshe (Storm Society) and the Fate of Modernism in Republican China," in John Clark, ed., *Modernity in Asian Art* (New South Wales: Wild Peony, 1993), 139.

No longer can we allow it to breathe feebly until it dies.

讓我們起來吧！用了狂飆一般的激情，鉄一般的理智，來創造我們色，綫，形交錯的世界吧！

Let us rise up! With our raging passion and iron intellect, we will create a world interwoven with color, line and form!

我們承認繪畫決不是自然的模仿，也不是死板的形骸的反覆，我們要用全生命來赤裸裸地表現我們潑刺的精神。

We acknowledge that painting is by no means an imitation of nature, nor a rigid replication of the human body. With our entire being, we will represent, unconcealed, our bold and daring spirit.

我們以為繪畫決不是宗教的奴隸，也不是文學的說明，我們要自由地，綜合地構成純造型的世界。

We believe that painting is by no means the slave of religion, nor a mere illustration of literature. We will freely, and cohesively, construct a world of pure shapes.

我們厭惡一切舊的形式，舊的色彩，厭惡一切平凡的低級的技巧。我們要用新的技法來表現新時代的精神。

We detest all the old forms and colours, as well as all mediocre and rudimentary techniques. We will represent the spirit of a new era with new techniques.

二十世紀以來，歐洲的藝壇突現新興的氣象，野獸羣的叫喊，立體派的變形，Dadaism 的猛烈，超現實主義的憧憬……。

Since the beginning of the 20th century, a new atmosphere has emerged in the European artistic community, comprised of the outcries of the Fauvists, the twists of the Cubists, the vehemence of the Dadaists and the craving of the Surrealists...

二十世紀的中國藝壇，也應當現出一種新興的氣象了。

It is time for a new atmosphere to emerge through the 20th-century artistic community of China.

讓我們起來吧！用了狂飆一般的激情，鉄一般的理智，來創造我們色，綫，形交錯的世界吧！

Let us rise up! With our raging passion and iron intellect, we will create a world interwoven with colour, line and form!²⁰⁴

This manifesto charged that the art world in China was stagnant and impotent, full of vulgarity and mediocrity. These young men were determined to shock and reinvigorate China's stagnated art world with an injection of new spirit and new techniques. Their new techniques involved a construction of "pure shapes" and a configuration of "color, line and form." Inspired by the revolutionary spirit of Cubism, Fauvism, Dadaism and

²⁰⁴ The English translation of the cited Manifesto is from Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, and Zheng Shengtian, eds., *Shanghai Modern: 1919-1945*, 234. Michael Sullivan has translated a part of the *Manifesto* in his *Art and Artists of Twentieth Century China* (1996), 62.

Surrealism, they were waging a war against the art establishment, and especially against art forms involving the “imitation of nature,” the “replication of the human body,” and the “illustration of literature” – that is, against academic realism, their arch-enemy. The academic realists headed by Xu Beihong and his students, positioned themselves as “anti-traditional Chinese literati amateurism” which for centuries had been exalted in the Chinese scholarly tradition. Ironically, Xu and his followers used one tradition – the Western nearly-dying academic realism – against the age-old Chinese artistic tradition that had thrived on literati amateurism, self-expressive brush strokes, and abbreviated composition, a tradition that had become so mannered and stale toward the end of the Qing dynasty.

Juelanshe’s attitudes towards the Chinese literati tradition, were ambivalent, to say the least. They did not know enough to turn their backs on Chinese traditional art nor did they claim to be the heirs of or rebels against that lineage. Their ultimate failure was their lack of inheritance, the lack of a tradition of their own against which they could declare their war. Nevertheless, Juelanshe and their manifesto had demonstrated certain avant-garde characteristics. In his studies of Western avant-gardism, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Poggioli argued that the avant-gardes aim for future-oriented utopias; they usually demonstrate antagonistic, anti-traditional, nihilistic, and agonistic attitudes; they are infantile, yet progressive.²⁰⁵ Most Juelanshe’s members were in their twenties and they experimented with various Western modernist forms. Lacking social and institutional connection, they were not taken seriously in the Chinese contemporary art world. To “promote their new art and incidentally their own careers in an indifferent, if

²⁰⁵ Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of Avant-garde*, 53-74.

not hostile, environment,”²⁰⁶ Juelanshe provided a gathering ground for these young people and a public venue where their voice could be heard.

The Art Periodical Media World

These young artists were conscious of the omnipotence of the mass media, especially in the 30s’ Shanghai, the home of more than four hundred vernacular magazines and journals of which over one hundred specialized in art and artistic activities.²⁰⁷ Shanghai, which boasted China’s largest publishing industry, was the home of the famous *Dianshi Studio Pictorial* (1884-98), *Dongfang Zazhi* (1904) (The East Magazine), and *Liangyou Pictorial* (1926) (The Young Companion) which had published news and photographs of the Storm and Stress Society’s four exhibitions between 1932 and 1935. *Liangyou*, perhaps the most popular urban pictorial magazine, periodically carried news of modern art exhibitions and photographs of works by individual artists, some of whom were returnees from the West or Japan. These publications meant that the urban reading public was at least exposed to certain trends in Western modern art.²⁰⁸

The media climate and the publishing industry of Shanghai were both amenable and stimulating to the modernist movement and provided ample opportunities for

²⁰⁶ Croizier (1993): 139.

²⁰⁷ The most complete catalogue on China’s art periodicals issued between 1911 and 1949 was Xu Zhihao’s *Zhongguo meishu qikan guoyan lu*, 1911 – 1949. It provides a list of art periodicals organized according to the year of their first issue, from 1911 to 1949. The period of the 1930s (before 1937) witnessed the “golden age” of art periodical publishing, as shown in Xu Zhihao, ed. *Zhongguo meishu qikan guoyan lu* 1911-1949 (Brief survey of Chinese fine arts periodicals during 1911-1949) (Shanghai: shuhua chubanshe 1992), 66-187. For the studies on the connection between art periodical publishing and its social context, see Caroline L. Waara, “Arts and Life: Public and Private Culture in Chinese Art Periodicals, 1912-1937” (Ph.D. dissertation, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1994), and Liu Ruikuan, “Zhongguo meishu de xiandaihua: meishu qikan yu meizhan huodong de fenxi (1911-1937) [Modernity in Chinese Art: Analysis of the Art Periodicals and the Activities of Art Exhibitions (1911-1937)]” (Ph.D. dissertation, National Taiwan Normal University, 2003).

²⁰⁸ For the connection between Shanghai modernity and the *Liangyou* magazine, see Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern, The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 64-67.

Chinese modern artists to explore recent developments in Western art and discover new venues for publicizing their art. Some art periodicals participated in introducing recent developments in European art, printing reproductions of Western artists' works, and translating art theories from the West. The best-known art periodicals that were devoted to introducing more contemporary European art were *Mei Yu* (Art Education), *Yishu* (the Arts), *Yishu shenhua* (Art and Life), *Xiandan Meishu* (Modern Art), *Yifeng* (Art Wind), *Apollo* and *Athena*. These latter two were closely associated with the Hangzhou National Art Academy which promoted the pedagogy of synthesizing art styles of the East and the West. *Dongfang Zazhi* (The East Magazine) introduced the theories of William Morris and many other modern trends as early as the 1920s. Between 1930 and 1931, *Meiyu* (Art Education) published translations of Croce and Lamartine and reproductions of Bourdelle's and Bouguereau's works. *Yishu xunkan* (L' Art or Art Tri-monthly), the periodical largely responsible for promoting the Storm and Stress Society and for publicizing its manifesto, may have done the most to facilitate an understanding of European modern art among the public. While *Yifen* (The Art Breeze) was best known for spreading the messages of Surrealism, *Apollo* and *Athena* published translations of Baudelaire's poems, Elie Faure's essay on Chinese art, and Clive Bell's work on Cézanne as well as introductory essays on Paleolithic art, Greek mythology, Leonardo, and the Pre-Raphaelites.²⁰⁹ Art critics and art historians such as Ni Yide, who had been trained in

²⁰⁹ See Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China*, 64-65; Maychin Kao, "China's Response to the West in Art: 1898-1937" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1983), 201-203; Croizier, "Post-Impressionists in Pre-War Shanghai: The *Juelanshe* (Storm Society) and the Fate of Modernism in Republican China" (1993), 140-150; and Liu Ruikuan's Chinese dissertation (2003), 7-10. Most of these journals dated between 1921 and 1937 can be found only in major libraries in Shanghai, Beijing, Hong Kong, and Taipei. Copies of *Liangyou* (The Young Companion); *Yifeng* (The Art Breeze); *Xiandai* (L' Contemporary); and *Dongfang Zazhi* (The East Magazine) were found and researched at the Library of Congress. Most photographic reproductions of the paintings done by members of the Storm and Stress

Japan, Teng Gu (1901-1941), trained in Germany, and Fu Lei (1905-1965) and Lin Wenzheng (1903-1989), both French-trained, had all actively participated in writing and translating European art theories and history.²¹⁰ Teng Gu translated Herbert Read's *The Meaning of Art* in 1933, while Feng Zikai translated parts of Ruskin's *Modern Painters* from a Japanese source in 1923. Tolstoy's *What is Art?* was translated in 1921.²¹¹ It has been argued that Shanghai readers would have been well informed about the latest trends of modern art from Europe within six months, and some even suggest, within two months. Nevertheless, the transmission of information from the West to Shanghai in the 1930s was almost instantaneous.²¹² The media climate that these publications and journals helped to create was, in Michael Sullivan's words, "civilized, cosmopolitan, stimulating, and confused."²¹³ It is hard to assess how these journals were generally received by the public or whether they were exclusively read within the art community. How much in-depth did these journal articles investigate the modern art of the West? How far-reaching were their articles among the general public, and how thoroughly did the translators and

Society and works by Pang Xunqin were found in the pages of these periodicals although their originals have been lost. These periodicals have provided valuable historical evidence.

²¹⁰ During the 1930s, Ni published nine books and numerous essays on Western art theory, techniques, and history. Among his most known essays are "How to appreciate Western Art" and "Discussion on the spirit of modern art," which were reprinted several times. He is also the first art critic to introduce Surrealistic painting, in his article of 1933, "The Surrealistic Painting." See Croizier, "Post-Impressionists in Pre-War Shanghai: The *Juelanshe* (Storm Society) and the Fate of Modernism in Republican China" (1993), 140, and *Ni Yide yishu suibi* (Shanghai Wenyi chubanshe, 1999), 56-108. Teng Gu (1901-1942) was a German-educated art historian and an art critic. In 1933 he translated Herbert Read's *The Meaning of Art* which was widely read by art students of the time.

²¹¹ Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (1996), 65.

²¹² Zheng Shengtian, "Waves Lashed the Bund from the West: Shanghai's Art Scene in the 1930s" in Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, and Zheng Shengtian, eds., *Shanghai Modern: 1919-1945* (Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2004), 178. Shen Kuiyi noted in his conference paper "Cubism in the Paris of the East" that "it was said that anything fashionable in Paris would appear in Shanghai two months later." See the International Symposium on "Cubism in Asia: Unbounded Dialogues" (Report, 2005), 217.

²¹³ Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (1996), 65.

transmitters of these Western modern art trends understand them?²¹⁴ Undoubtedly, this stimulating and metropolitan media environment existed only in Shanghai and a few other major cities.

The Japan Connection

In the 1920s and 30s, the Chinese came in contact with recent developments in Western modern art through two main channels, one being recently returned students from Paris, London, or Tokyo, and the other being the translations and periodical reproductions of works of Western modern artists, such as Picasso, Matisse, and Cézanne. Pang kept a Paris-purchased book on Cézanne next to him during his long journey home and during his periodic relocations to escape the Japanese invasion of Shanghai from 1937 to 1945.²¹⁵ Xu Zhimo, the Cambridge-returned poet and a champion of modern Western art, bought reproductions of Cézanne's works in Japan on his return stop en route from London.²¹⁶

Students with less financial support looked to Japan for their modernist inspiration. After spending a year in Japan from 1927 to 1928, Ni Yide soon began drawing on his Japanese sources to write introductory articles for art journals on Post-impressionism, Fauvism, Surrealism, and Dadaism.²¹⁷ Feng Zikai, who spent a year in Japan in 1921, returned home and translated parts of Ruskin's *Modern Painters* from Japanese in 1923. Pang Xunqin's wife, Qiu Ti (Schudy, 1906-1958) also studied in Japan

²¹⁴ Essays reproduced from these journals, such as Ni Yide's, suggest a rather rudimentary understanding of Western modern movements.

²¹⁵ Michael Sullivan, "Introduction," in *Modern Chinese Art; The Khoan and Michael Sullivan Collection* (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 2001), 13.

²¹⁶ Xu Beihong, "*Huo Zhi Bu Jie*," originally published in 1929 and reprinted in Shui Zhongtian and Lang Shaojun, ed. *Ershi Shiji Zhongguo Meishu Wenxuan* (The Selected Essays on Fine Arts in Twentieth-Century China) (Shanghai: Shuhua Chubanshe, 1996), 218 – 225.

²¹⁷ He returned prematurely in 1928 due to his rage against Japanese aggression in Jinan, China.

from 1928 to 1930.²¹⁸ Two other young members of the Storm and Stress Society, Yang Qiuren (1907-1983) and Yang Taiyang (b. 1909), who never left China, became familiar with the latest art movements in the West by way of Japanese publications they found in Shanghai. Yang Taiyang, in his 1988 interview with Croizier, recalled that in addition to looking into the works of Western modern artists through reproduction volumes, he also met modernist Japanese oil painters at the studios of Chinese painters who had studied in Tokyo.²¹⁹ The identity of these oil painters he encountered in Shanghai is unclear; however, the Japan connection was clearly demonstrated in the first National Exhibition of 1929, which included paintings by leading Japanese oil painters. Among them were Wada Eisaku, who had studied under Raphael Collin in Paris and Kuroda Seiki in Tokyo; Ishii Takutei, a pupil of Asai Chu and Fujishima Takeji (who was a teacher of Ni Yide); Mitsutani Junishiro, a follower of Matisse; the Academic realist Terauchi Manjiro; and Umehara Ryuzaburo, who attended the exhibition in person.²²⁰ In Japan, oil painting had already been established for half a century, and the Japanese connection proved to be a vital source of inspiration for the modernist movement in China.²²¹

²¹⁸ Pang Tao, ed., *Schudy* (Qiu Di) (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2006), 85. Which art school Qiu Ti had studied in Japan is yet to be confirmed. Pang Tao recalls that her mother refused to talk about her studies in Japan, being greatly affected by her experience in the Sino-Japanese war (1937–1945) during which time Qiu Ti and Pang, and their two young children had to retreat to interior China and endured much hardship.

²¹⁹ Croizier, “Post-Impressionists in Pre-War Shanghai: The *Juelanshe* (Storm Society) and the Fate of Modernism in Republican China,” (1993), 142.

²²⁰ Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (1996), 59.

²²¹ For Japan’s connection to modern Chinese art and literature, see Shu-mei Shih, *Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001); John Clark, “Yôga in Japan: Model or Exception? Modernity in Japanese Art 1850s-1940s: An International Comparison.” *Art History* 18, no. 2 (June 1995): 253-285; Liu Xiaolu, *Shijie meishu zhong de Zhongguo yu Riben meishu* (Nanning: Guangxi Meishu Chubanshe, 2001); Aida-Yuen Wong, *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), and Julia Andrews, “The Japanese Impact on the Republican Art World: The Construction of Chinese Art History as a Modern Field,” *Twentieth-Century China* 32, no.1 (2006): 4-35,

Admittedly, that most of the literature on Western art and theory derived from secondary sources was often poorly translated and introductory. Yet the proliferation of published journals and reproduction volumes clearly created a dynamic and stimulating media environment for the emergence of Juelanshe and its initial public appearance.

Most paintings produced by the members of Juelanshe in the first half of the 1930s have survived only in photographic reproductions in journal periodicals. The pictorial magazines and art journals that carried the news and reproduced the works of the Storm and Stress Society include *Liangyou huabao* (the Young Companion), *Shidai Huabao* (Modern Pictorial), *Meishu Shenhuo* (Arts and Life), *Yishu Xunkan* (L'Art or Art Trimonthly), *Yifeng* (The Art Breeze), and *Xiandai* (*Les Contemporaines*), a literary journal promoting modern literary styles and trends under the editorship of Shi Zhecun.

Pang's First Solo-Exhibition and the Storm and Stress Society's First Group Exhibition

Between 1932 and 1935, Juelanshe mounted four annual exhibitions in Shanghai. The first was held in October, 1932, after the group's manifesto proclamation in September.²²² On September 15, 1932, Pang staged his first solo-exhibition in Shanghai following his return from Paris three years before. According to his memoir, to save money, his solo show and the Juelanshe's group exhibition were organized back-to-back in the same gallery space, at *Zhonghua xueyi she* (Chinese Art Study Society) in the French concession. Shanghai's contemporary public exhibition culture was a lively and invigorating one, even though the public gallery was a relatively new phenomenon,

and *Cross Cultural Artistic Exchange in Later Chinese and Japanese History* (Columbus: Institute for Chinese Studies, Ohio State University Press, forthcoming).

²²² Due to the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in early 1931 and invasive fighting in Shanghai on December 8 of the same year, Juelanshe's first exhibition was postponed to October of 1932.

having been imported from Japan.²²³ The city's first public exhibition of *Xihua* (Western-style) artworks had been held in 1915, marking the first ever display of oil paintings in Chinese history.²²⁴

The most publicized and the best-known exhibition in Shanghai had been the first National Art Exhibition in April, 1929, sponsored by the Ministry of Education. That wide-ranging show featured not only traditional paintings (*Guohua*), but also Western-style paintings (*Xihua*), plus sculptures, prints, architectural designs, and photography. Of the 900 entries, 354 were oil paintings, and a little over 400 were traditional style paintings. It was the first comprehensive exhibition where Western-style paintings (*Xihua*) measured up in numbers to the *Guohua* (the National paintings).²²⁵

It was in the context of this exhibition momentum that Pang's solo show and Juelanshe's first exhibition were showcased. *Shenbao*, the widely circulated Shanghai newspaper reported his solo exhibition.²²⁶ The October 16, 1932 issue of *Shidai huabao* (*Time Pictorial*) published a page titled "Shanghai Yanghua jie (Shanghai Western Painting Field)." This page (Fig. 14) features three of Pang's paintings, including the *Sad Melody* (*Beiqu*, Fig. 13), and a photograph of Pang Xunqin (Fig.28) standing in front of his painting *Three Women* (Fig. 29) that was shown in his solo-exhibition. Pablo Picasso, Pang's favorite artist, painted the "three women" subject numerous times (Fig. 30), and Fernand Léger's iconic *Le Grand Déjeuner* (Three Women), dated 1921, must have been

²²³ For centuries, Chinese literati painters shared their artworks among like-minded peers in their private homes and gardens, or their paintings were viewed by private dealers and in frame shops.

²²⁴ Liu Haisu's bold exhibition of nudes is widely written about in the history of Chinese modern art; however, its historical significance is often obscured by its scandalous nature and its sensational flavor. This exhibition triggered an official ban on nude portraits in public galleries for a few years, until 1922.

²²⁵ Zhao Li and Yu Ding, eds., *Documents of Chinese Oil Painting, 1542-2000* (Changsha: Hunai Meishu Chubanshe, 2002), 553.

²²⁶ *Shenbao*, September, 22, 1932.

all too familiar to Pang, who had lived in the same city as Léger. *Yishu Xunkan*, the journal most closely associated with the Juelanshe, published Juelanshe's *Manifesto* and introduced Juelanshe's members to the public in its fifth issue (October 11, 1932) and their sixth issue (November, 1932) published a Picasso painting titled "three women."²²⁷ The subject of "three women" may have been popular in Shanghai; in the subsequent year, 1933, writer Shen Congwen, Pang's contemporary, published a novel titled "San nūxing (Three Women)."²²⁸

In his solo-exhibition, Pang displayed about seventy paintings, sketches, and drawings; some of the works were painted in Paris and some were created after his return to China.²²⁹ The first day of the show drew in over five hundred Chinese and foreign visitors from the Shanghai expatriate community. Pang's exhibition seemed to have secured more exposure in Shanghai among foreign residents than natives. The French newspaper *Le Journal de Shanghai (Shanghai Ribao)* ran a page with a title "Quelques oeuvres du peintre chinois Hiukin Pang." The coverage included photographic reproductions of seven of Pang's exhibition paintings and a photograph of the artist (Fig. 31).²³⁰ By late 1931, Pang had already been introduced to the Shanghai's expatriate community; three of his paintings had been selected for an exhibition organized by the

²²⁷ I noted in my diary entry for July 31, 2007, that I have seen the print of Picasso's "three women" published in *Yishu xunkan* 1, no. 11 (November, 1932), housed at the National Library of China, Beijing. Regrettably, I did not obtain a copy of this page and now I don't remember which version of Picasso's "three women" was published in *Yishu xunkan* and its date. Picasso painted numerous versions.

²²⁸ Shen Congwen published his novel in *Xin shehui banyuekan* (New Society Semi-monthly), vol. 8 to vol. 9, 1933, in Shanghai. The connection between Shen and Pang will be further explored in chapter four.

²²⁹ *Shenbao*, September 22, 1932, and *Nanhua wenyi* 1, no. 15 (August, 1932).

²³⁰ Pang Xunqin in his memoir indicated that the English newspaper *The China Weekly Review* (or *Mileshi pinlunbao* in Chinese started by Thomas F. F. Millard) included a critical review of Pang's solo exhibition. Pang's Memoir, 133. I have searched the entire September and October issue of *The China Weekly Review*, 1932 in the Shanghai Library, Xujiahui cangshulou, but did not find any review article related to Pang's solo exhibition and the first Juelanshe exhibition.

Shanghai American Women's Club which gave him initial public exposure.²³¹ At this exhibition, he met Mrs. Chester Fritz, whose husband was a Jewish tycoon²³² in Shanghai, and who, herself, was a deputy editor of *The China Weekly Review* (*Mileshi pinlunbao*). An influential Shanghai socialite, she staged a reception for Pang as the guest of honor at her residence, where she had previously entertained Bernard Shaw and Charlie Chaplin.²³³ At that reception, Pang met the French consul, E. Koechilin (*Kekelin* in Chinese). Impressed by Pang's work, Koechilin subsequently purchased his painting titled *Wu Ding* or *Roof Top*, one which, so he claimed, Western artists could never possibly have conceived. Koechilin died on his way back to Paris in 1932; consequently the whereabouts of this painting remain a mystery. Pang sold only one small painting to a foreign buyer at his solo exhibition.²³⁴

Pang's Chinese compatriots who attended both his solo show and, subsequently, the first Juelanshe exhibition were mainly art students and Shanghai intelligentsias, writers, fellow artists, art critics, and the like.²³⁵ Pang Xunqin's French-trained colleague and friend, Fu Lei, a literary and art critic and a translator of the French literature of Romain Rolland and others, was an active promoter of modernists. He wrote a glowing

²³¹ Yuan Junyi, *Pang Xunqin Zhuan* (*Biography of Pang Xunqin*) (Beijing Art and Craft Publishing House, 1995), 73. Pang's Memoir, 124-25.

²³² The direct connection between the Storm and Stress Society and the Shanghai Jewish community has not been established; however, for the topic of Jewish communities in Shanghai, see David Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis & Jews: The Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai, 1938-1945* (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1976); James R. Ross, *Escape to Shanghai: A Jewish Community in China* (New York: Free Press, 1993); and Ernest Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge: A Memoir of the World War II Jewish Ghetto* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995). The first recorded Jewish art exhibition by a club of Jewish refugee artists (ARTA) in Shanghai was held in May of 1943. See Li Chao, *A History of Oil Painting in Shanghai* (Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1995), 82-83.

²³³ Yuan Junyi, *Pang Xunqin Zhuan* (*Biography of Pang Xunqin*, 1995), 69; Pang's Memoir, 124-25.

²³⁴ Pang's Memoir, 125. E. Koechilin was stationed in Shanghai from December 10, 1928 and left his post in 1932. Thanks to Mr. Zhang J. J. at the Library of Congress who helped me locate Koechilin's name in French.

²³⁵ Pang's Memoir, 171-182.

article titled “Pang Xunqin’s Dreams” to introduce Pang and his paintings to the public. Lei’s article first appeared in *Yishu Xunkan (L’Art)*, September 21, 1932. In the article, Lei explained how Pang had turned from being a medical student to a student of music, and then to art, explored his Parisian experience, and analyzed his painting style of patterned fragmentation and expressive surrealism.²³⁶ Fu Lei’s zealous promotion of Pang contrasted to the benign response from the general public. After his solo exhibition, Pang sold only one painting, *Spanish Dance* (Fig. 15), to Xi Guansheng, who owned the Guansheng Restaurant chain. The two hundred yuan Pang realized from this sale enabled him to pay off the debt incurred to fund his exhibition.²³⁷ Ralph Croizier argued that the urban intellectuals were receptive to new trends in modern art in the era of cultural iconoclasm after the May Fourth movement and that the bourgeoisie provided some economic support for the modernists’ survival since they often sent their children to various art schools where these modern artists were faculty members. Nevertheless, financial sponsorship for modernist groups on the part of the general public and the government was rare; although “modern-minded intellectuals might be interested in their art and some of the Westernized Shanghai bourgeoisie mildly curious, the former could not afford to buy their paintings and the latter would not.”²³⁸ To cover the expenses needed for funding Juelanshe’s exhibitions, Pang Xunqin and his fellow artists had to paint for advertisement brochures and covers of magazine and commercial packages.²³⁹

²³⁶ *Yishu Xunkan* 1, no. 3 (September, 1932), 12-13. For Fu Lei’s role and his connection with Juelanshe and Pang Xunqin, see Hu Zhen, “Fu Lei yishu piping sixiang yanjiu (Studies on Fu Lei’s thoughts on art critics)” (Ph.D. dissertation, Jinan daxue, University of Jinan, 2005), 24-64.

²³⁷ Pang’s Memoir, 133. Pang still saw in 1939, the *Spanish Dance* hanging in Xi’s restaurants at Hankuo.

²³⁸ Croizier “Post-Impressionists in Pre-War Shanghai: The *Juelanshe* (Storm Society) and the Fate of Modernism in Republican China” (1993), 141.

²³⁹ Refer to chapter three of this dissertation on Pang Xunqin’s design. Juelanshe’s members’ difficulty in selling their paintings was mentioned in Croizier, “Post-Impressionists in Pre-War Shanghai: The

Given Juelanshe's meager financial circumstances, Pang's turn to design at this time was both pragmatically motivated and necessary.²⁴⁰ Perhaps he felt he was reliving his life in Paris, only now it was the Paris of the East.²⁴¹

***Such is Paris and Such is Shanghai* – Colonial Modernism vs. Metropolitan Modernism**

Fascinated by the metropolis of Shanghai (Fig. 32), the co-founder of the Juelanshe, Ni Yide, once wrote: "Shanghai is a place that we all admire. Although we are not given a chance to live in Paris, which is a city of art, at least, in China, we have to be in Shanghai, which is the hub of the newly emerging art. It has a vibrant spirit, and one can easily experience all kinds of new excitement."²⁴²

If Ni Yide championed Shanghai's metropolitanism, Pang Xunqin's projection of the city remained rather ambivalent. His oil painting of 1931 (now lost), titled *Enigma of Life*, and sometimes referred as *Such is Shanghai*, betrays Pang's ambivalent and fragmented view of the city (Fig. 33). Patterned like a collage, motifs like an opera mask, a poker "king" and "queen," a female beauty, cards of red heart and black jack seem to float translucently, overlapping and melting into one another, denying the space in between. A dagger in the right-hand corner stabs into the space of the cards. Almost invisibly, a nude female body seems to hang behind the surface. A Chinese dollar bill

Juelanshe (Storm Society) and the Fate of Modernism in Republican China" (1993), 141-142; in Yuan Junyi, *Pang Xunqin Zhuan* (1995), 79, 86; and in Pang's Memoir, 133, 139.

²⁴⁰ After 1949, Pang devoted his professional life to compiling the *History of Chinese Decorative Designs*, which took more than thirty years to complete, with interruptions by the Anti-Rightist movement in 1957 and the Cultural Revolution from 1966-1976. Pang was an early advocate of applied graphic art in China where a tint of professionalism had been detested by the literati culture for centuries. Pang's turn to design is discussed in chapter three of this dissertation.

²⁴¹ Shanghai in the 20s and 30s was often called as the "Paris of the East." Refer to Shen Kuiyi, "Cubism in the Paris of the East."

²⁴² Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, and Zheng Shengtian, eds. *Shanghai Modern: 1919-1945*, 180.

sign is visible at the bottom, and a miniature Greek cross and a dim candle light faintly illuminate a tiny spot. Desolation and melancholy loom large in the painting. Pang Tao, Pang Xunqin's daughter, recalled how Pang Xunqin once told her that upon returning to Shanghai he was shocked by how moneyed Shanghai was and by people's eager pursuit of money.²⁴³ Shu-mei Shih, the literary historian in her seminal book, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937* (2005), points out that the culture of consumption in Shanghai is manifested in "buying modern commodities and frequenting the quintessential urban spaces such as theater and cafes" as "the mode of participating in the city."²⁴⁴ Shih's assessment strikes a similar cord to what Ni called "all kinds of new excitements" in this metropolis. However, Pang's somber critique of capitalist modernity seems to nullify his peer Ni Yide's exuberant praise of the city.

If Ni Yide equated Shanghai with Paris, "the city of art" as he called it, and even lamented his own lack of opportunity to live there, Pang, on the other hand, having experienced life in Paris, had a rather bleak view of the city. Pang's *Such is Paris* (Fig. 34 and 35), produced in the same year as *Such is Shanghai*, is equally fragmented. It reveals Paris as a highly chaotic, sexualized, and racialized city, suggesting Pang's ambiguous recollection of the cosmopolitan. Juxtaposed Parisian icons pack the entire composition. A balcony, night lights, the café, Parisian women, a Bohemian with a cigar, a half-faced policeman, a dark skinned woman obscured by a white nude, a urinal attached to the nude's right thigh and alluding to Marcel Duchamp's infamous *Fountain* of 1917, all seemingly random motifs, transform a distant Parisian reality into a surrealistic dream.

²⁴³ Pang Tao, "Pang Xunqin, Qiu Ti zhaoqi zuopin jiezhu" in *Meishu yanjiu*, no. 4, (2001): 26.

²⁴⁴ Shu-Mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 340.

The King of Hearts in *Such is Shanghai* is desolate and melancholy, whereas the Queen of Hearts in *Such is Paris* emanates an air of languishment and indifference.

The visual and textual evocation of the two cities, Shanghai and Paris, by Ni Yide and Pang Xunqin suggests a point of connection to another Shanghai modernist, Shi Zhecun (1905-2003). Active in the early 1930s, Shi was the focus of Shu-mei Shih's book, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937*. Shi Zhecun, a cardinal proponent of cosmopolitan modernism, was educated in a French missionary university in Shanghai, was fluent in French and English, and translated into Chinese numerous Western psychoanalysis-types of literature and all the major works by *Fin-de-Siècle* Viennese writer Schnitzler, a Freud contemporary.

In a 1990 interview, Shi Zhecun confided to Shu-mei Shih that "if he had had the opportunity to go to France, he would probably have never returned to China." Reflecting on his remarks, Shu-mei Shih poignantly observes, "This privileging of France, [Shi Zhecun's stance which, take note, echos Ni Yide's sentiment], much as one may call it cosmopolitan openness, was also born of an absence of actual lived experience in France as the racial *Other*."²⁴⁵

Based on her extensive studies of what she calls "textually mediated" Shanghai literary modernists, Shu-mei Shih has convincingly postulated the so-called "bifurcating strategy" that flaunted the "metropolitan West/Japan" and denied the "colonial West/Japan," in the "cultural imaginary" of the Shanghai modernists. "By this strategy," Shu-Mei Shih argues, "the cosmopolitans chose *not* to engage with the racial, economic, and other hierarchies in their lived experience of foreign settlement, but instead chose to

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 346.

project their vision to faraway metropolitan centers where a liberal hegemony operated in the garb of civilization, persuasion, rule of law, and consent.”²⁴⁶

Ni Yide’s admiring projection of Paris, a city in which he had never set foot, contrasts with Pang Xunqin’s ambivalent visualization of the West where he had lived as the racial *Other*: one perspective confirms and the other ruptures the bifurcation strategy by the Shanghai literary modernists.

Pang Xunqin’s ambivalent artistic evocation of Paris, with a bohemian man dominating the composition and an ethnic-looking figure hidden behind a white nude, likely alludes to the social and racial dimension of the city. Pang was refused admission to the Ecole des Arts Décoratifs (Institute of Decorative Arts of Paris) due to the institute’s policy of rejecting students of Chinese ethnicity.²⁴⁷ In his memoir, Pang enumerates various incidents of racial prejudice he experienced as a student in l’Académie Julian. These experiences may shed some light on the account by one of Juelanshe’s members, Zhou Duo, of his impression of Pang Xunqin in 1932, at the first Juelanshe exhibition. “When Pang met a Chinese, he would bow eighty degrees.... If a foreigner came to see his paintings, he would first point out how good his paintings are.”²⁴⁸

Shi Zhecun’s refusal to face his colonial experience in semi-colonial Shanghai and his longing to move permanently to Paris contrasts sharply with Pang Xunqin’s interpretation of his colonial experience. I would argue that it is precisely Pang’s colonial experience as the colonized in Shanghai and the racial Other in Paris that offers a case of

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 374.

²⁴⁷ Pang’s Memoir, 43.

²⁴⁸ *Yishu xunkan* 1, no. 5, (October 11, 1932): 10.

removal from the “textually mediated” Shanghai cosmopolitan modernists’ bifurcation strategy that Shu-mei Shih so ably illustrated. Significant is the account of how in 1925 a Jesuit father in Pang’s Shanghai missionary university, Zhendan University, witheringly belittled Pang by saying, “You Chinese cannot produce any great artist.” So angered was he by the Jesuit father’s insulting statement that Pang decided to go to Paris to study art to repudiate the insult. Pang’s eventual return to China, after experimenting with various French modernist vocabularies, was largely propelled by a question from a senior French art critic who asked him how much he knew of the art of his native country, to which Pang could hardly utter an answer. Pang turned to the East, and never looked back. Pang’s colonial experience after living in both Paris and Shanghai, as contrasted with Shi Zhecun’s denial of his own colonial experience, offers a case of disjuncture to the cosmopolitan modernists’ insistence on covalence with the modernism of the West and engages with the colonial modernism or at least blurs boundaries between the two kinds of modernism.

Nevertheless, Pang Xunqin was as much a part of this Shanghai cosmopolitan modernism as were Ni and Shi. When Shi Zhecun served as the chief editor of *Les Contemporaines* from 1932 to 1935, a leading journal promoting Western modernist literature, Pang designed for one major issue (*kuangdahao*, November, 1934) a cover and signed his name in the French phonetic form, Hiunkin (Fig. 36). The untitled cover design was a Picasso-like outline of faceless sailors, one of them playing an accordion; the anonymity of modern life may have been alluded to here. Such designs of distorted and fragmented forms often adorn the covers of *Les Contemporaines* (Fig. 37). The fact that Pang’s cover design was chosen for this harbinger of modernist journals in China

locates him in company with the cosmopolitan modernism championed by Shi Zhecun, or at least it attests to his participatory role in the cosmopolitan modernism.

Juelanshe's Four Exhibitions (1932-1935)

Each October between 1932 and 1935, Juelanshe staged a group exhibition. For the first one, *Yishu xunkan* (L' Art) published a special issue.²⁴⁹ There were about fifty paintings on display, including non-members' works. Pang's *Such is Paris* (Fig. 34, 35) was among the works on display, in addition to his *Nude* (Fig. 38), *Landscape, A Sad Melody* (Fig. 13), *Tengyi* (bamboo chair, Fig. 5), *A Portrait* (Fig. 21), *Comfort* (Fig. 39), and *the Café* (Fig. 11).²⁵⁰ Some were painted in Paris and brought back while others were executed in 1931 and 1932 before his solo exhibition. Paintings like *Spanish Dance* (Fig. 15) and *In the Studio* (Fig. 40), which were part of his solo exhibition between September 15 and 25, 1932, were perhaps not shown in the Juelanshe group exhibition in October. Almost all the originals from this period are lost, leaving only the prints of them scattered in the publications of 1931 and 1932. Pang continued to paint in areas like still life (Fig. 41 and 42) and portraiture (Fig. 43, 44, 45). The only surviving still life, the *Lü zun* (Green Wine Vessel, Fig. 42) from 1930 is an oil painting of a wine vessel and cup set alongside a small laughing Buddha statue. This oil on canvas was painted while Pang was recuperating in his hometown, Changshu, in 1930, after his long journey back from the West. He picked up a pair of hometown's most ordinary objects, a ceramic wine vessel and a cup, and set them against an abstract background of geometric shapes, including rectangles and triangles, painted in shades of dull red, green, and beige. The cup in dull

²⁴⁹ *Yishu xunkan* 1, no. 5, October 1932.

²⁵⁰ Li Chao, "Jielanshe yanjiu (Studies on the Storm Society)." *Meishu yanjiu* (January, 2008): 73.

beige is dwarfed by the large black-colored wine container, reflecting its black shadow. Sitting on a reddish black surface, perhaps hinting at furniture surface of rosewood, (a type of deep dark red wood highly popular among the upper-class Chinese families since the 15th century), the three objects are saturated in thick black and beige paints with tints of green. Featuring Chinese household items painted in oil against an abstract background, the painting itself defies a simple definition and categorization.

Most of Pang's paintings exhibited and published up to 1932, however, reveal his urban sentimentality and a nostalgic confusion regarding cosmopolitan pleasure and chaos, e.g. *The Café* (Fig. 10 and 11), *Riddle of Life* or *Such is Shanghai* (Fig. 33), and *Such is Paris* (Fig. 34). *Such is Paris*, with its juxtaposed and fragmented icons of Parisian life, and the puzzling *Riddle of Life (Such is Shanghai)*, with its melancholy mood and urban motifs, typify his contemporary style. The city under Pang's brushes was "fragmented, sexualized, and hallucinatory,"²⁵¹ while the countryside as represented by the hometown he depicted in this still life *Lü zun* (Green Wine Vessel), was solid, innocent, and earthy. With these paintings at his solo exhibition and at the first Juelanshe group exhibition, Pang Xunqin ushered himself onto the stage of the Shanghai art world.

According to Pang's memoir, all four Juelanshe group exhibitions were set up at inconvenient locations in the city, thereby failing to draw large crowds of visitors, and often the exhibition hall was inadequately lit. The second exhibition, in October 1933, moved to an even less desirable location; attendance was down, but media coverage increased.²⁵² The popular pictorial magazine, *Liangyou* (The Young Companion),

²⁵¹ Richard Vinograd, "Relocations: Spaces of Chinese Visual Modernity," in Maxwell K. Hearn and Judith G. Smith, eds., *Chinese Art Modern Expressions* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 167.

²⁵² Shanghai Fukaisen shijieshe litang (The Guess Hall of the Shanghai Ferguson World Society) .

featured a whole page with eight pictures of Juelanshe members' paintings (Fig. 26); Pang Xunqin's semi-abstract *Guotu* or *Design* was included (Fig. 46).²⁵³ *Shidai huabao* (Time Pictorial, November issue of 1933) also covered their second exhibition and published eleven art works from the exhibition and photographs of some individual artists beneath the printed works. They are from the right, Pang Xunqin, Wang Jiyuan, Qiu Ti, Duan Pingyou, Ni Yide, Zhou Duo, Zhang Xian, and Yang Taiyang (Fig. 47).²⁵⁴

Pang's painting *A Blind* (Fig. 48), published in *Yifeng* magazine February, 1933, and perhaps painted between 1931 and 1932, may shed some light on the artist's state of mind at the time.²⁵⁵ Bearing a resemblance to Pang, the blind person with his overstated hands, searching forward, may imply Pang's own state of searching like a blind person; the road ahead still eluded him. Living under the shadow of his contemporary Western modernists and of the overarching canon of Chinese traditional art, Pang was not yet able to set forth on his own path. The self-referential painting articulates Pang's desolation and despair.

A woman of beauty and talent, destined to brighten Pang's path, appeared in his life at this time. Qiu Ti (Fig. 49), or Schudy, the name she adopted while studying in Japan in 1928, met Pang Xunqin at his solo exhibition in September, 1932. She was captivated by Pang's rendition of modern cosmopolitan life, especially in his two paintings, the *Riddle of Life (Such is Shanghai)* and *Such is Paris*, and Qiu Ti was equally

²⁵³ *Liangyou*, no. 82, (November 30, 1933), 30. I photographed this page from *Liangyou* in the Library of Congress holdings, summer 2007.

²⁵⁴ *Shidai huabao* 5, no. 1, (November 1, 1933), no pagination. The picture of this page was taken by the author from the copy of *Shidai huabao* at the Shanghai Library on July 3, 2009

²⁵⁵ *Yifeng* 1, no. 2 (February 1, 1933): 8.

mesmerized by the artist himself and his Parisian experience.²⁵⁶ Soon falling in love, they married at the end of 1932. Schudy, the name by which she signed most of her works, studied oil painting at the Shanghai Art Academy for three years and went to Japan for further study in 1927, returning to Shanghai in 1928.²⁵⁷ Qiu Ti became a Juelanshe member after the society's first exhibition in October, 1932. At the second Juelanshe exhibition, October, 1933, Qiu Ti's still life in oil *Hua* (Flower, Fig. 49) received the first-prize award and was widely publicized.²⁵⁸ In this year (1933), Pang painted his young wife in this elegant oil portrait (Fig. 50) that immortalizes her youth, her grace, and her fragile and gentle nature.²⁵⁹

By the time of Juelanshe's third annual exhibition in October, 1934, the society and Pang Xunqin had gained considerable public attention. His *Untitled* (Fig. 51) was on view in June, 1934, at the first exhibition of the Yifeng Society, an independent art society established by Sun Fuxi, also a Paris-returnee. The painting survived in a black and white print in the June-issue of *Yifeng* magazine.²⁶⁰ The art critic Li Baoquan offered a short comment on Pang's painting in his review of the Yifeng exhibition published in

²⁵⁶ Pang Tao, ed., *Schudy* (2006), 118, 134. Qiu Ti was impressed by Pang's talent after seeing his paintings at his first solo exhibition in September, 1932. They began dating and were married, either in late 1932 or early 1933.

²⁵⁷ For studies on Qiu Ti, see Pang Tao, ed., *Schudy* (2006); Sun Ping's *Bainian jiazuo, Pang Xunqin*, (2002), 257-263; Shui Tianzhong's "Tanxiu Qiu Ti (Search for Qiu Ti)" in *Meishu yanjiu*, no. 4 (1997): 42-46; "Yishu yu hunyin (Art and Marriage)" in Huang Li, ed., *Zhongguo Nixing Zhuyi* (Feminism in China) (Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe 2004), 218-19; *Three Generation of Chinese Modernism: Qiu Ti, Pang Tao and Lin Yan*, an exhibition catalogue (Canada, Vancouver: Art Beatus Gallery, April 1998). Amanda Thomas at the University of Kansas is writing a doctoral dissertation on Qiu Ti which would shed more light on her artistic life and contribution to the modernist movement in Shanghai.

²⁵⁸ *Shidai huabao* 5, no. 4 (December 16, 1933), no pagination. According Yuan Junyi, the monetary award was worth fifty yuan at the time, and the money for the award was actually secretly borrowed from Pang's friends or his own mother. Yuan Junyi, *Pang Xunqin Zhuan* (1995), 79.

²⁵⁹ Qiu Ti died at the age of 52 in 1958, the year Pang Xunqin was branded a "rightist" by the Communist government and stripped of his professorship.

²⁶⁰ *Yifeng* 2, no. 6 (June, 1934): no pagination.

the September issue of *Yifeng*.²⁶¹ “Pang Xunqin’s *Untitled*, grey-toned, with its characters’ weary composure, despondent mood, lethargic appearance, in every way expresses a kind of mood, a mood of cosmopolitan life. He [Pang] is indeed a true representative illustrator of mega-cosmopolitan life of Shanghai.” By this point, Pang had established himself as having the ability to capture the mood of cosmopolitan life. The *Daughters of Our Time* (Fig. 52) expresses a similar kind of sensibility.²⁶²

The Society’s third exhibition drew the largest attendance as once again it made available a wide range of styles and included some non-members’ works. The society was acting as something of a magnet for Shanghai modernist-inclined painters and provided them an opportunity, albeit it limited, to show their works.²⁶³ This exhibition was staged at the hall of the Sino-French Friendship Society (zhongfa lianyi hui) at Pushi road. The exhibition, lasting from October 10 to 14, 1934, displayed more than forty paintings.²⁶⁴ *Shidai huabao*’s October, 1934, issue published a page featuring six paintings by Juelanshe members (Fig. 53) and its cover was graced by Pang Xunqin’s painting *Daughters of Our Time* (Fig. 52). At this exhibition, Pang inaugurated his famous painting *Son of the Earth* (Fig. 1), creating quite a sensation.

The Son of the Earth and Untitled (or the Presser): The Politics of Art in Shanghai

One of the myths conjured up by cosmopolitan modernists like Shi Zhecun is the claim of having an apolitical stance by virtue of their insistence on the “autonomy of art.” Shu-mei Shih argues that writer Shi Zhecun’s conscious choice to remain politically

²⁶¹ Li Baoquan “Zou chu yifeng she zhanlan hui yi hou (After coming out of Yifeng society’s exhibition),” *Yifeng* 2, no. 9 (September, 1934): 21.

²⁶² Published as the cover for *Shidai huabao* 6, no. 12 (October 10, 1934).

²⁶³ Pang’s Memoir, 143.

²⁶⁴ “wenyi xiaoxi (Art News),” *Yifeng* 2, no. 11 (November 1934), 94.

neutral is a form of “depoliticized cosmopolitanism.” Without doubt, the cosmopolitan modernists were submerged in the left-wing literary and cultural movement led Lu Xun, and could not claim much political capital. However, their literary and artistic works were by no means divorced from any politics. The inseparability of art and politics in an age of “Mechanical Reproduction,” in Walter Benjamin’s sense, is inevitable. Here the question is, whose politics: the politics of affiliation with any given establishment or the politics of “self-activity,” in Brecht’s phrase?²⁶⁵

Disturbed by reading a news story regarding drought victims in the south, Pang Xunqin in 1934 painted the mannerist-inspired “modern *Pietà*” – *the Son of the Earth* (Fig. 1). This painting elicited death threats and brought to the brink of arrest by the GMT National government, for the painting was thought to be too close to the Leftists, a view that suggests the incompetence of the current GMT government.²⁶⁶ In the painting, the deliberately elongated and thinly-outlined figures, echoing the early Picasso and Modigliani, are not life-like according to academic realist standards, but neither are they abstract. The painting evokes a sense of bemoaning desolation and despair. “There is a gentle sadness, and a touch of Pang’s softly lyrical or decorative temperament, to the picture.”²⁶⁷ The political liability of this painting is another instance that negates the cosmopolitan modernists’ claim of an apolitical stance and their insistence on the “purity of art.” The political consequence of this painting signaled that a cosmopolitan modernist like Pang could not immunize himself from the politics of art in the Shanghai of the 30s.

²⁶⁵ Bertolt Brecht, in Tom Kuhn and Steve Giles, ed., *Brecht on Art and Politics* (London: Methuen Press, 2003).

²⁶⁶ Pang’s Memoir, 127.

²⁶⁷ Croizier, “Post-Impressionists in Pre-War Shanghai: The *Juelanshe* (Storm Society) and the Fate of Modernism in Republican China” (1993), 148.

The Storm and Stress Society failed almost completely to enter the political space of Chinese modern art. Their refreshing voice condemning the stagnant state of the Chinese art world was quickly muted by the roar of attack from the group of left-wing wood-cut artists allied with Lu Xun.²⁶⁸ For these obviously Western-inspired and avowedly individualistic avant-gardes, there was no place for them in the face of national crisis and impending Japanese invasion. The most serious accusation from the leftists was that they were both foreign and irrelevant to China's current national needs.²⁶⁹

By 1932, the left-wing art movement was well underway. Lu Xun, the most famous writer in Chinese modern literature, and leftist intellectuals had sponsored a new woodcut movement that linked the visual arts directly with social and political purposes. All progressive artists, so Lu Xun proclaimed, should unite and follow the national revolution, denouncing factional schools of modernism, of "painting for painting's sake." "If the early realist-modernist debate had been about style, the leftist critics attacked the modernists over content and purpose."²⁷⁰

Modernists were ill-equipped to shoulder the national and political burden, first because of their emphasis on stylistic innovation and personal creativity, and secondly, and most relevant to the Chinese situation, because of their obviously foreign connection. In a time of renewed threat of foreign invasion, this was a fatal liability.

²⁶⁸ For the study on the left-wing wood-cut movement and its association with Lu Xun, see Xiaobing Tang, *Origins of the Chinese Avant-Garde – the Modern Woodcut Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Frances Dal Largo, "Between High and Low: Modernism, Continuity, and Moral Mission in Chinese Printmaking Practices, 1930-1945" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 2005); Shirley Hsiao-ling Sun, "Lu Hsun and the Chinese Woodcut Movement: 1929-1935" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1974), and her *Modern Chinese Woodcuts* (San Francisco: Chinese Culture Foundation, 1979).

²⁶⁹ Croizier, "Post-Impressionists in Pre-War Shanghai: The *Juelanshe* (Storm Society) and the Fate of Modernism in Republican China" (1993), 143-144.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 148.

Despite being politically uncommitted to the revolutionary left, an affiliation which they might have regarded as an imposition on their creative freedom and something that would subject their art to even greater ideological control, modernists were not insensitive to the miserable conditions prevailing in their society. In the last two exhibitions, Pang and some other members engaged with subject matter that would integrate the theme of a suffering nation with their modern stylistic approach.

The society's fourth exhibition, which was staged October 19-23 of 1935, in the same venue as their first exhibition, *Zhonghua xueyi she* at the French concession, concluded the society's four-year life span.²⁷¹ *Shidai huabao* announced that final exhibition with a page featuring seven paintings by Juelanshe members (Fig. 54).²⁷² *Liangyou's* November 1935 issue highlighted this exhibition and published photos of eight paintings (Fig. 55) by different Juelanshe members, including Pang Xunqin, Zhou Taizheng, Zhou Duo, Yang Taiyang, Ni Yide, Yang Qiuren, Zhang Xian, and Qiu Ti.²⁷³ *Xinren zhoukan* (New People Weekly) published two pages containing nine prints of Juelanshe members' paintings (Fig. 56).²⁷⁴ Both *Liangyou* and *Xinren zhoukan* (New People Weekly) included a *Still Life* (Fig. 57) by Qiu Ti and portraits by Zhang Xuan and Yang Taiyang. Zhou Zhentai's *Repairing a Machine* (Fig. 58) and Pang Xunqin's painting *Untitled* (Fig. 59), however, repeatedly appeared in *Shidai huabao* (*Time Pictorial*), *Liangyou*, *Xinren zhoukan* (New People Weekly), and *Meishu shenghuo* (Art

²⁷¹ Soon after the fourth exhibition, Juelanshe was disbanded.

²⁷² *Shidai huabao* (*Time Pictorial*) 8, no. 9, October 12, 1935, no pagination.

²⁷³ *Liangyou*, no. 111 (November, 1935). *Liangyou* made a mistake by labeling the exhibition as the third one. It is actually the fourth and the last of Juelanshe's exhibitions and was held in October, 1935. If the photographs were related to the third exhibition that took place in October, 1934, it would have taken *Liangyou* magazine a whole year to report it, which would be utterly impossible.

²⁷⁴ *Xinren zhouka* 2, no. 10, November 2, 1935.

and Life).²⁷⁵ These two paintings had received the most media exposure by appearing in almost all the major art publications of the time.²⁷⁶

Pang's mystifying painting, *Untitled*, raises questions about the omnipresence of industrial capitalism in a semi-colonial modernity. The painting incorporates three fingers in the top left corner pushing down an oversized press that connects to a robot in the foreground and squeezes a melancholy-looking country woman into a tiny spot in the middle ground. Below the three fingers is a group of four female dancers dressed in pure white. They hold hands in a circle, echoing Matisse, as they wait for a fifth dancer to glide down from the sky to join them. The press's mechanical harshness and the robot's lifeless artificiality contrast sharply with the purity and lucidity emanating from the circle of the distant dancers. The monumentality of the machinery unambiguously invades the idyllic space of the country meadows, destroying the utopian ideal Pang might have envisioned.

Pang's autobiography provides a detailed explanation of this particular painting. The robot, he claims, symbolizes the advanced industrialization of the capitalist countries, the Chinese peasant woman symbolizes the backward Chinese agrarian society, and the three fingers stood for the forces of imperialism, reactionary politics, and feudalism.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁵ *Shidai huabao* (Time Pictorial) 8, no. 9 (October 12, 1935), no pagination, and *Meishu shenghuo* (Art and Life), no. 21 (December 1, 1935), no pagination. Both sources and their dates were confirmed in the Shanghai Library on July 3, 2009. On the page of *Meishu shenghuo*, the English title for the exhibition is labeled as "Third Exhibition of the Torrents Society." Obviously, it was a mistake to label the exhibition as the third one, a mistake shared by *Liangyou* magazine as well. According to the date of publication of the magazine, the exhibition has to be the fourth one, which took place in October, 1935. The publication date for *Meishu shenghuo* was December, 1935, two months after the Juelanshe's fourth exhibition.

²⁷⁶ Zhou Taizheng's *Repairing a Machine* appeared in all the four magazines. Pang's *Untitled* appeared in all except in *Xinren zhouban* (New People Weekly). Zhang Xian's "Portrait of a Girl" also appeared in all four publications.

²⁷⁷ Pang's Memoir, 184, and Croizier, "Post-Impressionists in Pre-War Shanghai: The *Juelanshe* (Storm Society) and the Fate of Modernism in Republican China" (1993), 148.

Historian Ralph Croizier cautions us against taking Pang's explanation at face value. Pang's memoir was written in the early 1980s, shortly after the Cultural Revolution, during which Pang suffered the loss of his artistic identity, his professorship, and almost all his pre-1950s paintings. Pang, who by that time had survived two major political purges in modern Chinese history, including the anti-rightist movement, was already deeply enmeshed in the state-sponsored anti-imperialist and anti-feudalist ideology. He may have amplified his political consciousness of the 30s.²⁷⁸ This amplification of his anti-imperialist consciousness could also be interpreted as a deliberate effort to disassociate himself from the neutral apolitical stance and the Westernized label which had been attached to Juelanshe by the socialist-constructed interpretation of modern Chinese art history up to the early 1980s. Despite the symbolic ambiguity of the three fingers, the subject matter of this painting alludes to the invading presence of Western industrial capitalism on the one hand and on the other to the enigma of China that Pang was yet to discover after 1934.

The soberly realistic painting shown at the fourth Juelanshe exhibition, *Repairing a Machine* (Fig. 58), depicts a worker repairing a large piece of machinery which occupies much of the canvas space, almost crashing into the space of the figure. The painting was created by Zhou Zhentai (or Zhou Taizhen), who had studied in Japan and whose association with the underground Communist party caused his arrest and subsequent death in prison in 1936, shortly after Juelanshe's fourth exhibition.²⁷⁹ The

²⁷⁸ The three forces Pang referred to seem to echo the "three big mountains" of the old society (coined by Mao Zedong): the feudalism, imperialism and capitalism. However, Mao Zedong first used the metaphor of three big mountains in his inauguration speech for the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

²⁷⁹ The Storm Society's and especially Pang's association with Zhou were both given prominence in Pang's own memoir and Yuan's biography of Pang. This was done to emphasize Pang's sympathetic position

painting explicitly takes an oppositional stance against Western capitalism and industrial oppression of the Chinese working class.

Of all the Juelanshe members' works, Pang's *Son of the Earth* and *Untitled* and Zhou Zhentai's *Repairing a Machine* were about the closest the society's members could get to engaging with the social and political causes of their time. In any case, one of the factors causing the dissolution of Juelanshe after the fourth exhibition is that members of the group disagreed strongly about the extent to which the artists should involve themselves with contemporary social and political causes. Most members, Pang included, were not ready to embrace the left-wing radical political views. Pang, although not fully committing himself to the "art for art's sake" camp, was also reluctant to endorse the leftists "art for life's sake" slogan.

By the mid-1930s in China, a country which faced the imminent threat of Japanese invasion, it was not easy or even possible for artists to preserve their artistic and spiritual sensibility and continue creating works that absorbed new stylistic experiments and expressed personal feelings.

When the Sino-Japanese conflict further infiltrated into major cities like Shanghai and Peking and spread into most parts of China after 1937, many artists were forced to abandon their comfortable urban space for the countryside. Finding themselves out of their element, many of them ceased painting and turned to teaching. In Pang's case, he turned more toward decorative art forms. Eventually detaching himself from socially

regarding the Communist Party, and to deemphasize Pang's noncommittal political attitude and individualistic standing, a position that would be more historically accurate in Pang's case. However, we have to recognize that both his memoir and the Yuan's biography were written after the Cultural Revolution in which Pang destroyed almost all his paintings from the 1930s and suffered severely for his Western connection and apolitical standing.

engaged subject matter, he painted youthful and somewhat melancholy looking young women of the Miao ethnic minority, a theme to be explored in chapter four.

At the end of a four-year life span and with a quick splash, the Storm and Stress Society sank to the bottom of the pond. What is the historical significance of the group's existence, as seen both from a distance and close-up? The discursive debates between the two Xus in 1929, around the time of Pang's return from Paris, no doubt indirectly affected the position of the Society by placing its members at the forefront of the modernist camp. Their manifesto is clearly pointed against the academic realist establishment. "Release the disturbing power of realism! Let us arise! Summon up the passion of wild beasts, the will of steel, to create an integrated world with color, line and form!" – their manifesto is still resonating self-expression and avant-garde spirit. However, none of the members of the Society achieved prominence in the institutional camp of either the realists (Xu Beihong's camp in Beijing and Nanjing) or the modernists (Lin Fengmian's camp in Hangzhou). After the war, Pang briefly taught in the Hangzhou Academy of Fine Arts for two years. As a group, they were never recognized or admitted into the institutional canon in China. They were born marginally and remained on the periphery of the history of Chinese modern art. After the Society's dispersal in 1935, all the members went their own ways. Ni moved to the left, joined the Communist party, and naturally adopted the more realistic style. Pang continued to paint in his "decorative" style and became a scholar of the history of Chinese decorative art, remaining politically border-line for the remainder of his life.

Chapter Conclusion

Pang Xunqin's paintings between 1931 and 1935, his Juelanshe period, can be divided into three categories: cityscapes, portraits, and figure paintings, including socially and psychologically engaged paintings like *Such is Paris*, *Riddle of Life (Such is Shanghai)*, *Son of the Earth*, and *Untitled*. Unlike his contemporary artists who mostly imitated and experimented with Post-impressionism, Cubism, and Fauvism, in a formalistic manner, Pang also employed these modernistic strategies, particularly Cubism, to express his sentiments regarding modern life, his confusion, his anxiety, and his identity crisis. His paintings pondered political issues and challenged viewers; they are enigmatic, mystifying, and intimately connective with the then-semi-colonial cosmopolitan life. None of his contemporary artists from Juelanshe had achieved the same thematic depth. They mainly flirted with forms, whereas Pang transcended the limitations of the forms which he utilized to engage with the modern life he came to confront. His paintings often emanated a melancholy mood, possibly the inherent nature of our modern life which, as a humanist, he felt so keenly.

Four years was not a bad run for an avant-garde group like Juelanshe in this politically troubled period of Chinese modern history. The Storm and Stress Society had to wait another half century, until the 1980s, to be resurrected, and to serve as an inspiring source for the second avant-garde generation.²⁸⁰ The cosmopolitan atmosphere of 1930s Shanghai, with its vibrant and dynamic urban and media culture, gave rise to its avant-garde movement. The movement's idealism and almost naïve assertion of the "purity of art" in their manifesto bears the imprint of the avant-gardes worldwide. However, the Juelanshe members, while trying to preserve their ideals, free from

²⁸⁰ Many art historians of modern Chinese art believe the avant-garde movement in the 1980s had some intrinsic affinity with the Storm Society.

corruption – an ideal Pang upheld until the end – failed to comprehend the intricacy of the webbed relationship among the old guard of China’s traditionalists and the rising power of the new institutional establishment – the academic realists and their social connection and political currency. Their Western-influenced distortion of forms and bold colors failed to find a ready audience even in the semi-colonial Shanghai. Most importantly, it was their insistence on “freedom of creation and self-expression” and their refusal to submit to any political or institutional constraints that caused their ultimate demise. Their alienation from the mainstream and their uncommitted political stance in an era of an increasingly politicized Chinese art world in the late 1930s simply could not be sustained. The contemporary historical and political environment was not compatible with the society’s lofty “pure form of art.” Lastly, innocent though they were, claiming to “release the disturbing power of realism” and to “create a world interwoven with color, line and form,” most members of the Storm Society never completely abandoned realism, and their compositions were never completely bereft of depictive images. Although opposed to imitation, most of them were in fact imitators of Matisse and Picasso, Degas and Dali; traces of these Western modernists were ever present. After all, their youthful idealism, their enthusiastic passion for their art, and their untainted iconoclastic spirit blew a fresh breeze and caused quite a splash in the art arena of early twentieth-century China, despite the transient and ephemeral nature of the movement’s existence. Their legacy is still waiting to be resurrected and fully reconstructed.²⁸¹

²⁸¹ Investigation of the Storm Society has been undertaken by Chinese art historians for the past ten years. The most recent essay, written by Li Chao, a leading Chinese art historian based in Shanghai, and titled “Juelanshe yanjiu (Study on the Storm Society)” was published in the January issue of *Meishu Yanjiu*, 2008. It suggests the continuous scholarly interest in the Storm Society. The earliest and more thorough study of the Storm Society was conducted by Yan Tingsong in his 1999 master’s thesis titled “Storm of the Avant-

Nearly fifty years later, in the 1980s, attempting to neutralize and rationalize the motives for the organization of Juelanshe, Pang wrote,

First of all, we were all discontented with the reality, our manifesto reveals it clearly; secondly, everyone wanted to build a new road in art, if single-handedly, the strength was too weak, therefore a group effort was needed; thirdly, all of us did not want to depend on any established authority. For the artistic thoughts, obviously, each of us had our own, but there was one thing we had in common, we all preferred the painting styles post the Western impressionism.²⁸²

Whether Pang Xunqin and his fellow members of Juelanshe were merely mimics of European modernism or had simply hijacked Western modernism to China's soil is a question that eludes a simple answer. Is the Storm and Stress Society simply an art historical incident that occurred in China or is it intrinsically connected to the rhythm of transnational modernity or a strand of global transnational modernism? Such a question again defies a simple yes or no answer. A close examination of Pang's painting style of this period has clearly demonstrated his Paris-Shanghai synthesis and the alignment of the two cosmopolitan locales, one of which was not necessarily superior to the other; rather each brought its different motifs to the larger tapestry of this transmittable and transnational global modernism.

Gardes – Study of the Storm Society.” Yan’s study compiled some valuable archival sources, laying the foundation for future studies of the *Juelanshe*. Two additional dissertations in Chinese deal extensively with Juelanshe: Tang Tianyi’s master’s thesis “se xian, xing jiaocuo de shije – guanyu Juelanshe yishu chouxiang yuyan de qishi (Shanghai University, 2005),” and Hu Zhen’s doctoral dissertation “Fu Lei yishu piping sixiang yanjiu (Guangdong, Jinan University, 2005), which covers Fu Lei’s role in Juelanshe.

²⁸² Pang’s Memoir, 173.

Chapter 3: Assimilating the World and the Native – Pang Xunqin’s Graphic Design and Design Theory (1932-1946)

Sometimes I casually pick up an object for daily use; its shape, its color, and its distinct pattern makes me forget the worries of the present moment, my spirit wanders, and my thoughts are far away... Pang Xunqin, October 10, 1943.²⁸³

Pang’s Initiation into the World of Design

Pang Xunqin’s visit to the Paris *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in October 1925 marked his initial encounter with modern industrial and graphic design.²⁸⁴ At age nineteen, Pang had been in Paris for less than a month. The Exposition simply knocked him off his feet. He subsequently marveled in his autobiography that what left the deepest impression on him were the interior decorative designs for furniture, carpets, curtains, and industrial products at the exposition. The coordinated colors and unpredictable patterning of these objects fascinated him, and for the first time he realized that “art was not merely about paintings; people’s daily living also needed beautification.”²⁸⁵

Pang’s 1929 visit to the Berlin suburbs filled with Bauhaus-style architecture reinforced his belief in the practical and social application of art and design. Pang Xunqin’s interest and eventual turn to decorative arts and graphic design as an educational discipline was shaped by these twin experiences in Paris and in Berlin. After returning to Shanghai in 1930, his initial turn to design was more or less the result of practical necessity because he could not make a living by selling his semi-abstract and

²⁸³ Pang Xunqin, “有时无意间拿出一件日用品，它的形态，它的颜色，它的花样，使我悠然出神，思想飘的远远去了！忘了目前的苦恼” The original was published in *Zhongyang ribao* 中央日报 (Central Government Newspaper), October 10, 1943.

²⁸⁴ The International Exposition of Modern Industrial and Decorative Arts was a world fair held in Paris between June and October of 1925. Pang arrived in Paris in September, 1925. The term Art Deco became a common association with this Exposition.

²⁸⁵ Pang’s Memoir, 42-43.

cubist-inspired oil paintings. Pang created designs for packaging and wrapping papers, book and journal covers, and advertising posters. The cover for the first issue of *Shipian* (*Poetry*, November 1, 1933), a monthly journal devoted to modern poetry (xin shi) featuring loose structure and simple phrases, was one of Pang's first such designs (Fig. 60 and 61). Edited by Zhu Weiji (1904 – 1971), *Shipian* published translations of the poetry of Leigh Hunt, Christina Rossetti, and John Keats. Shao Xunmei (1906 – 1968), a Paris-returned experimental poet, also published many of his poems there. Prose and poetry by Lin Huiyin (1904 – 1955), the famed female poet, who was a close friend to the Oxford-returned poet, Xu Zhimo, were the featured pieces in the journal.²⁸⁶ For the first and second issues, Pang Xunqin contributed his Baudelaire-informed poetry. Most of his poems are simply phrased and convey a melancholy mood similar to that of his paintings from this period. His cover design for *Shipian* is also a simple rendition. Motifs of distant hills, willow trees, a small bridge, and a long-tailed fire bird flying across and above a temple are scattered loosely yet symmetrically on the page. Grey is the color chosen for the temple roof and river ripples; green defines a few leaves and grasses, while the tree trunk, the field, and the distant hills are dashed in a greenish yellow. The sparse use of color and lines makes the composition appear abbreviated and simple, and motifs contoured in curvilinear lines and painted in lighter color tones seem to float like musical notes above the page. A few patches of red, used selectively to highlight an arched bridge, the fire bird's wings, and the body of the temple, almost jump off the page, to create a

²⁸⁶ Lin Huiyin wrote experimental poetry as early as in the twenties. She was married to the architect, Liang Sicheng, the elder son of Liang Qichao. Both Liang Sicheng and Lin Huiyin spent a few years in the United States. Liang attended the School of Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania and Lin attended the Yale Drama School for one semester. Extremely talented both in literature and in architectural studies, Lin helped her husband draft drawings of Chinese historical building while writing her poetry.

surprise element in an otherwise benign composition, thereby contributing to a playful and delightful design. This same mode of simplicity and abbreviation also defines Pang's design for the cover of the November, 1934, issue of *Xiandai, Les Contemporaines* (Fig. 36), a leading literary journal responsible for translating and promoting Western modernist literature.²⁸⁷ Here two abstract, thinly outlined figures, one playing an accordion and the other singing, float on the cover of this avant-garde journal. Cubist influence is evident here and the abbreviated figures recall Picasso's line-drawing paintings.

Pang's comic caricature of Chalot on the book cover of *Xialuo waizhuan* (*Chalot* by Philippe Soupault) translated by Fu Lei (1908 – 1966), first published in Shanghai, September, 1933, is a delightful design, illustrating the comic nature of the novel and illuminating the character of the story (Fig. 62).²⁸⁸ Pang affixed his *Da Xiong* Industrial and Commercial Art Cooperation label to the back of this book cover design (Fig. 63). Pang launched his *Da Xiong gongshang meishu she* (Da Xiong Industrial and Commercial Art Cooperative) with two other young artists, Zhou Duo and Duan Pingyou, in June, 1933.²⁸⁹ It was established in an attempt to promote his graphic design and bring to financial as well as idealistic fruition his Bauhaus-inspired dream—bringing art down from the ivory tower—in the Shanghai metropolis.²⁹⁰ To

²⁸⁷ Pang's Memoir, 129. The chief editor for *Xiandai* was Shi Zhencun from 1932 to 1935. *Xiandai* or *Les Contemporaines* published widely translated French, Russian, and British contemporary literature and especially promoted psychoanalysis-inspired novels. For Shi Zhencun's role in Shanghai modernity, refer to Shu-mei Shih's *The Lure of the Modern* and Ou-fan Lee's *Shanghai Modern*.

²⁸⁸ One cover was for Fu Lei's translation of *Chalot* by Philippe Soupault (1897-1990); one was for Fu Lei's translation of *Civilisation* (1921 and 1932) by Georges Duhamel (1884-1966), and one was for Fu Lei's translation of Bertrand Russell's *The Conquest of Happiness* published in 1930 in New York and England. So far, I have only found the original translated copy of Philippe Soupault's *Chalot*.

²⁸⁹ The advertisement for the exhibition held by *Da Xiong gongshang meishu she* can be found in *Shenbao* (June 20, 1933), 563 (combined issue of June, 1933, photographic copy in Shanghai Library).

²⁹⁰ *Da Xiong* was forced to close down in 1934 due to looting and lack of funding. Pang's Memoir, 135. His book cover designs from this period were mostly for Fu Lei's translated works; three of them are extant.

name his company *Da Xiong* (The Great Bear), which is the Chinese equivalent of the Ursa Major or the Big Dipper, Pang intended his company to shine brightest in the still dim sky of industrial and commercial design in China.²⁹¹ This bright start proved, however, to be only a meteor, however brilliant, which quickly fell into oblivion. Their first attempted exhibition (Fig. 64), “gongshang meishu zhanlan,” scheduled for June 20 to 22, 1933, at Da Lu Shang Chang (Continental Commercial Market) of Zhongguo guohuo gongsi (China National Goods Incorporated) in Nanking Road, was ransacked on the opening day by Shanghai local mafias.²⁹² During the short-lived existence of the *Da Xiong* Industrial and Commercial Art Cooperation from late 1932 to 1933, which used *Da Xiong* as its brand name, Pang had designed advertisements for eggs, beer (Fig. 65), cigarettes (Fig. 66 and 67), and cosmetics, and for a music recording company – zhongguo guanyin gongsi (China Music Recording Company) (Fig. 68).²⁹³ Pang also designed an advertisement poster for the French perfume Houbigan (Fig. 69), titled “Bois Dormant Houbigant France” (Sleeping Beauty Houbigant France).²⁹⁴ In this design,

²⁹¹ In one of Pang’s poems written for *Shipian* (Poetry Monthly), the cover for which he designed, the first line starts “The Great Bear is peeking behind the roof tops...” *Shipian*, no. 1 (November 1, 1933): 17.

²⁹² The advisement for their exhibition was announced in *Shenbao*, June 20, 21, 1933. Yuan Yunyi noted the ransacking of the exhibition in her biography of Pang Xunqin, *Pang Xunqin Zhuan* (1995), 80-81.

²⁹³ I located Pang’s design for the China Music Recording Company in *Shidai huabao* (Time Pictorial) 5, no. 6 (January, 16, 1934) in the Shanghai Library on July 6, 2009. Pang Tao, in her edited *Hiunkin Pang* (2006), 51, included three advertisement designs for beer and cigarettes collectively done by Pang Xunqin, Zhou Duo, and Duan Pingyou. However, Pang Tao did not include and does not remember her reference (according to her reply to my email dated on January 24, 2009) for these three designs. Yuan Yunyi in her biography of Pang Xunqin, *Pang Xunqin Zhuan* (1995), 85, included a reference to three of Pang’s advertisement designs: one for women’s clothing of the Zhanghua Wool and Textile Company; a design with a person playing a guitar was for the China Music Recording Company; and one advertisement design was made for the White Snow brand of cosmetic products. Yuan made a mistake by citing Pang as the designer for the Zhanghua Wool and Textile Company and for the White Snow cosmetic products. Pang’s design for the record company has been located on the same page with the other two designs next to Pang’s. It was published in *Shidai huabao* 5, no. 6, January 16, 1934, not 1933 as cited by Yuan.

²⁹⁴ “Bois Dormant Houbigant France (Sleeping Beauty Houbigant France)” has been translated into Chinese as *Chenshui de senlin* (Sleeping Forest); see Pang Tao, ed., *Hiunkin Pang* (2006), 50. Pang Tao thinks the theme of this painting is for promoting protection of forests. She is not sure of the exact date for this painting, but thinks it was perhaps painted in the late 1920s or early 1930s. I personally viewed the original print of the art work at the Pang Xunqin Changshu Art Museum on July 2, 2007. It is actually a poster print of an original design, perhaps a rare surviving original poster. Given the nature of the poster

Pang painted three pairs of deer. The larger pair, in the foreground, are climbing a hill, and the smallest pair which occupy the middle ground, are heading down a slope, fading into the distance. The hillsides are in grey shades, and faint yellow spotted by light browns is used for the deer.²⁹⁵ The undulating hillsides converge at the poster's left edge, and the deer are all moving in the same direction. The use of the deer motif and hill sides for a Houbigan perfume advertisement is beguiling. Houbigan, a highly popular perfume in the 20s and 30s, opened sales offices in many cities, including Shanghai, and Houbigan is generally regarded as the first modern perfume because of its use of synthetic coumarone.²⁹⁶ Pang must have been familiar with the Houbigan brand, having stayed in Paris for nearly five years. Whether the deer motif was associated with the early Houbigan brand is conjectural. Although *Da Xiong* failed, the experience rekindled Pang Xunqin's design interest and strengthened his connection with the field of graphic design.

Pang's identification with the art and design discipline and his most deliberate turn to studying and teaching design began when he was invited in fall, 1936, to the faculty of Beiping Yizhuan (Peking Art Academy). He taught *tu'an* or graphic design classes for third-year students.²⁹⁷

Pioneers in Chinese Modern Design History

and also based on the information that Houbigan France, the perfume company, had opened a sales office in Shanghai in 1920s, I believe this poster was designed for advertising the famed French perfume in Shanghai.

²⁹⁵ I viewed the poster in person in Changshu in July 2007. This design is reproduced in Pang Tao, ed., *Hiunkin Pang* (2006), 50.

²⁹⁶ Edwin T. Morris, *Scents of Time: Perfume From Ancient Egypt to the 21st Century* (New York: the Metropolitan Museum of Art 1999), 95.

²⁹⁷ From September 1930 to September 1936, Pang lived in Shanghai. He and his wife, artist Qiu Ti, had their first child (Pang Tao) in 1934, and the second (Pang Jun) in 1936. In the fall of 1936, he and his family left Shanghai for Beiping for a teaching position in Beiping Yizhuan (Beiping Art Academy).

In 1936, when Pang Xunqin was ushered into the discipline of design, also referred as the Department of *Tu'an* (Pattern), the history of design as a Chinese educational discipline was only about twenty years old.²⁹⁸ Many Chinese artists had already been educated in the graphic design discipline over the past ten years. The early pioneers in Chinese modern graphic designs include Chen Zhifo (1896-1962), Tao Yuanqing (1893-1929), and Lei Guiyuan (1905-1989).

Chinese modern graphic design as both a discipline and an art form has been shaped by three major sources: the indigenous Chinese history of art and craft, and that of the Japanese and of the West.²⁹⁹ Chen Zhifo, who graduated from an industrial school in Hangzhou, Zhejiang, at age twenty, remained there to teach graphic design.³⁰⁰ To aid his teaching, he edited a *Tu'an jiangyi* (Teaching Materials for Design), which was then regarded as the first textbook on graphic design in Chinese.³⁰¹ He is also generally

²⁹⁸ Lei Guiyuan, "Huishu sanshi nian lai zhongguo zhi tu'an jiaoyu (Reflecting on last thirty-years Chinese design education), March, 1947, in *Jiangxin wenmai – Zhongguo meishu xueyuan sheji yishu jiaoyu bashi nian* (eighty-years graphic design education at the China Art Academy) (Zhejiang: Zhongguo meishu xueyuan chubanshe, 2008), 29.

²⁹⁹ Scholarly studies in the English language on the history of Chinese graphic design are rather limited. Scott Minick and Jiao Ping's book *Chinese Graphic Design in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1990) is still the only book written on the subject. Two other useful sources of reference are Shou Zhi Wang, "Chinese Modern Design: A Retrospective," in Dennis P. Doordan, ed., *Design History: An Anthology* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1995), 213-241, and Julia Andrews, "Commercial Art and China's Modernization," in Julia Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, ed., *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China* (New York: Henry N. Abrams 1998), 181-92. The Chinese language literature on modern graphic design, on the other hand, experiences no such shortage; however, it is often included as one chapter in the anthology of Chinese design history tracing back to the ancient period. The best references, in my view, ones that I have relied on primarily for writing this chapter, include Chen Ruilin, *Zhongguo xiandai yishu sheji shi* (History of Chinese Modern Art Design) (Changsha: Hunan kexue jishu chubanshe, 2002), and Hang Jian, *Zhongguo gongyi meixue shi* (Aesthetic History of Chinese Arts and Crafts) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 2007), 200-222.

³⁰⁰ Chen Zhifo graduated from Hangzhou jiazhong gongye xuexiao, jizhi ke (Hangzhou highest-rated industrial school, machine-weaving department) at age twenty. He remained there as a teacher of graphic design and went on to edit *Tu'an jiangyi* (Teaching materials on design), which has been widely considered the first Chinese textbook on graphic design.

³⁰¹ All the textbooks on graphic patterns and design up to Chen Zhifo's time were translations from Japanese sources; therefore, Chen's edited textbook is generally regarded as the first teaching text on graphic design in the Chinese language.

credited with coining the term *Tu'an*. *Tu'an*, meaning “pattern” in a literary translation, had since become a part of Chinese design vocabulary. It was originally borrowed from the Japanese word for pattern—図案 (ずあん)—since most early graphic designers were trained in Japan.³⁰² In 1918, Chen Zhifo went on to study in the Department of Crafts and Pictorial Design at Tokyo College. Returning to Shanghai in 1923, he taught in various art colleges and designed covers for *Dongfang Zazhi* (*East Miscellany*) (inception 1904) and *Xiaoshuo Yuebao* (*Short Story Monthly*, inception 1921, edited by Mao Dun), both popular journals in twenties and thirties Shanghai.³⁰³ Chen’s designs for *Dongfang Zazhi* and *Xiaoshuo Yuebao* were modern in form and versatile in his pattern choices. Additionally, he designed jacket covers for books published by *Kainming shudain*, the book store closely associated with Lun Xun, Guo Moruo, and Mao Dun, key literary figures of the May Fourth iconoclastic movement.³⁰⁴ His most productive design period was 1925 to 1935.³⁰⁵ After that, he turned to bird and flower ink paintings bearing traces of the Japanese decorative and Chinese *gongbi* style.

³⁰² Both Chen Ruilin and Hang Jian have discussed the evolution of the Chinese terms for graphic design during the twentieth century. They come from *Tu'an*, literarily meaning “pattern,” borrowed from Japanese sources in the early 1920s, to *zhuangshi*, meaning “decoration,” from *gongyi meishu* (arts and crafts), and *yinyong meishu* or *shiyong meishu* (applied art) to *sheji* (design) or *sheji yishu* (design art or graphic design). Eventually, in 1998, *gongyi meishu* (arts and crafts) as a discipline was replaced by *sheji* or design. See Chen Ruilin, *Zhongguo xiandai yishu sheji shi* (History of Chinese Modern Art Design, 2002), 7–8, and Hang Jian, *Zhongguo gongyi meixue shi* (Aesthetic History of Chinese Arts and Crafts, 2007), 214–218.

³⁰³ For a short biography of Chen Zhifo, see Michael Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists, A Biographical Dictionary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 21. In 1928, Chen served as a faculty member and director of the Department of Graphic Design at the Guangzhou City Art Academy; during this time he published a book titled *Secai xue* (Theory of Colors). He returned to Shanghai to teach at the Shanghai Art Academy in 1930. Chen edited *Tu'an goucheng fa* (Structural Methods for Graphic Patterns), which was published in 1931.

³⁰⁴ Chen Ruilin (*Zhongguo xiandai yishu sheji shi*, 2002), 68-9, and Li Yongguang and Chen Xiufan, ed., *Chen Zhifo yanjiu* (Studies on Chen Zhifo) (Nanjing: Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, 1990).

³⁰⁵ Scott Minick and Jiao Ping, *Chinese Graphic Design in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1990), 24, 38, 42-43, 55, and Julia Andrew and Kuiyi Shen, *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China*, 183, 185-86, and color plate #81.

While Chen Zhifo was teaching graphic design at the Shanghai Art Academy in the early 1930s, Pang Xunqin served there as a substitute oil painting instructor in the fall of 1931. Chen and Pang may have met, but no evidence suggests they knew each other well.³⁰⁶ In the fall of 1934, the commercial art exhibition organized by the Chinese Industrial and Commercial Art Designers' Association (*Zhongguo gong shang ye meishu zuojia xiehui*), established that spring, was held at the Continental Commercial Market (*Dalu shangchang*) off Shanghai's Nanking Road. One of the association's major board members, Chen Zhifo was regarded as a prominent graphic designer at the time, with his numerous designs being shown at the exhibition. Although Pang Xunqin did not join the designers' association, he must have been familiar with this organization and its commercial art exhibitions, because between June 20 and 22, 1933, Pang tried without success, to set up an industrial and commercial exhibition in the same location, *Dalu shangcheng* (Continental Commercial Market).³⁰⁷ The exhibition organized by the Chinese Industrial and Commercial Art Designers' Association has been hailed as the first commercial art exhibition ever held in China, overlooking the small-scale commercial art exhibition attempted by Pang Xunqin a year earlier.³⁰⁸

Almost all the literature on Chinese modern graphic design places Tao Yuanqing (1893-1929) in a prominent position, chiefly because of his natural talent as a graphic

³⁰⁶ Pang may have read Chen's books on Tu'an in the early 30s. Pang only mentioned Chen Zhifo once in his memoir. After Chen left Sichuan in October of 1942 to accept the appointment to preside over the National Academy of Art, Pang Xunqin was asked to substitute for Chen to teach design classes, a position vacated by Chen at the Art Department of the Central University in Chongqing. Pang's Memoir, 198.

³⁰⁷The exhibition was organized by the *Da Xiong* Industrial and Commercial Art Society he spearheaded. Advertisement for the exhibition was published in *Shenbao*, June 20, 21, 1933, see Fig. 64.

³⁰⁸ Chen Ruilin, *Zhongguo xiandai yishu sheji shi*, 59, and Hang Jian, *Zhongguo gongyi meixue shi*, 210.

artist and, more importantly, on account of his close tie with Lun Xun.³⁰⁹ Tao Yuanqing was, like Lun Xun, a Shaoxing native. He was educated and taught design in Hangzhou and never went abroad. His design style derived primarily from Chinese indigenous sources ranging from Han figurative rubbings to ancient Chinese calligraphy; however, his work was concise and abstract, often being synchronized with the thematic sentiments of the literary novels whose covers he designed.³¹⁰ Tao's untimely death at age thirty-six ruled out his further influence on Chinese modern graphic design, and the chronology indicates that his influence on Pang Xunqin's design style must have been minimal.³¹¹ The prominent graphic designer Qian Juntao (1906-1998) was the one who continued along the path initiated by Tao Yuanqing.³¹² The historian of Chinese graphic design, Hang Jian, recognizes the contributions made by designers such as Qian Juntao and Zhang Guangyu whose design style relied primarily on Chinese indigenous sources.³¹³

Pang Xunqin's teaching post as a design instructor at the Peking Art Academy was offered him by Li Youxing (1905-1982), a French-trained graphic designer. Li graduated from the Department of Graphic Design at Peking Art Academy in 1926 and in 1929 from the Textile Graphic Design Department at the Art Academy of Lyon, France. For two years Li worked in Paris as a textile designer for a silk company before returning to China in 1931. He worked as a designer and served for eight years as a director of the

³⁰⁹ For the more extensive coverage on the relationship between Tao Yuanqing and Lun Xun, see Scott Minick and Jiao Ping, *Chinese Graphic Design in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Publishing, 1990), 21-33, and on Lun Xun and the modern woodcut movement, refer to Shirley Hsiao-ling Sun, "Lu Hsun and the Chinese Woodcut Movement: 1929-1935" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1974), and her *Modern Chinese Woodcuts* (San Francisco: Chinese Culture Foundation, 1979).

³¹⁰ For the best visual examples of Tao's designs, refer to Scott Minick and Jiao Ping, *Chinese Graphic Design in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Publishing, 1990), 28-31.

³¹¹ Tao Yuanqing passed away in 1929 before Pang returned to China.

³¹² For the connection between Tao Yuanqing and Qian Juntao, refer to Chen Ruilin, *Zhongguo xiandai yishu sheji shi* (Changsha: Hunan kexue jishu chubanshe, 2002), 68-75.

³¹³ Hang Jian on Zhang Guangyu, *Zhongguo gongyi meixue shi*, 211-212..

design and pattern department for a Shanghai silk factory. After becoming a professor of design at the National Peking Art Academy, Li invited Pang Xunqin to teach, whereupon they had become colleagues.

The Historiography of Chinese Modern Design

Another France-returnee and graphic designer, Lei Guiyuan (1905-1989), a man who would significantly alter Pang's fate in the early 50s, met Pang Xunqin after both the Peking Art Academy and Hangzhou Art Academy moved to inland China in 1939. Lei was already a prominent designer and a professor of design at the Hangzhou Art Academy when they met. Lei graduated from the Department of Graphic Design at Peking Art Academy in 1927 and taught one year at the Hangzhou Art Academy in 1928. The next year Lei went to Paris on a government scholarship, majoring in graphic design, and returned in 1931 to teach his discipline at the Hangzhou Art Academy and serve as an academic director. Lei's prolific period was from 1932 to 1945, when he designed graphic patterns for fabric, lacquer ware, and industrial products. After the war, he returned in 1945 to the Hangzhou Art Academy, directing the department of applied art. His first comprehensive book on graphic design, published in 1950, was titled *Xin tu'an de lilun he zuofa* (New Theories and Methods of Graphic Design).³¹⁴

Before Lei's book, several books had already been published on methods of graphic design and pattern, including the aforementioned Chen Zhifo-edited textbook, *Tu'an jiangyi* (Teaching Notes on Graphic Patterns) published in 1917. Yu Jianhua's *Zui xin tu'an fa* (The Newest Methods on Graphic Patterns) came out in 1926. Following Yu,

³¹⁴ Lei's other books include *Gongyi meishu jifa jianghua* (Talks on techniques of arts and crafts); *Xin tu'an xue* (New pattern-studies); *Tu'an jichu* (Fundamentals of patterns); *Zhongguo tu'an zuofa chutan* (Initial study on methods of Chinese patterns); *Zhongwai tu'an zhuangshi fengge* (Chinese and foreign decorative pattern styles). All of these works were published after the 1950s.

Fu Baoshi wrote his *Jiben tu'an xue* (Studies on Fundamental Patterns), published in 1935. Lei Guiyuan's *Xin tu'an de lilun he zuofa* (New Theories and Methodologies of Graphic Design) was published fifteen years after Fu Baoshi's book, and in 1953 Pang Xunqin added his contribution on the study of patterns, his *Tu'an wenti de yanjiu* (Studies on Questions of Graphic Patterns) which was published in Shanghai. On the history of Chinese arts and crafts, the two prominent books published before 1950 are Xu yanzhuo's *Zhongguo gongyi yange shilue* (A Brief History of Arts and Crafts in China), published by Shanghai Commercial Press (Shangwu yinshuguan), and Xu Weinan's *Zhongguo gongyi meishu* (Arts and Crafts in China), published by Zhonghua shuju, 1940. On the more specific topic on silk embroidery, *Xueji xiu pu* (Silk Embroidery Manuals, 1919), dictated by Shen Shou (1874 – 1921),³¹⁵ was the first compilation, followed by Zhu Qijin's *Nühong chuan zhenglue* (Embroideresses of China) and *Sichou biji* (Notes on Silk), both published in Shanghai, 1930, and enriching the literature on silk design and its history.

Although no specialized journal on graphic design was published during the Republic period, many journal articles introduced the concepts of arts and crafts and of industrial graphic design and its significance in modern life. An article written by Xi Chen in July, 1920, for *Dongfang zazhi* (Eastern Miscellany, vol. 17, no. 7, July, 1920) on Britain's Arts and Crafts Movement headed by William Morris, titled "Morris' Views on Art and Labor," was one of the earliest essays introducing the Western concept of arts

³¹⁵ Shen Shou (1874-1921) was an embroiderer and educator of silk embroidery; she operated a modern style embroidery institute to teach young women embroidery skills. Aided by Nantong entrepreneur Zhang Sai (1853-1926), Shen Shou dictated the book *Xueji xiu pu*, illustrating her design patterns and methods. Chen Ruilin, *Zhongguo xiandai yishu sheji shi*, 83.

and crafts.³¹⁶ Chen Zhifo's article, "Xiandai biao xian pai meishu gongyi (Modern Expression in Arts and Crafts)," written for the same journal nine years later, introduces new trends in European graphic design, including the "Bauhaus" design concept.³¹⁷ In this essay, Chen attempts to illustrate the concept of industrial and graphic art, noting that the "industrial art object is the combination of art and industrial technology, aiming to improve the life of humans – the 'applied' art is a synthesis of art and the practical use of art, thus an industrial activity."³¹⁸ Chen Zhifo continued to contribute essays on graphic arts, and in 1936 his essay "Meishu yu gongyi (Arts and Crafts)" was published in *Zhongguo Meishu hui jikan*, Shanghai.

The West Lake Exposition - Exhibitions on Design

Between 1929 and 1936, when major metropolitan areas like Shanghai, Peking, and Hangzhou were blessed with relative social stability and when most students who went to Europe and Japan to study art and design had returned, these metropolises witnessed a surge of interest in art in general and modern applied art in particular. The first international exposition *xihu bolan hui* (The West Lake Exposition), organized by the Hangzhou National Academy of Art headed by Lin Fengmian, was held in Hangzhou along the scenic West Lake in June, 1929.³¹⁹ It was China's first comprehensive international exposition held with an eye toward competing with the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* of Paris in July 1925.³²⁰ It featured seven large exhibition pavilions, including those of education, agriculture,

³¹⁶ *Dongfang zazhi* (Eastern Miscellany 17, no. 7, July, 1920), 41-49.

³¹⁷ *Dongfang zazhi* (Eastern Miscellany 26, no. 18, June 6, 1929)

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ *Dongfang zazhi* (Eastern Miscellany 26, no. 10, May 25, 1929), a special issue on the West Lake Exposition "xihu bolan hui tekan."

³²⁰ The *International Exposition of Modern Industrial and Decorative Arts* was a world's fair held in Paris from July to October, 1925. Both Lin Fengmian and Pang were in Paris during the exposition.

industry, silk and embroidery, public health and sanitation, and antiquity, and the fine arts pavilion, which Lin Fengmian oversaw. The directors for the other pavilions were selected before the exposition's opening. This entire exposition, which covered five thousand square kilometers, circled around the West Lake about seven miles. An additional pavilion was set up to showcase "foreign raw material machineries," for the benefit of Chinese industrialists and manufacturers.³²¹ The fine-arts pavilion was divided into two sections, one highlighting traditional Chinese art and other western-style art. The West Lake Exposition was a comprehensive undertaking that encompassed materials relating to the fine and applied arts and industrial arts and crafts. A landmark event in the history of Chinese graphic and applied art, it marked the point when the general public began embracing the concept of modern design and applied art.

Mass Media on Modern Design in the 1930s

To educate the public on the concept of modern design, articles like the following short and popularizing piece, "zenyang cai pei cheng wei modeng jiaju (What kind of furniture could be considered modern?)" were often featured in the journals and magazines of the 1930s Shanghai. In this piece, the author emphasizes "convenience and simplicity" as the essential qualities of modern furniture, in addition to "its scientific application and aesthetic appeal." "The offering of art is classless," the author argued; therefore "functional arts and crafts for daily use must appeal to the popular taste."³²²

This agenda to democratize art and champion applied art is promoted in numerous

³²¹ For the study of the West Lake Exposition, refer to *Dongfang zazhi* (Eastern Miscellany 26, no. 18, June 6, 1929) which carries a special issue on the West Lake Exposition, and Zhong Zihua's "Xizi hupan de bolan hui (Exposition along the bank of the West Lake)." *Lishi yukan* (History Monthly), no. 48, Taiwan.

³²² Cheng Shangjun, "zenyang cai pei cheng wei modeng jiaju (What kind of furniture could be considered modern?)." *Yifeng* 1, no. 12 (December, 1933): 56-7.

articles written for *Yifeng* (Art Breeze), magazine published in Shanghai between 1933 and 1935. “Art and Technology” by Zhang Pengnian; “Getting on the Path of Applied Art” by Tang Juan, and “The Necessity of Applied Art” by Gao Binwei are but a few examples.³²³ French-trained artists Yan Wenliang, Chang Shuhong, and Lei Guiyuan all contributed articles to *Yifeng* on the subject of applied and decorative art. Yan Wenliang’s “From Production-oriented Education to Consider the Necessity of Applied Art” was written for the graduates at the Department of Applied Art of the Suzhou Art Academy, encouraging them to become entrepreneurs in the applied-art industry and to improve the aesthetic appeal of China’s industrial and functional products.³²⁴

Chang Shuhong submitted two of his articles for *Yifeng* from Paris while still studying there. One, written in May, 1934, and titled “Synopsis on the Modern Art Deco Movement in France,” summarizes the development and evolution of French decorative arts from 1800 to 1934 and concisely introduces modern design issues, including how to improve sanitation through modern products.³²⁵ His other article, written on February 12, 1934, in Paris, and titled “Considering Modern Decorative Art,” argued that modern decorative art distinguishes itself in “speed, brightness, simplicity and harmony from that of the previous era when the common transportation was horses and carriages.”³²⁶ In the same volume of *Yifeng*, Lei Guiyuan, trained as a professional decorative designer and more concerned with the role of designer and craftsman in modern society, contributed an article titled “The Advance of Craftsmen and Designers under the Pressure of Modern

³²³ Zhang Pengnian “yishu yu jishu,” *Yifeng* 1, no. 6 (June, 1933):103-04; Tang Juan, “Zhou shang shiyong yishu de daolu,” *Yifeng* 2, no. 3 (March, 1934): 22-23; Gao Binwei, “shiyong yishu de xuyao,” *Yifeng* 3, no. 5 (June, 1935): 95-96.

³²⁴ *Yifeng* 2, no. 2 (February, 1934): 77 – 8.

³²⁵ *Yifeng* 2, no. 8 (August, 1934): 78 – 81.

³²⁶ *Yifeng* 3, no. 1 (January, 1935): 112 – 113.

Life.” Although spending two years in Paris (1929-1931), Lei was more critical of some modes of modern designs, such as the more exposed styles of women’s clothing and the skeleton-like structure of modern buildings.³²⁷ Lei advocated a design style more in line with Chinese traditional art and craft patterns, his design tastes being more conservative and controlled (Fig. 69).³²⁸

In the 1935 June issue of *Yifeng* magazine, editor Sun Fuxi, also a Paris-trained artist, wrote an essay seeking papers for a special December issue on applied art, *shiyou meishu zhuanhao*. In his quest, he argued that in the contemporary society where the economy and commerce took center stage, art should serve its time and artists should “implant the soul into the artifacts of our daily use.” He called for papers in three areas – the theory of design (*liluan*), designs (*sheji*), and experimentation (*shiyan*) – and in nine categories: (1) fabric design (including prints, weaving and dye printing); (2) interior design (wallpapers, furniture, pottery, tiles, and lacquerware or painting); (3) garden design; (4) stage design including costume design; (5) small artifact design, e.g. umbrellas, fans, writing materials such as brush boxes, and items of daily use; (6) gold, silver, ivory, and glass design; (7) advertisements, book covers, and magazine and poster designs; (8) Chinese and Western calligraphy decorations for small advertisements and packaging for matches, cigarettes, and fruit boxes; and (9) fashion design for daily and special-occasion clothing.³²⁹

³²⁷ *Yifeng* 3, no. 1 (January, 1935): 116 – 117.

³²⁸ Lei came out to criticize Pang’s more modern approaches to design in the “anti-rightist” movement in 1958, terminating their friendship and collegial relationship that traced back to the early 1940s. Pang was still bitter about Lei’s betrayal in the 1980s, according to Pang’s second wife, Yuan Junyi, *Pang Xunqin Zhuan*, 168 – 70.

³²⁹ Sun Fuxi, “shiyong meishu zhuanhao zhengqiu (calling for contributing essays for the special issue on applied art),” *Yifeng* 3, no. 6 (June 1935): 101-02.

Compared to earlier advocates of modern design and pioneering graphic designers, such as Chen Zhifo, Tao Yuanqing, and Lei Guiyuan, Pang Xunqin was a relative late newcomer. In the first English-language study on the history of modern Chinese graphic design by Scott Mimic and Jiao Ping, *Chinese Graphic Design in the Twentieth Century* (1990), still regarded as a well-structured short history of Chinese modern graphic design, Pang Xunqin's name was not included. The two authors focused on Tao Yuanqin, Chen Zhifo, Qian Juntao, and Situ Qiao, most of whom were book-cover designers. Although Pang flirted with industrial and book-cover designs while in Shanghai, his definitive professional and academic turn to graphic design started in 1936, when he accepted the teaching post in the Graphic Design Department at the Beiping Art Academy. There he met Li Youxing, who had studied fabric design in Lyon, France. At the academy, Li Youxing taught design to the first-year students and Pang to the third-year ones. Gao Lifang and Li Shuying, two female instructors, taught design to the second year students.³³⁰ Pang must have learned a few things from these professional designers for he had trained as a painter whereas Li Youxing's training was in design. But his stay at the Beiping Art Academy was short-lived; the 1937 Japanese invasion of Beiping forced the institution to move. All the major art academies relocated in inland China during the war; the Beiping Art Academy and Hangzhou Art Academy met up in Yuanling, Hunan, in 1938.³³¹ Pang met Lin Fengmian and Lei Guiyuan from the Hangzhou Art Academy for the first time at Yuanling. Because of a dispute involving the leadership of the Hangzhou and Beiping Art Academies, Pang left the Beiping Academy for Kunming in late 1938.

³³⁰ Pang's Memoir, 145 – 47.

³³¹ Pang moved with the other faculty members of Beiping Art Academy from Jiujiang, Lushan, in Jiangxi province to Wuhan and Hankou, and from Hankou to Xiangxi of Hunan, arriving at Yuanling in 1938. Pang's Memoir, 149-153, 157-159.

He and his family settled in a house at Qingyun jie (Street of Blue Clouds) in Kunming, and Lei Guiyuan also moved to Kunming, where the downstairs of Pang's house served the pair as their work studio.³³²

Pang's Year at Academic Sinica

During this volatile and precarious period, Pang met many Chinese scholars and artists in Kunming, the gathering place of all the major academic institutions in retreat, such as Tsinghua University, Yanjing University (Beijing University), Jingling University from Nanjing, Qilu University from Shangdong, and the Historical Linguistic Academy from the Academic Sinica. They later reorganized as Xinan Lianda, the Southwest United Universities. Pang, now an independent artist once again, felt quite at home in Kunming where he seized the opportunity to learn from the experts in Chinese ancient culture and antiquity.³³³ Pang met Liang Sicheng (1901-1972), an architectural graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, and his brother, Liang Siyong (1904-1954), a 1930 Harvard archaeological graduate. These siblings were respected scholars at the Academia Sinica (the Chinese Academy of Sciences) and the National Central Museum, which retreated to Kunming after the Japanese occupied Nanjing.³³⁴ Pang was introduced by the Liang brothers to the Central Academy, which appointed him a research fellow at the planning department. Pang began studying ancient decorative designs with Chen Mengjia (1911 – 1966), a poet and a scholar of ancient jade and bronzes. Chen took him to explore bronze objects and loaned him books on ancient bronze patterns. Pang worked

³³² Ibid., 161.

³³³ Ibid., 160.

³³⁴ Ibid., 178. When major Chinese coastal cities were occupied by the Japanese, many intelligentsia along with many universities and art schools moved to inland China, such as Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou, the homes of many Chinese ethnic minorities.

in an office with Wang Tianmu, an archaeologist specializing in Han funeral objects, such as chariots wheels and tomb murals. Through Wang, Pang began to study Han rubbings and paintings taken from stone steles and brick tiles, and he started collecting Han brick rubbing motifs and patterns. Shen Congwen (1902 -1988), the famous writer about Hunan regional culture later turned a scholar and connoisseur of Chinese antiquity, also encouraged Pang's study of decorative patterns.³³⁵ Through Wu Jinding, Pang explored motifs and patterns from Chinese Neolithic colored potteries and began to collect sources of and to draw these patterns in his note books. He also copied inscribed motifs of Chinese ancient bronzes from the books Chen Mengjia loaned him. Chen's colleague, Liang Siyong, took Pang to the Department of Archeology where he observed recent findings and newly excavated artifacts, such as bronze vessels and masks, from Yinxu (tomb sites of Yin).³³⁶ Pang relished opportunities to see thousands of small-size ancient jade artifacts, carved in various fish patterns, none of which were identical. Pang was mesmerized by these highly animated patterns so skillfully molded and polished to translucence by the hands of ancient artisans who faithfully retained the jade's original natural forms.³³⁷

Pang's interest in these simple motifs grew, perhaps, out of his familiarity with abstract and minimalist patterns as a consequence of his Paris-based immersion in modern art. Possibly he discerns the inherent affinity between these ancient patterns and modern abstract forms, both of which focus our senses on the minimal. These widely varied and unpredictable ancient motifs so intrigued him that he felt compelled to study

³³⁵ Ibid., 161.

³³⁶ Ibid., 162. One bronze mask left a deep impression on him.

³³⁷ Ibid., 179

them scrupulously, and he compiled volumes of meticulously written notes and drawings on these patterns (Fig. 70 and 71).³³⁸

Meanwhile Pang undertook another significant project, drawing his version of *Zhongguo Tuan Ji* (Compilation of Chinese Patterns, Fig. 72).³³⁹ The result was a four-part album, each of which contained twenty-five pages of patterns and a total of one hundred pages of designs.³⁴⁰ The first album features color drawings of his interpretation of Shang and Zhou bronze patterns (Figs. 73 and 74); the second album explores the latter Shang and Warring States bronze patterns (Figs. 75 and 76); while the third is based on Han patterns (Figs. 77 and 78); and the fourth on patterns of the Han and post-Han (Figs. 79, 80 and 81). Among the best of the drawings from these four albums, some were lost during 1960s Cultural Revolution, according to Pang Xunqin's own recollection.³⁴¹ Some of the surviving drawings were reproduced in the recent Pang Tao-edited *Hiunkin Pang* catalogue.³⁴² In 1939, these four albums of *Zhongguo Tu'an Ji* were widely and favorably viewed by the intelligentsia of the Southwest United Universities in Kunming. Some of those familiar with these four albums even went so far as to comment that Picasso was no genius in comparison with the Chinese ancient artisans who created these original patterns. Pang Xunqin, however, disagreed. He was convinced the collective creativity of the China's ancient artisans could not be compared with the individual creative achievements of Picasso, something which should not be understated. At the

³³⁸ Pang's Memoir, 162.

³³⁹ Pang Tao, ed. *Hiunkin Pang*, 77.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 162.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.* 162.

³⁴² Pang Tao, ed. *Hiunkin Pang*, 77.

same time, however, the greatness of Chinese traditional art must not be ignored.³⁴³ For Pang, there is no conflict between Picasso's abstractions and the Chinese ancient graphic patterns; both are conceptual, original, and formalistic.

***Gongyi meishu ji* (A Collection of Industrial and Fine Art Designs)**

Much like Picasso, Pang, too, was drawn to the primitive world-view as exemplified in art. Both saw in ancient primitive design a new way of looking at the world and a fresh technique that would inspire creative breakthroughs. As an Academia Sinica research fellow, Pang was given a three-month assignment to collect and record *Miao* ethnic customs and handicrafts in Guizhou province near Yunnan, Kunming. From November 1939 to January 1940, while traversing many mountain villages of the *Miao* ethnic groups and collecting their cross-stitched laces and embroidery patterns and even their folk songs, Pang took meticulous notes and recorded these patterns in notebooks.³⁴⁴ Upon returning from his field work, Pang sorted and cataloged the decorative patterns he had collected. During this period, his designs began taking more drastic stylistic turns, incorporating ancient bronze motifs and ethnic decorative patterns combined with modernist geometric forms and colors. Specific ancient motifs, the zoomorphic patterns taken from ancient bronzes, are arranged in an unending chain of repetition, and their once monochromic metallic quality is transformed into multi-colored vibrancy.

Shortly after Pang's return from his field work in early 1940, the Academic Sinica was ordered to move this time from Kunming to Sichuan province. During this trip,

³⁴³ Pang's Memoir, 162.

³⁴⁴ His field work in these *Miao* villages and his paintings inspired by *Miao* ethnic arts will be further explored in chapter 4. The *Miao*'s handicrafts Pang collected and his recorded volumes, according to the artist's daughter, are in the collection of the Beijing Palace Museum. Perhaps they are lost among the museum's huge collections.

unfortunately, he lost considerable written materials and some drawings of patterns completed during his Academic Sinica stay when the luggage fell into muddy puddles. Ink-written materials were hopelessly smeared. After resettling in Li Zhuang, near Chongqin, Pang decided to retrieve some of these lost drawings by redoing them. After nearly three months of isolation and hard work at Li Zhuang, Pang eventually moved to Chengdu in the late 1940, resigning from the Academic Sinica, and accepting a teaching post offered by Li Youxing, his former colleague from Peking Art Academy, to teach at Chengdu Provincial Art Academy.³⁴⁵

Settling in Pi Xian near Chengdu, Pang spent a quiet summer in 1941 living in a ruined temple, Jixiang Si, once belonging to an old nunnery (Fig. 82).³⁴⁶ *Gongyi meishu ji* (*A Collection of Industrial and Fine Art Design*), a portfolio of colored drawings and paintings of his designs, was conceived there. In 1941, this portfolio (Fig. 83) was awarded the second prize for academic research from the Ministry of Education.³⁴⁷ The culmination of two wartime years spent copying and studying ancient patterns of Chinese bronze, jade, and lacquer and Miao ethnic handcrafts, Pang's work seamlessly synthesizes the distillation of both ancient and ethnic traditions and their integration into modern geometric forms and colors. The thirty designs, listed numerically from leaves one through thirty in his table of contents (Fig. 84), purposefully were drafted to embellish objects of functional use, ranging from rugs, tea sets, vases, decorative boxes, women's handbags, umbrellas, table cloths, bedding and cushion covers, and water basins to plates and rice bowls. In the table of contents, he also specifically indicates the

³⁴⁵ He sent a resignation letter to Li Ji, then the director of the Academic Sinica, after leaving Li Zhuang. Pang's Memoir, 194.

³⁴⁶ Pang did a colored painting of the old nunnery. Pang's Memoir, 195.

³⁴⁷ Ibid. 195, and Pang Tao, ed., *Hiunkin Pang*,

raw materials designated for these objects: ceramics for tea pots and vases; wool weaving for carpets and handbags; lacquer for boxes; porcelain for bowls and plates; color dyeing for fabrics; and quilts for table and bedding covers. In his preface (Fig. 85) to this album of thirty designs, Pang identifies the origins of the patterns and motifs he has adapted for these designs. Yin bronze motifs have been adapted for leaves three, ten, fourteen, and seventeen. The design for the two carpets (leaves three and seventeen) is adorned by *taotie wen*, an abstract motif resembling a monster's face, a common pattern from ancient bronzes (2600-700 BCE). The fish motif for a lacquer box (leaf ten) and the ox motif for the handbag design (leaf fourteen), according to Pang, resemble the ancient written ideograms for fish and ox. The motifs for leaves nineteen, twelve, twenty-three, and twenty-four originated from the Zhou dynasty (1050 – 256 BCE). Han style patterns have influenced the design motifs for leaves one, eight, thirteen, sixteen, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-five, twenty-eight, twenty-nine, and thirty. The double fish motif on the vase design, leaf one, originating from the Han, continues to represent the meaning of good wishes. The pattern for a carpet, leaf six, resembles the style of Six Dynasties (265 – 581), while the patterns for a table cloth, leaf eighteen, and a plate, leaf twenty, represents Tang dynasty influence (618 – 906).³⁴⁸

Pang's preface summarized the development of decorative arts and crafts in Chinese history, tracing it back to Neolithic pottery. He held in highest regard the decorative arts of the bronze period (2000 – 256 BCE), characterizing this era's design style as "magnificent in spirit, refined in skill, rich in thought, honest and pure in

³⁴⁸ Pang Xunqin, preface to *Gongyi meishu yi*, written in August of 1941, in *Pang Xunqin gongyi meishu sheji* (Arts and crafts designs by Pang Xunqin) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1999), 3 – 4.

sensibility, entirely original and reflecting the true character of Chinese culture.”³⁴⁹ He assessed Han design style as natural and innocent, and discerned in Tang style a constellation of influences from outside China but synthesized with its own tradition, thereby elevating Chinese arts and crafts to a magnificent level. Critical of the decorative tendency of the post-Ming (post-17th century) period, as being too polished and convoluted and leaning excessively towards the literati painting style to the detriment of ancient grandeur and character, Pang himself hoped to learn from the past. “In light of this,” Pang observed, “I have, in my leisure time apart from studying painting and cataloging the history of Chinese patterns, drafted this album in an attempt to embrace the distinctive character and spirit embodied in ancient patterns of Chinese arts and crafts and integrate them with our present day sensibility and utilitarian purpose, and I welcome any correction and guidance from the public.”³⁵⁰

Just as Pang himself suggests in his preface, this album’s designs were inspired by the distillation of the Chinese decorative tradition in relation to modern sensibility and the utilitarian function of the objects for which the designs were made. Pang recognizes no conflict between the ancient bronze motifs and modern sensibility; instead he is struck their inherent affinity, all of them being simple in style, concise in execution, organic in pattern, abstract in form, and enigmatic, beguiling, and transcendental in spirit. Simplicity is the essence of Pang’s design style. His compositions are never overtly decorative. When employing a figurative or an animal motif, he uses it rather economically, centering it or placing it to the side, often in isolation, surrounded by a vast blank space. The double fish (leaf 1, Fig. 86), framed by an abstract half circle, square, and dot

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 3.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 4. Here I thank my friend Hong Kun who helped me with part of this translation.

patterns, swims freely in the lower part of the vase, which is shaped like a round water tank, and separated by a weaving-water line, from the neck, which is bereft of any patterns and finished off by a few simple lines at the top. The entire vase is painted mustard yellow to exude an antique appearance. Such simplicity and economical use of motifs can also be discerned in leaves one, eight, ten, and fourteen. In the design for a long rectangular lacquer tray (leaf 7, Fig. 87), two lone geese are painted in pale blue in the right corner, their wings in full flight against a black lacquered sky, and a stark white moon hangs on the left corner of the tray. The pallid moon and the faint blue geese float on the black lacquer surface, suggesting a desolate mood, but one partially offset by the warmth of the orange red, the color reserved for the center of the tray's handles. The color correlation is simultaneously ingenious and idiosyncratic. This kind of black, white, and blue correlation continues on the designs on leaves eight and ten, for two lacquer boxes. On the black lacquer box's top cover (leaf 8, Fig. 88), a pair of tortoises in black with white stripes float on a white background, which is further enclosed by a wide border of black. When the box is closed, the dividing line between the top cover and the box is marked by a thin line of white. The only part of the box to receive decoration is the cover, which is adorned with the tortoise motif described above. This austere, dignified, and sophisticated design contrasts with the light-hearted design for the lacquer box, which features a pair of fish (leaf 10, Fig. 89). The color choices, the dark blue sky, and the half-risen white moon above the black sea suggest a heavier mood, one which is tempered, however, by a pair of fish floating on the surface of the blackness. The childlike fish drawing is decorated with light blue and green squares resembling scales outlined by white curvy lines placed in relief against the dark blue and black background,

to create, overall, a delightful and innocent appearance. In his design for a woman's purse, two archaic-looking oxen resembling the ancient ideogram for ox are profiled, apparently conceptually, and they float flat against the brown field (leaf 14, Fig. 90). In the far distance, dark brown hills mark the horizon between the field and sky painted in dark green. The colors in this design complement one another, and the oxen motif, which is painted in black but highlighted with dots of grey, white, and green, to define the contours of their eyes, appears simultaneously archaic and stylized. Yet the overall design with its compositional simplicity and melancholy mood, strike one as both modern and distinctively Chinese.

Of the designs requiring the decoration of an entire-space, Pang would skillfully adopt one or two isolated ancient bronze motifs and either animate them with colors or mold the motifs to suit the shape of the object. See, for example, how, for his four designs (leaves 3, 4, 5, and 6) for carpets, Pang allowed each design to fit seamlessly into the shape of the particular carpets, rather than being confined by it. For leaf 3 (Fig. 91), the two ends of the oblong are framed by an identical pair of *taotie* motifs animated by dominantly green coloration with some yellow definition. The conceptual form of the *taotie* motif, now divorced from its original metallic base and animated with vibrant colors, produces a design at once abstract and archaic. This unique style of Pang is most successfully achieved in his design for a rectangular-shaped rug (leaf 5, Fig. 92). Here he connected a pair of ancient motifs, one of them upward and the other downward in thrust, drawing horizontal and vertical lines, thereby framing each composite motif in a rectangular shape. He then repeated that shape four times vertically; each successive shape is turned in the opposite direction, and, altogether, each side of the carpet

incorporates eight such repetitive pairs. Between each of the four sets of pairs, he inserts two pairs of the same motif but connects them vertically rather than horizontally. At first glance, this design appears simple, but close examination reveals a meticulous manipulation of motifs, an intricate pattern, and a complicated variation. The mathematical symmetry and geometrical clarity are unified with an apparent simplicity.

Pang's designs often strike one as beguilingly effortless and simple. The design for a tablecloth (leaf 16, Fig. 93) falls into to this category. Taking a trio of ancient decorative motifs – *qinglong* (green dragon), *baihu* (white tiger), and *fenghuang* (phoenix), all mystical animals often seen on Han funeral artifacts – Pang animated them with different colors and so intertwined them that one evolves to another, with a continuous linkage of motifs and with no single line being broken. The entire design is confined within a rectangular geometric shape and the colors are symmetrically arranged. The rhythm of the design becomes almost musical, both variation and unity being achieved within the total ensemble.

Pang is essentially a draftsman. He comprehends perfectly the shape and the form of his objects. His designs only enhance the objects' shapes, beautifying them as he repeatedly said, but never usurping the objects. The intertwining zoomorphic motifs, punctuated by various shades of green and beige, give the bowl and plate set (leaf 23, Fig. 94) an appearance of simple elegance. The blue and yellow fish motif punctuated by variations adorns the border of the plate (no. 27, Fig. 95). Centered in the plate is the motif of a mystical sun bird painted in black against a white round background. He encloses the latter with an orange circle, reminiscent of a bright sun ray burning in an eclipsed sky painted in shades of black and orange. That orange circle encloses the entire

round edge of this set. The dominant motif for the tea cup is a pair of sun birds, one painted in black and the other blue, that embrace the cup against a white background, while the in-between space is decorated with the same fish motif seen on the plate. The cup's lower portion and lid are predominantly painted in the same mix of black and orange. This interesting color mix and resulting coherence along with the variation in motifs is a hallmark of Pang's design style. The ancient motifs, enlivened by vibrant colors and ingenious arrangement, are reincarnated into the vocabulary of modern design. Pang Xunqin's idiosyncratic adaptation and integration of ancient motifs into his modern design patterns reinvents the ancient design vocabulary and realizes and re-imagines the cohesiveness between the primitive and the modern. He is, no doubt an appropriator, but simultaneously an innovator.

The most striking, indeed, the distinguished characteristic of this album is the vibrant colors Pang suffused into his designs. Pang is essentially a colorist. Isolated ancient motifs and zoomorphic patterns originating in ancient bronzes are arranged in an unbroken chain of repetition, and their once monochromic metallic quality is magically transformed into multi-colored vibrancy. Pang is bold and unconventional in his use of color. For a particular lacquer box design (leaf 12, Fig. 96), the intricate and complicated pattern of a *taotie* motif, now in black with white stripes, springs to life against the red lacquered base brightened by an orange hue. On the top cover, this motif appears foreboding and almost harsh against the red orange background. Yet the front of the box is adorned by a bird motif framed by an abstract extension of his tail and wings, to form a square shape that connects the cover and the body of the box. This bird motif in a square of predominant black with intervals of white stripes appears in the mid-front side of box,

to suggest its lock, against the red orange colored background. The entire pattern exudes a bold sense of symmetry and contrast.

This sense of unity within a totality and this bold utilization of color also characterizes Pang's design of another round lacquer box (leaf 9, Fig. 97). Here, shades of green and yellow dominate and animate a set of four fantastic phoenixes where wings are contoured to fit the box's round surface. Five yellow dots, symbolizing the sun, perhaps, mark the cardinal line and two side points of the box, and the overall effect is one of poise and balance and unity. Although Pang is best known for employing more subdued and opaque colors of grey and brown in his contemporary paintings, for some of his designs he achieves a kind of idiosyncratic use of primary colors, bright and even opulent in effect. He never shies away from brilliant and highly saturated colors. In his design for a bowl (leaf 24, Fig. 98), he chooses as the dominant color a bright pink punctuated by bright yellow, reddish pink, and some lighter browns and greens. The brims surrounding the bowl and plate are decorated with continuously interlocking zoomorphic motifs, and the plate's center is adorned with a pair of yellow elephant motifs that float above a white round background. The design's highly saturated colors create the effect of lighter weight, and the animal motifs, now dynamic and flamboyant, seemingly float above the surface. This kind of flamboyance also surfaces in Pang's design for a tea cup and saucer set (leaf 26, Fig. 99) and a tea pot (leaf 28, Fig. 100). Here the peacocks and fire birds dance and glide on the surface of the cup, saucer, and tea pot. Traces of the art deco are evident here.

This album of thirty designs epitomizes Pang's creative synthesis of the three inspirational sources to which he was indebted: the ancient Chinese decorative-pattern

tradition, the indigenous ethnic style, and, not least, the modernist sensibility regarding color, abstraction, and abbreviation that the artist grew to embrace. These seemingly effortless and simple designs attest to Pang's hard work, year after year, as a student of the Western technique of drawing and sketching, as a student of Chinese traditional arts and crafts, and as a student of his homeland's ethnic traditions. This album also testifies to another Pang's singular achievements, his capacity for seamlessly assimilating the indigenous and the modern, color and form, and the East and the West. If employed for utilitarian objects today, these designs would inevitably appeal to the tastes of twenty-first century consumers. Yet the value of Pang's remarkable World War Two-era design achievements has been overlooked as a consequence of the twists and turns of China's twentieth-century history, including its art history.

The fate of this album of thirty designs took an interesting turn. Departing from Chengdu, China, in 1945, after serving as a staff member for the West China University Museum in Chengdu, Michael Sullivan, who was destined to become renowned in the West as a historian of Chinese art, carried with him to London this album of designs produced by his Chinese friend, Pang Xunqin.³⁵¹ Unable to find a London publisher, Sullivan returned the portfolio to Pang when they were reunited in Beijing thirty-four years later, in 1979. In a modern format, a selection of this portfolio's designs was

³⁵¹ Michael Sullivan and Pang Xunqin struck up a close friendship during Sullivan's stay in Sichuan. See Michael Sullivan, "In Remembrance of Pang Xunqin" in *Pang Xunqin huaji* (Paintings of Pang Xunqin) (Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1997), 18-20.

published in Beijing two years later (1981),³⁵² and in 1999 a complete set of Pang's original thirty designs were produced by Renmin meishu chubanshe (Fig. 101).³⁵³

After completing this album of designs in 1941, Pang became increasingly involved in the formal discipline of design and committed more time to writing essays exploring theories of decorative and applied art and design. More importantly he also began formulating the idea of establishing China's first art design academy, one reminiscent of the Decorative Art Academy of Paris, to which he had unsuccessfully applied for admission in 1925.³⁵⁴

In 1946, he confided this path-breaking academy idea to his educator colleague, Tao Xingzhi (1891-1946).³⁵⁵ Pang somewhat realistically characterized his plan for such an academy as a "utopian dream." He envisioned a college-level, four-year course of applied-arts study for incoming students. They would engage in both theoretical and empirical studies of the decorative art traditions of both China and the West. In addition to designing a house, architecture majors would also become engaged in building one. Similarly, furniture designers would master carpentry skills, and textile-design specialists would learn how to dye and sew fabric.³⁵⁶ For the remainder of his life, at great personal

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Glancing through shelves of books in a Shanghai bookstore in the summer of 2005, perhaps out of serendipity, I spotted the only copy of this catalogue (published in 1999) at the bottom of a shelf, dusty and watermarked after years of neglect. For me, this was like finding gold in a pile of debris. I grabbed the copy, paid for it, and gratefully became one of the 2000 owners of this publication. There were only 2000 copies printed and published in 1999. For this chapter and its images, I relied mainly on this copy.

³⁵⁴ In his autobiography, Pang mentioned that the Decorative Art Academy of Paris had a policy of not accepting students of Chinese descent. Pang's Memoir, 43.

³⁵⁵ For references on Tao Xingzhi, see Zhang Changjie, *Xiandai gongyi gailun* (Modern art and craft) (Taipei dongda tushu gongsi 1977), 26-39, and Shi Zhongwen, ed. *Zhongguo yishushi – gongyi meishu juan* (Shijia zhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 2006), 993.

³⁵⁶ Pang's Memoir, 209.

sacrifice, Pang dedicated his artistic and intellectual energy to transforming this utopian ideal into a reality.

After the communist China was founded in 1949, Pang Xunqin's vision of establishing China's first academy of arts and crafts came to fruition. With Pang as one of its principal founding members, the Central Academy of Arts and Crafts opened in 1956. Sad to say, however, his obviously Bauhaus-inspired pedagogy clashed with the nationalistic and economically motivated interests of the central government, which gave its highest priority to exporting traditional Chinese crafts in order to generate foreign currency. Chinese officials regarded traditional Chinese crafts as purer forms of Chinese designs and hence as more marketable to Westerners than the hybridized Western and Chinese design style that Pang promoted. His Bauhaus-linked vision was deemed too closely tied to Western imperialism, and thus to be in opposition to the state-sponsored anti-imperialist ideology.³⁵⁷ Ultimately, Pang was branded a "rightist," purged, and removed in 1958 from his vice-presidential post at the Academy. Over the next twenty years, Pang produced scarcely any significant art works, either painting or design. Instead, he quietly devoted his time to further researching the ancient Chinese design tradition and to compiling his most important scholarly work, the *Chronological Studies of Chinese Decorative Paintings*, which was eventually published in 1982, six years after the close of the Cultural Revolution.

The thirty-five year span following 1945, the year that Pang's album landed in Sullivan's possession, is the period when Western-informed modernist art was rejected by China's socialist ideology and ceased to be produced there. Moreover, large numbers

³⁵⁷ Hang Jian, *Shouyi de sixiang* (Aesthetics of Handcrafts) (Jinan: Shandong huabao chubanshe, 2001), 17.

of earlier modernist-inclined art works were destroyed or lost.³⁵⁸ During the 1980s, when Pang's album was finally published, China was experiencing a resurgent interest in the art and literature of the 30s and 40s, the Republic era, and the nation's simultaneous reintegration with the world resurrected the long-ignored body of modernist-inclined art and literary works.³⁵⁹ The first anthology of Chinese modern paintings (*zhongguo xiandai huihua*) was published in 1986; about half the volume concentrates on Western-trained modernists such as Pang.³⁶⁰ However, most Chinese texts about Pang focus on his affiliation with the Storm and Stress Society, the 1930s Shanghai avant-garde group (see Chapter Two). During Pang's Juelanshe period (1931-1935), he primarily produced oil paintings that were informed by cubist forms, betraying metropolitan sentiments. The mode of decorativeness and patterning in Pang's paintings from the 30s has been acknowledged by most Chinese art historians in various essays or anthologies of modern Chinese art.³⁶¹

Yet such anthologies have reproduced very few of Pang's designs. Whenever they refer to his subsequent embrace of decorative and graphic design, they do so in such a way as to imply that his turn to decorative design and his effort to establish China's first

³⁵⁸ It was perhaps fortunate that Sullivan had taken Pang's portfolio to Oxford. Otherwise it, too, might have been destroyed, either by the Red Guards, who did confiscate most of Pang's pre-1950s paintings, or by Pang himself, who destroyed many of his own works for fear of further political reprisal for his so-called Western imperialist leanings.

³⁵⁹ The two literary scholars Ou-fan Lee and Shu-mei Shih have both written on this "nostalgia" of the Republic era and this renewed interest in modernist literature in their books. Refer to Lee's *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China 1930-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), and Shih's *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001).

³⁶⁰ Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan, *Zhongguo xiandai huihua shi* (History of Chinese Modern Paintings). Nanjing: Jiangsu Meishu chubanshe, 1986.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 128, and Hang Jian *Shouyi de sixiang* (Aesthetics of Handcrafts) (Jinan: Shandong huabao chubanshe, 2001), 71.

academy of arts and crafts had diminished his statue as a serious painter.³⁶² The historiography of modern Chinese art, one which privileges painting over any other art forms, ranks Pang far below his better known and also Paris-trained contemporaries Xu Beihong and Lin Fengmian, neither of whom ever “strayed” away from painting. This privileging of painting over design in the scholarly construct of Chinese art history is most emphatically not a unique case; rather it underscores a widespread discursive hegemony across the discipline of Chinese art history, both in China and abroad.

Although Pang’s turn to graphic design has been lamented in the Chinese narrative of modern art history as distracting him from becoming a serious painter, most major English-language writings about Chinese modern art have simply ignored Pang’s role in design history.³⁶³ All the relevant art historical texts stop at his involvement with the Storm Society and with oil paintings. Scarcely any scholarly essays in English have addressed Pang’s design or, for that matter, any modern Chinese industrial or graphic design activity. Although in recent years book- and magazine-cover design and calendar and movie posters from the 1930s have attracted substantial scholarly attention as a springboard to visual cultural studies,³⁶⁴ modern design for consumer products and their historical connection with Chinese modernity seem to have completely escaped the attention of art historians of Chinese art.

³⁶² Hang Jian, *Shouyi de sixiang* (Aesthetics of Handcrafts) (Jinan: Shandong huabao chubanshe, 2001), 71 and Zhu Buoxiong and Chen Ruilin, *Zhongguo xihua wushi nian* (Chinese Western Paintings over Fifty Years) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1989).

³⁶³ Here I am referring to the three important texts on Chinese modern art: Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Julia Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China* (New York: Henry N. Abrams, 1998), and Maxwell Hearn and Judith Smith, eds., *Chinese Art Modern Expressions* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001).

³⁶⁴ Jason Kuo, ed., *Visual Culture in Shanghai, 1850s-1930s* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007); Ellen Johnston Laing, *Selling Happiness: Calendar Posters and Visual Culture in Early-Twentieth-Century Shanghai* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004).

Chapter Conclusion – Pang’s Critical Reception, East and West

The absence of studies of Chinese graphic design in both English- and Chinese-constructed histories of Chinese modern art raises the question of why such an omission exists. Can we write off such a discursive omission by simply claiming that the field of Chinese modern art history in the West is still a relative new area with few specialists?³⁶⁵ When the discursive construct of modern Chinese art history is built around the binaries of traditional and modern ink painting, between Chinese ink and Western oil painting, where, within that construct, do we place the art design and where do we locate Pang’s synthesized design style?

The hegemony of painting in both Chinese and the Western-language constructs of modern Chinese art history seem to have seemingly blocked the admission of modern Chinese design into their narratives. Traditionally, in China, decorative arts were considered *diaochong xiaoji*, i.e., “a small craft such as carving or painting an insect.” The privileging of literati painting had conveniently marginalized artists who excelled in crafts such as decorating porcelains and carving lacquer boxes. The literati class, who were the collectors of these decorative objects, rarely engaged in designing them. Pang’s efforts to integrate modern forms with Chinese native crafts represent a modern intellectual’s self-motivated attempts to transcend the boundary between the literati and so-called folk art; that effort was itself modern. If it was primarily the political and ideological factors that spurred the dismissal of his designs and of his Bauhaus-linked theory in Mao’s China, then the current discursive omission underscores the continuation of the reign of the age-old hegemony of the literati culture in the history of Chinese art.

³⁶⁵ Julia Andrews, “Mapping Chinese Modernity,” in Maxwell Hearn and Judith Smith, eds., *Chinese Art Modern Expressions* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 301-303.

In the English-language based historiography of modern Chinese art, particularly in the United States, such an omission may reveal the political and cultural complexity of historicizing the Western-informed modernism of China. The post-colonial criticism of Eurocentrism may unintentionally have constrained Western art historians of Chinese art from engaging with materials that bear traces of Western influence. Also scholars may consciously have avoided studying such materials to escape criticism or to avoid being tagged as Eurocentric; phrases such as “Western-influenced” or “Western-styled” have become intellectual taboo. The discursive shift from Eurocentrism to Sinocentrism under the guise of multiculturalism elevates ideology over historicity, thereby generating another form of hegemony which canonizes certain art forms and marginalizes others.

Sinocentrism has particularly marginalized Western modernist-style art forms, deeming them inferior to the Chinese ink paintings and traditional crafts which claim their origins in China. The existing discourse’s focus on the so-called “authentic” forms of Chinese art relegates Western-informed art styles such as Pang’s to the margin of hybridization, thereby rendering them impure because of foreign “contamination.” The preference for studying Chinese traditional arts in the field of Chinese art history is self-evident. Among the dozen doctoral monographs on twentieth-century Chinese art produced during the post-1980s in the United States, none has been written about the Western- repatriate artists such as Pang Xunqin. Two dissertations that focus on this category of artists have come out of Britain, most recently (2005) a monograph on Lin Fengmian.³⁶⁶ The scarcity of scholarly productions regarding Western-informed and Chinese-transformed art style in the construct of Chinese modern art history valorizes

³⁶⁶ Sandy Ng, *Lin Fengmian (1900-1991): Figure Painting and Hybrid Modernity in Twentieth Century Chinese Art* (Ph.D. dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2005).

both the sinocentric claim of the originality of traditional Chinese arts and the Western hegemonic claim to originating modernism.

In his 1993 essay, “Open and Closed Discourses of Modernity in Asian Art,” Australian art historian John Clark has linked this “privileging of origin” of modernism in the West to the Euro-Americans’ “inability to accept as authentic what Asian cultures have in their various ways done with originally Euro-American forms.” As Clark argues, “Where that culture in particular has an interpretative discourse which privileges origination, such as in Euro-America, the very fact of transfer poses radical challenges to central codes of the culture, and not just its art discourses.”³⁶⁷ This inability to accept Asian modernism as a part of a larger framework of global and transnational modernism reveals an age old Western insistence on the ownership of modernism.

This claim of the originality of modernism may help explain why Pang’s portfolio lay idle for thirty-five years in England. The sinocentric claim of originating traditionalism and the Euro-American claim of modernism have *doubly* marginalized art works such as Pang Xunqin’s that were able to syncretize and transcend both the Western modernist and Chinese indigenous forms.³⁶⁸ This “double-othering” may help account for the present occlusion of Chinese graphic design in the historiographic construct of Chinese modern art.

³⁶⁷ John Clark, “Open and Closed Discourses of Modernity in Asian Art,” in John Clark, ed., *Modernity in Asian Art* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), 5.

³⁶⁸ The sinocentrics would label Pang’s graphic design excessively Western, and not Chinese enough, while the Western hegemony of modernism would reject his design altogether, as being neither Chinese nor Western original.

Chapter 4: The Lure of the “Primitive” – Pang Xunqin’s Paintings of Miao Ethnic People and the Issue of Primitivism and Modern Art, a Chinese Case (1938 – 1946)

My depiction of these fellow ethnic people from Guizhou is far from reality and cannot be held by any ethnographic standards because what lies underneath my brushes betrays my own self.³⁶⁹
– Pang Xunqin, 1943.

“The Road” – “Lu”

As a result of the 1937 Japanese occupation of Beiping, Pang Xunqin and his family retreated to China’s interior along with the students and faculty of the Beiping Art Academy, and settled in Yuanlin, west of Hunan, in early 1938.³⁷⁰ During their brief Yuanlin sojourn, Pang drafted a composition titled *Lu*, or “the Road” in translation. At the time, Pang had just resigned from the Beiping Art Academy due to leadership friction between the Beiping institution and the Hangzhou Art Academy.³⁷¹ Pang subsequently moved to Kunming, where he initially lacked institutional affiliation and struck many as a free-spirited and independent artist.³⁷² After he and his family had settled in a house on Qingyun jie (Street of Blue Clouds),³⁷³ Pang enlarged his pencil drawing of *Lu* and

³⁶⁹ Pang Xunqin. “Self Introduction,” in *Zhongyang ribao*, Chengdu, September 12, 1943. Reprinted in Pang Tao, ed. *Pang Xunqin wenxuan: lun yishu, sheji, meiyu* (Selected Essays by Pang Xunqin, Discussions on Art, Design, and Art education) (Jiangsu Education Publishing House, 2007), 47.

³⁷⁰ Pang’s Memoir, 151. The Academy first retreated to Lushan in Jiangxi, and then moved further inland to Yuanling, a town in the west of Hunan, near the hometown of then famous regionalist writer, Shen Congwen, whose advice was considered with regard to this particular location for the academy’s retreat.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 157-9. The Beiping and Hangzhou Art Academies merged as one institution, which caused frictions among the faculty from both academies. Lin Fengmian resigned and left Hunan. Pang, who was on disagreeable terms with some faculty from the Hangzhou Art Academy, also left for Kunming.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 178.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 161. Shen Congwen, already an established writer in 1938, lived across the street, and it was there Pang met Shen’s nephew, Huang Yongyu, who later became an important artist in China. Pang, in his memoir, did not mention in detail how well he knew Shen back then; however, Pang mentioned Shen a few times. Shen, a prolific writer between 1925 and 1948, and a determined independent, refusing to lean towards either the left or the right, completely stopped writing literary works after 1949 and turned himself into a scholar of Chinese antiquity and the history of textiles and fabrics. The parallels between Pang and Shen will be drawn in the latter part of this chapter, for both found inspirations from the art and life of the Miao people. For scholarly studies on Shen Congwen in the English language, see Jeffrey Kinkley, *The Odyssey of Shen Congwen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), and Kinkley, ed., *Imperfect Paradise: Stories by Shen Congwen* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995).

converted it into an oil painting. It was this work, along with his painting *Son of the Earth* that facilitated Pang's association with Wen Yiduo (1899–1946), who had once studied at the Chicago Art Institute (1922–1923). A poet and an artist in his own right, Wen was then an intellectual leader and a renowned literature professor at the Tsinghua University, a part of the Southwest United University.³⁷⁴

Lu was the first painting Pang destroyed in 1966 for fear of being branded a counter-revolutionary should the Red Guards find it. This painting, however, made Wen Yiduo jump to his feet the first time he viewed it, in 1938. Holding Pang's hand, Wen repeatedly exclaimed, "I am so sorry, Xunqin, I did not know you have such a talent, and I have not seen any of your paintings; I didn't know that you could not only paint, but paint such paintings! I have never thought someone could paint such paintings!"³⁷⁵ So exhilarated was Wen Yiduo that he borrowed his friend Luo Longji's living room to stage a small exhibition of Pang's works, as well as to host a tea reception for him.³⁷⁶ Many faculty of the Xinan Lianda (the Southwest United University) attended the reception, among them Cao Yu, Feng Zi, Sun Shutang, Liang Sicheng, Lin Huiyin, and Zhu Ziqing.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁴ For Wen Yiduo's life and his role in the intellectual history of the Republic period, see Kai-Yu Hsu, *Wen I-To* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980), and Joseph Garver, "Wen I-To: Ideology and Identity in the Genesis of the Chinese Intelligentsia," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1980). The Southwest United University (xinan lianda) was an affiliation of all the major universities that retreated to southwestern China as a result of Japanese occupation in major cities of China between 1937 and 1945.

³⁷⁵ Directly quoted from Pang's Memoir, 176.

³⁷⁶ Luo Longji (1898-1965), was a close friend of Wen Yiduo. Both Luo and Wen had studied in American universities in the 20s, Wen at the Art Institute of Chicago, Luo at Harvard. Luo went on to London to receive his Ph.D. in political science and publicly advocated a multi-party governing system in China after he returned. In the 50s, he was branded as a rightist, one of the first six rightists being labeled in the Anti-Rightist Movement of 1957 of the People's Republic of China.

³⁷⁷ Pang's Memoir, 176. All of these attendees were prominent cultural figures in art, architecture, and literature; most of them received post-graduate education in the West.

So what kind of a painting was this *Lu* that so excited Wen Yiduo? Given the loss of the painting during the turbulent Chinese century and the absence of even a photographic copy, we can only imaginatively reconstruct it on the basis of some fragmentary literary accounts by Pang.

Based on his account, Pang intended that the original pencil preparatory drawing would incorporate several motifs: oppression against the people; the awakening of the people; the rebellion of the people, including rebellions against imperialism, the ruling government, and bureaucratic capitalism; the people standing up; the people triumphant; and the people establishing a prosperous country.³⁷⁸ This ambitious projection presented a huge challenge for Pang, for as he admitted that at that time he had never read any Marxist works and did not quite comprehend the revolution taking place in his country. “Most of all,” he wrote, “I was not familiar with the real life of the people.”³⁷⁹ With regard to technical matters, Pang was also experimenting with blending realism and decorativeness and, simultaneously, incorporating Chinese and Western stylistic elements into this painting. Such an intent, according to Pang, presented a particular difficulty when he tried to transform his preparatory drawings into a mural in oil.³⁸⁰ *Lu*, in the envisioned form of a large mural, never came to fruition, and Wen Yiduo may have seen

³⁷⁸ Pang’s Memoir, 161. However, we must accept Pang Xunqin’s account with some reservation. Pang was never a political artist, so creating a painting which carries such a strong revolutionary tone was quite unlike him. We must exercise caution about what Pang wrote his memoir in the early 1980s, when to be on the right side of the political spectrum, meaning the Left or the revolutionary side, was still important. Pang may have tried to fashion himself consciously or subconsciously as a politically sensitive artist.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 161. Coming from a gentry family, Pang was still apologetic for not belonging to the Proletarian class. Pang, writing his memoir in the early 1980s, was perhaps still living under the nightmarish experience of the Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Perhaps Pang here still felt the need to do some soul searching and self-criticism, a rehabilitation tool used during the anti-rightist movement of 1957 and the Cultural Revolution of 1966, both of which persecuted Pang.

³⁸⁰ Pang may have intended to execute a large mural oil painting; once he referred to the painting as a “mural in his memoir, 161 and 279.

a partially finished version of the oil painting, which, so Pang recalled, neither portrayed the peasants as the major force for revolution nor criticized feudalism. The painting's lack of leftist political leaning made Pang fearful of repercussions should it be discovered, and he consequently destroyed it in 1966.³⁸¹

Pang was vague regarding the style of *Lu*, and determining the painting's compositional details and content remains problematic. *Lu* was first displayed in public, along with his painting *Son of the Earth* (Fig. 1), at Pang's solo exhibition held in the Chengdu Provincial Library in October, 1941.³⁸² In his memoir, Pang recalled that a group of KMT military officials who viewed his show commented negatively about his treatment of the army officials' heads featured in the painting, arguing that they resembled neither human or pigs' heads. After Pang informed them that these soldiers were meant to represent the Japanese army officials, the KMT officials pointed out that their uniforms were similar to those worn by KMT officials. Pang responded that he was not familiar with military uniforms and promised to make some changes in the ranking stars painted on the clothing.³⁸³ Based on this anecdote, we know that Pang incorporated soldiers into this key painting, and it was neither abstract nor completely realistic, but perhaps expressionistic. It might have been a satirical commentary on the current KMT government and most likely it incorporated an anti-Japanese military aggression theme. Again reservations should be voiced with regard to Pang's recollections; he might have unconsciously portrayed himself as having been politically sensitive and a sympathizer of

³⁸¹ Ibid., 177 and 279. Pang admitted that when he painted "Lu," he never thought of the revolution in terms of peasants and feudalism.

³⁸² Huang Zongxian's "Da huannan shidai de jueze – da houfang meishu yanjiu (Choices in time of a Great Crisis – Studies on the Art Produced in the Interior China)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Nanjing Art Academy, 1999), 184.

³⁸³ Pang's Memoir, 197.

the left, an image he still needed to cultivate even during the early 1980s, the time when he crafted his memoir. Most likely, Pang painted *Lu* in a style similar to that of his *Son of the Earth* painting; i.e., it was expressive with flattened figures, and possibly it was rendered in a kind of brownish hue.³⁸⁴

Most telling perhaps, is the title of this painting, *Lu*, meaning the path or the road. This title likely suggested Pang's own sense of loss and ambivalence at the time. After Juelanshe's failed attempt to promote their brand of modernism; when the country was facing a great national crisis, with war and uncertainty looming large; after Pang and his family retreated from their familiar metropolis to the interior west, and when he found himself without any institutional affiliation, Pang must have been tormented as to which road to follow.³⁸⁵ Pang may also have contemplated giving up painting altogether to fully engage in the art of design and design education.³⁸⁶ Conceived in such a context and at this pivotal moment of his life, *Lu* might have revealed the confused state of his political predisposition, the sense of loss in his search, and his ambivalence regarding his future.

Pang's Field Work in the Miao regions of Guizhou

Pang's path took a new turn in late 1938 after he began working as a research fellow at the Academia Sinica (the Chinese Academy of Sciences) and the National Central Museum, which had retreated to Kunming following the Japanese occupation of

³⁸⁴ Appropriating Picasso, Pang categorized his paintings into the brown, grey, or blue periods. "Lu" may belong to his brown period since his later paintings of Miao people were labeled by him products of his blue and grey period.

³⁸⁵ Pang's Memoir, 160. Some of his friends left for Yan'an, the heart of the communist revolution, and some made a great deal of money taking advantages of the war. Pang commented he would never walk on the latter "road" and neither he was certain of the first "road" to Yan'an. The title *Lu* here obviously implied a crossroads and he had to choose.

³⁸⁶ Wen Yiduo strongly opposed Pang's giving up on painting and encouraged him to follow "the path" of an artist. Wen, later in Sichuan, was the one who supported Pang's promotion to a professorship. Pang's Memoir, 177.

Nanjing.³⁸⁷ After studying patterns of ancient Chinese bronzes, jades, and lacquers at the museum, Pang embarked on a three-month assignment to collect and record Miao ethnic customs and handcrafts in Guizhou province. Initially Pang was reluctant to take on this assignment; he feared that researching ethnic art would derail his own artistic pursuits.³⁸⁸ Some of his relatives also shared with him alarming rumors about the ethnic Miao people: how the Miao'd poisoned arrows would be used to shoot people from other tribes and how some tribes would use the heads of non-tribal persons for their New Year sacrifices.³⁸⁹ Pang's relatives' concerns reflected a common and biased perception of the ethnic Miao among the Han majority. Nevertheless, Pang accepted the Miao assignment, and in November, 1939, he arrived in Guiyang in the company of Rui Yifu (1897-1991), an anthropologist who in 1933 had already conducted an ethnographic study of the Western Hunan Miao tribes.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁷ When major Chinese coastal cities were occupied by the Japanese, many intelligentsia along with their universities and art schools moved to inland location, such as Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou, the homes of many Chinese ethnic minorities.

³⁸⁸ He was also concerned that by becoming a specialist in the ethnic artistic tradition, he might have to stay in Yunnan for the rest of his professional life, a future to which he was not ready to commit. See Pang's Memoir, 180.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 181.

³⁹⁰ Rui Yifu, an anthropologist who studied in Tsinghua University in the 20s, was one of the first generation of Chinese anthropologists who engaged in the ethnographic studies of the ethnic minority. His works were widely published, including the most famous, *Xiangxi Miaozu diaocha baogao* and *Miaoman tuji* (Pictorial Collection of the Miao). Rui moved to Taipei in 1949 and was a leading anthropology scholar at the Academia Sinica. Rui and his colleague, Ling Chunsheng (1902–1981) – a graduate of the University of Paris in 1929 under the tutelage of Marcel Mauss (1872-1950), and of Paul Rivet (1876 – 1958) – collaborated in the first field study of the Miao ethnics in 1933. They and Yong Shiheng went to the western Hunan and conducted their ethnographic study of the Miao tribes in the region, the first to be aided with photographic equipment. Their field work was the basis for the *Xiangxi Miaozu diaocha baogao* (Research Report on the Western Hunan Miao Tribes) that was compiled in 1937 and eventually published by the Shanghai Commercial Press in 1947. The publication was delayed due to the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). This report is usually considered the first ethnographic study conducted by Chinese scholars.

In contrast to Rui's earlier Miao project, he and Pang Xunqin were now assigned to collect ethnic artifacts in the Miao regions near Guiyang.³⁹¹ Rui's ethnographic knowledge exceeded Pang's, but Pang benefited from his own aesthetic taste and his artist's eye for Miao crafts. Pang first collected *huabian*, a type of cross-stitched, lace-like embroidery crafted by Miao women, both old and young. Miao women usually spent their life savings on embroidering a single jacket prepared for their wedding. Having so focused on lavishing all their talent on this kind of artifact, Miao women treasured such jackets and wore them for important ceremonies throughout their lives.³⁹²

In Guiyang's Cijiao shan area, Pang and Rui met the Huamiao ethnic tribe, or the flower Miao, so named because the style of their embroidered costume was floral and colorful. Using white thread, Huamiao women stitched a pattern on the surface of their black cotton jackets and applied red thread to add embellishment to the white pattern; and occasionally they added blue thread to the white pattern. The patterns were usually cross-stitched and square-shaped and appeared on the backs of their jackets or along the borders of their sleeves, as shown in Pang's paintings (Fig. 102). Additional decorated accessories included backpack straps and aprons that also incorporated embroidered patterns. Pang and Rui were so captivated by the artistic beauty and intricate patterns of the Miao crafts that they purchased some cross-stitched laces and loose embroidered sleeve borders as well as an entire head-to-toe ensemble of decorative accessories.³⁹³

³⁹¹ Pang and Rui, with a grant of 3000 yuan from the Central National Museum, were assigned to collect artifacts of the Miao in Guizhou region. The materials they collected might be housed in the Nanjing Museum (http://www.nanjing.gov.cn/culture/jlsq/jlzg/200704/t20070412_210382.htm).

³⁹² Pang's Memoir, 183.

³⁹³ Ibid., 186. Pang learned late in life that these costumes and materials they collected were not shipped to Taiwan but instead were left at the Nanjing Museum and later transferred to the Palace Museum in Beijing. The whereabouts of these collected materials remains unconfirmed. The Palace Museum in Beijing cannot be reached to confirm whether these materials are still in their collection.

Pang believed they managed to collect many more patterns than did the Japanese anthropologist Torii Ryuzo (1870-1953) who had come to Yunnan and Guizhou at the beginning of the twentieth century.³⁹⁴

In December, 1939, the pair arrived at Huaxi, Guiyang, where they met the Zhongjia tribe which had been largely assimilated into the Han culture.³⁹⁵ The women wore jackets and pants that were similar to the Han clothing style, with the addition of some floral patterns.³⁹⁶ They went on to study the Qingmiao tribe at Huaxi and attended their *tiaohua* (jumping flowers) ceremony, a ceremony celebrating the New Year and expressing hopes for an abundant harvest.³⁹⁷ For such a ceremony, the Qingmiao people would cut down a tree trunk and erect it in the central area of their village. There young Qingmiao women would link hands and dance around the tree, while the young men played the *sheng* instrument (Fig. 103).³⁹⁸ In 1941, Pang did a sketch of that ceremony, perhaps a preparatory work for the painting version (Fig. 104). The Qingmiao women wore simple clothes without much embroidery, but the edges of their sleeves were brocaded and the hems of their skirts were adorned with dark blue – *Qing* – stripes to distinguish their tribe from others (Fig. 110).

Pang and Rui continued on to the Longli and Guiding regions where they encountered the Baimiao tribe and the Huamiao at Guiding. The Baimiao people wore

³⁹⁴ Torii Ryuzo (1870-1953) came to the Yun'nan and Guiyang areas in 1902 to conduct a field study of the Chinese ethnic minorities in the Southwest region and collected many costume patterns and customs from the local Miao people. Based on his field research in the region, he published *Miao zu diao cha baogao* (Report on the Research of the Miao Tribe) in 1905. This report remained the only field study conducted on the Miao minority until 1933 when two Chinese anthropologists, Lin Chunsheng and Rui Yifu, began their field study in the region. They completed their report in 1937 and published it in 1947 after the Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945).

³⁹⁵ Many people from this tribe were educated and sent to Han-style schools. Pang's Memoir, 187.

³⁹⁶ Ibid. Pang and Rui were invited to attend a local wedding where they were treated as special guests.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., 188.

³⁹⁸ A woodwind instrument made of bamboo.

headgear similar to a turban wrapped around their heads and their jackets buttoned in the middle, exposing their necks, and hung a square piece of decorative dyed-fabric on the backs of their jackets. The women's skirts were divided into two parts; the upper part of the fabric was dyed with floral patterns and sewn to the lower part of the skirt, which was white starched, thus identifying their tribe with "white," *bai* meaning white in Chinese. The lower part of their skirts terminated in a broad ruffle-like hem made of white fabric (Fig. 105).³⁹⁹ This colored ink painting depicting a Miao drinking festival perhaps provides a good guide to the style of clothing worn by the Baimiao women.

The two scholars met more Huamiao in the Guiding area. According to Pang, the Huamiao people in Guiding were not much different from those of Long Li. They wore jackets that opened in the middle, leaving their necks exposed. The opening edges were decorated with embroidered borders, and the shoulder and arm areas were also embellished with embroidery. They covered their heads with simple square-shaped cloths (Fig. 106 and 107). The young Miao couples in these two paintings showcase the style of the Huamiao outfit, and the details of the decorative patterns are given the ultimate attention by the artist. Yet the facial expressions of the couples featured here remain benign and generic.

Pang and Rui moved on to Anshun where they met more Huamiao people. Pang recalled their clothing style as different from that of the Huamiao people in Guiding.⁴⁰⁰ Red fabric is the basic color for the Anshun Miao people, who would create circular brocaded patterns on the red fabric using a broad golden silk thread. A girl would at age seven or eight begin covering her red jacket with embroidered floral patterns. The

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 189-90.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 190.

endeavor would continue until her wedding day, when she would present the piece as a gift to her husband who would treasure and wear it only at a “jumping flowers” festival (Fig. 108). The Anshun Miao people wore cotton-filled jackets to keep themselves warm in winter. In this painting, the deep shadows and shading delineated by Pang around the women’s belts as they tighten their winter jackets suggest the thickness of the cotton inlays. Sometimes color-dyed patterns rather than embroidery were used to adorn their jackets.⁴⁰¹ Here, Pang painted multiple Miao figures to display the various decorative patterns and details on the fronts and backs of their jackets, along their collar trimming, on their shoulders, and on their headgear. The intricate and ornate patterns highlighted in shades of red against the blue grey shades are eye-catching and colorful. The artist’s interest in documenting these patterns is obvious.

Pang’s memoir recalled that Anshun Miao people seemed to be more prosperous than the Miao people in the other regions. For the first three days of the Chinese Lunar New Year, the young women from the Anshun village enjoyed the luxury of having these days off, and they would emerge from their houses, wearing shoes adorned with embroidery, and sit in the sun on a piece of rock, doing their needle work.⁴⁰² They utilized traditional patterns, most commonly the butterfly pattern, but they incorporated some variations so that none of the embroidered patterns looked exactly the same.⁴⁰³ The young women scarcely spoke to one another while embroidering, busying themselves to finish as much embroidery as possible during their three-only free days.⁴⁰⁴ Sometimes

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Pang’s Memoir, 191.

⁴⁰³ Ibid., 191.

⁴⁰⁴ According to a village superstition, doing needle work other than during the first three days of the New Year could cause an ox to go blind.

sheng music could be heard from a distant hilltop as young men used their musical talent in an attempt to court these young women. The latter, hearing the distant music, hardly raised their heads or interrupted their needle work. Young men and women all wore a kind of belt made from a variety of colored thread. When a young man and woman decided to begin dating, they would exchange those belts as a token of their commitment. This vertical scroll (Fig. 109), titled “The First Love,” depicts a Miao young man and woman courting on a stream bank. Their figures are dwarfed by the tall trees behind them. Clearly visible in the young man’s hands is the *sheng* bamboo instrument which helped him lure the young woman. She, in turn, is holding onto a tree branch, visibly shy, and leaning towards the young man. The white apron hemmed with a red square-patterned trim decorates her otherwise plain dark blue skirt, and the young man’s dark blue jacket is highlighted by the red-colored shoulder strap of a small brocaded bag visible on his right side, the kind of bag traditionally carried by the Miao people.

Pang and Rui also attended a “*tiaoyue*” (dancing under the moon) festival where good harvest wishes were celebrated. The dancing area was located on a low hill which had been flattened by the villagers so that it could accommodate over one-hundred dancers. The dancers were all men, one blowing the *sheng* instrument and the others dancing in tune to the rhythm of the music (Fig. 110). This painting titled *Sheng Wu* or *Sheng Dance* may visually refer to the “*tiaoyue*” ceremony. Pang recalled that at the ceremony young- and middle-aged men wore the embroidered jackets made by their wives, and even children wore their “*huayi*” (flower clothes) with embroidery. The “*tiaoyue*” ceremony of wishing for an upcoming plentiful harvest provided an opportunity to show off the needlework of women from different households. Pang

remembered that the dancing ground was like a sea of red, grand and animated.⁴⁰⁵ Pang and Rui spent nearly three months in the Miao region of Guizhou and they never met a single hostile villager. In every village they visited, people welcomed the pair, showering them with lace, embroideries, and Miao dyes, until Pang and Rui had used up their funding.⁴⁰⁶

Pang kept detailed notes on the ethnic costumes, customs, and folksongs of each Miao village they visited, and he compiled two volumes of notes and sketches during the field work. These notes were ultimately destroyed in the 1960s, along with many of his books and paintings.⁴⁰⁷ The materials they collected from the Long Li and Guiding regions were unfortunately lost in a fire at the Guiding post office, a facility they used for sending their materials back to the Nanjing National Museum, then located in Kunming. They succeeded, however, in transmitting to the museum, the costumes, embroideries, and dyed fabrics they collected from other villages and sketches from their field work.⁴⁰⁸ After their return from the field work in January, 1940, Pang began to sort and catalogue the decorative patterns he had collected. He painstakingly painted and drew out many of these patterns. Pang suspected that some of these drawings, along with the costumes,

⁴⁰⁵ Pang's Memoir, 192. When I was at the Changshu Art Museum on July 4th 2007, I requested to view one painting that has not been published (museum catalog # 00080). The painting depicts three young Miao men playing the *Sheng* instrument and dancing to the music. They all wear bright red jackets with gray and blue intercrossing. The size of the painting is about 84 x 62 cm. This painting may provide a better example of the *Huamiao* people wearing bright red jackets.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., 192.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., 189.

⁴⁰⁸ The Miao handicrafts Pang collected and his recorded volumes are, according to the artist's daughter, in the collection of the Beijing Palace Museum. But they have become lost amidst the museum's huge holdings.

embroideries, and dyed fabrics they sent to the Nanjing National Museum, were eventually transported to the Beijing Palace Museum after 1950.⁴⁰⁹

Pang's Paintings of the Miao People

Inspired by his first-hand experience at different Miao villages and mesmerized by the beautiful patterns of their ethnic clothing, Pang, between 1941 and 1946, painted a series of works, in Chinese colored ink on satin or on *Xuan* paper, featuring Miao ethnic women and men dressed in their native attire. Forty paintings of such themes have been published and catalogued, and most of them are in the permanent collection of the Changshu Pang Xunqin Art Museum in Jiangsu province. The National Art Museum of China in Beijing owns a few, and the rest are in private collections.⁴¹⁰ Michael Sullivan, the prominent historian of Chinese art, while on the staff of the West China University Museum in Chengdu between 1944 and 1945, made friends with many Chinese artists stationed there during the war.⁴¹¹ Among them was Pang Xunqin who gave Sullivan at least three of his paintings featuring ethnic Miao people, which have been published (Figs. 106, 111, and 112).⁴¹² *The Miao Couple* referred to earlier (Fig. 106) reveals the fine detail of the decorative patterns on their outfits while the landscape behind them is vague and fading.⁴¹³ *Miao Girl with her Pig* (Fig. 111), given to Sullivan's wife, Khoan, in 1945, is of a small album-size (29 x 29 cm). Here Pang leaves the background completely blank and focuses only on the pig and the Miao girl pulling it. Her outfit, from the headgear to

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., 193.

⁴¹⁰ One is catalogued in the collection of French Cernuschi Museum of Art, Paris.

⁴¹¹ See Sullivan, "Recollections of Art and Artists in Wartime Chengdu." *The Register of the Spencer Museum of Art* 6:3 (1986): 6-19.

⁴¹² The three paintings have been catalogued in *Modern Chinese Art: the Khoan and Michael Sullivan Collection*, Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, (2001): plate #85, #88, and #90.

⁴¹³ In the aforementioned catalogue, this painting (plate #88) is titled "*Two Miao Girls*," which, I believe, is a mislabeling. The image shows clearly a woman and a man, not two females.

the sandals, is clearly delineated and shaded in light blue, and the pig, shaded in grey, is adorably plump. The girl gently pulls the pig with a leash as if she is pulling her pet. The tenderness shown by the girl toward her pig is captured by Pang in a few simple strokes and outlines. *The Letter* (Fig. 112) reveals a much more somber mood. Sullivan's note for this painting reads: "She has read her husband's – or her brother's? – letter from the Front; his pipe hangs on the wall, and her thoughts are far away."⁴¹⁴ The young woman, dressed in a Han-style winter jacket, is sewing in front of her house. The door and window frames of the house are visible behind her, the opened letter is in a basket beside her, and the pipe is hanging on a wooden brace of the door on which a part of a fading Chinese New Year good-luck (*Fu*) red paper poster is barely visible. Light blue, beige, and gray dominate the color pallet, and the pensive and melancholy mood of the young woman is noticeably conveyed by the artist, a mood by then already a part of Pang's signature style. The painting appears to be deceptively plain, but a close look reveals the painstaking detail of the floral and circular patterns on both the fabric piece covering the young woman's head and her belt. The woven patterns of the baskets, including the basket on which she is sitting, were all carefully delineated. Pang's ability to render meticulous details and simultaneously to deceive viewers with his seemingly effortless execution manifests itself in this painting, like many others.

The published works, plus one unpublished painting, which were viewed by the author, totaling all together forty-one paintings and sketches featuring Miao men and women, can be divided into five groups according to their different stylistic, thematic,

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 110.

and technical emphases.⁴¹⁵ In the first group, the figures are usually large, pressed to the foreground and occupying almost the entire composition, with little or no background, e.g., Figs. 102, 106, 107, 108, 113, and 114. The decorative patterns on the costumes of the Miao figures or on any of their accessories such as head wrappers, back straps, and jewelry are all rendered in microscopic detail; every line and pattern has been meticulously traced and painted. The figures are somewhat flattened and pressed against each other, and only about two-thirds of their bodies are featured, thereby focusing visual attention on the details of their outfits and patterns. The facial expressions of these figures depict little, if any, emotion, thereby revealing Pang's usual idiosyncratic melancholy and weary look, reminiscent of some of the figures created during his Shanghai period.⁴¹⁶ Pang Xunqin's fascination with the Miao ethnic costumes and patterns obviously dictated his choice of style in rendering these figures, which were intended to showcase the different patterns of Miao costumes and their home-made embroideries and textile motifs.

The second group is a series of album paintings depicting the life and customs of the Guizhou ethnic Miao people, titled by Pang *Guizhou Shanmin Tu* (Paintings of Mountain Villagers of Guizhou). This album was created between 1941 and 1942 after Pang resigned from the Academia Sinica (1941) and moved to Chengdu to teach at the Changdu Provincial Art Academy.⁴¹⁷ According to Pang, he painted twenty leaves in this

⁴¹⁵ One painting I viewed at the Changshu Pang Xunqin Art Museum on July 4th of 2007, depicting three Miao young men playing the *sheng* instrument, has not yet been published. Thus, the exact number of Pang's paintings of the ethnic subject, including the ones that have not been published and those that have been scattered in public or private collections, remains to be determined.

⁴¹⁶ A comparison to *Such is Paris* or *Such is Shanghai* and Qiu Ti's portrait, Fig. 33, 34, and 50.

⁴¹⁷ Pang left Li Zhuang in early 1941 and sent a resignation letter to Li Ji, then the director of the Academic of Sinica. Subsequently Pang settled in Chengdu, Sichuan. Pang's Memoir, 193-4.

album, each being attached to a simple explanatory page.⁴¹⁸ Ten of these twenty leaves were acquired in October 1943 by Ambassador Gu Weijun, who promised Pang that he would donate these paintings to the Royal Academy in London.⁴¹⁹ Of the remainder of the other ten leaves of this album, most are in the collection of the Changshu Pang Xunqin Art Museum, and five of these leaves have been identified and catalogued.⁴²⁰ Painted in colored ink on satin, these leaves measure 40 centimeters in height and 33.5 in width.⁴²¹ Leaving most of the page blank in the background, Pang concentrated in this album on the Miao people and their featured activities. Isolated by a blank space, the miniaturized yet full figures of the Miao people, who occupy the middle picture plane and are absorbed in their activities, such as mourning the dead or carrying wood from the distant mountain, manage to command the viewer's attention. The primary color tone for these paintings is blue and gray, and colors are sparsely and thinly applied. Neither the patterns of the Miao people's clothing nor their facial expressions demand much attention; however, a melancholy ambience and a sentiment of isolation loom large in these paintings. The desolation of a Miao funeral is evoked by the lone and dutiful mourner whose forehead is wrapped in a white cotton band, a tradition observed by the Miao at funerals (Fig. 115).⁴²² The deep sorrow of the mourner, who is sobbing while covering

⁴¹⁸ Pang's Memoir, 198. These attached explanatory pages have been lost. *Guizhou shanmin tu* was perhaps first exhibited at the National Art Exhibition held in Chongqin in 1942. Pang's Memoir, 201-202.

⁴¹⁹ Pang's Memoir, 204. Whether these ten leaves are still in the collection of the Royal Academy needs to be further investigated. I saw one leaf titled *Carrying Woods* at the Changshu Pang Xunqin Art Museum in July 2007.

⁴²⁰ They are catalogued in both *Huaji* (1997) and *Hiunkin Pang* (2006).

⁴²¹ Oil paints and canvas were hard to find in China's interior. Pang began to use Chinese colored ink and painted on satin or on rice paper. Pang's Memoir, 198.

⁴²² Pang attended a funeral when he was in a Miao village near Guiyang. It was customary for Miao people to wear white cotton straps around their heads at funerals to pay respect to the deceased. Pang's Memoir, 184.

his face, is vividly captured in a few dashes of blue tones and in the economy of the sketching that have become the hallmarks of Pang's idiosyncratic style.

In another leaf (Fig. 116) titled *Selling Burning Woods*, the heavy labor endured by the two Miao women carrying bundles of wood on their backs is expressed in their small and hunched frames and heavy steps on an isolated mountain road. The older woman, breathlessly walking ahead, has her right arm anchored on her waist to support her back while her left hand carries a clay water jar; her hard labor and destitution are keenly felt. The two other leaves, one labeled *Washing Clothes* (Fig. 117) and the other *Carrying Water* (Fig. 118), both frame the Miao within an idyllic backdrop of quiet hills and streams. The deftness and effortlessness of a young Miao woman fetching and carrying water was a romanticized version of their village life, remote from the industrialized metropolis. Situated in a clear mountainous setting which appears isolated and free of chaos, the village people in *Washing Clothes* (Fig. 117) line up along a zigzagging stream to wash their clothing in an apparently very clean creek running in front of their village. The distant mountain and the village in the background are barely suggested via a few patches of colors and outlines, and the young men and women deeply absorbed in their work have become the focal points, with the remainder of the painting being left empty. In another painting in this album (Fig. 119), Pang portrays a young Miao man shooting his bow arrow at a target while being watched by three young Miao men standing to his side. Only the young man's back is visible to the viewers. Pang left the rest of background completely blank, forcing us visually to follow the arrow in midair to the target, an embroidered pocket bag—perhaps a love token—hung on a single tree

branch.⁴²³ Pang's use of blank space simultaneously isolates and highlights the main characters, leaving his composition deceptively simple and abbreviated.

This use of blank space to focus on the figures is most evident in a series of line drawings produced between 1943 and 1944. In each, a single Miao woman, completely delineated in thin lines, the *baimiao* (line tracing) style, poses in an empty space while carrying something either in her hand or on her back. One of them carries a baby in a basket on her back (Fig. 120); another, a basket of tangerines on her shoulder (Fig. 121); a lantern (Fig. 122); an umbrella (Fig. 123); a bucket of water (Fig. 124); or a sickle (Fig. 125). These drawings perhaps served as preparatory works for Pang's colored paintings of similar subjects. One line drawing depicts a young woman sitting on the ground, tying her shoe laces, next to a bundle of wood (Fig. 126). A colored painting in the collection of the Changshu Pang Xunqin Art Museum, features a young woman resting in a similar sitting posture, while holding a bamboo rake and carrying a basket filled with tree branches tied to her back (Fig. 127). The sitting posture of the young woman in this painting version is identical to that of the young woman in the drawing, thereby prompting speculation that the drawing might have served as a preparatory work for the more finished painting.⁴²⁴ For another pair of works, however, such speculation requires more caution. Here, the female figure in the line-drawing version of *Picking Tangerines*

⁴²³ Miao women usually made and embroidered pocket bags they carried on their backs. The bags could be love tokens. This painting may depict a courting game in which a young man has to shoot down the embroidered pocket bag that belongs to a Miao young woman in order to court her to become his bride.

⁴²⁴ The colored painting *Xiaoxi* (A Little Break) is dated as 1944 in both *Pang Hiunkin* (2006) and *Pang Xunqin huaji* (Collection of Pang Xunqin's Paintings, 1998). Pang Xunqin himself did not date the painting. Pang Jun, the artist's son, remembers that after his father returned to Shanghai in 1946, he did a series of paintings featuring women of Jiangnan (south of the Yangzi river) in a style similar to that of the paintings of the Miao women he produced in Chengdu in the early 1940s. This series of paintings featuring Jiangnan women includes *Beilou* (Basket), *Xiaoxi* (A little break), *Zhuoyu* (Fishing), *Gedao* (Harvesting), and a few more. See Zhong Zhaosi, Pang Jun, and Lin Miaoyu, *Zhongguo jujiang meishu zhoukan*, no. 127, (February, 1997), 18.

(Fig. 121) is almost identical to the female figure in the colored version of a similar subject titled *Tangerine Harvest* (Fig. 128). The tilted gaze of the young Miao girl, the similarity with regard to the position of her right arm that holds the basket of tangerines, and the silver bracelet dangling on her right forearm, all suggest that one version must have been the inspiration for the other. Yet, in Pang Tao's edited catalog *Hiunkin Pang* (2006), the line-drawing version is dated 1945 and the date for the painting version 1942.⁴²⁵ In another catalog published in 1998, the line-drawing version is dated as 1944 and the painting version 1942.⁴²⁶ If the painting was actually produced two years before the line-drawing version, it is entirely possible, then, that the line-drawing figure was inspired by the earlier-created figure in the painting. Pang Xunqin rarely dated his works of this period; often his drawings and paintings bear his simple signature in a corner, and, occasionally, he affixed his seal without dating.⁴²⁷ Without knowing whether Pang Xunqin himself specifically dated his paintings and sketches, and given the possibility that these catalogues may have misdated Pang's works by a year or two, it proves difficult to determine conclusively whether his line drawings served as preparatory works for the colored paintings or whether they were supposed to stand on their own in that category.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁵ Pang Tao, ed. *Hiunkin Pang* (2006), 150-51.

⁴²⁶ *Pang Xunqin huaji* (Collection of Pang Xunqin's Paintings, 1998), 160.

⁴²⁷ While at the Changshu Pang Xunqin Art Museum in July, 2007, I was permitted to see seven of Pang's paintings and designs. As far as I can recall, none carries a date on its surface. The one painting I viewed, depicting three young Miao men playing the *sheng* instrument while dancing, bears no date on the surface or on the back.

⁴²⁸ Pang's Memoir, 197 – 8, and 202. Pang did recall that his paintings and drawings featuring Miao ethnic people were mostly done after October, 1941, the date of his first solo exhibition held at the Sichuan Provincial Library. And between 1943 and 1945, Pang did a lot of line drawings (*baimiao*); most of them featured Tang dancers in an album-leaf format.

The 1998 catalogue of Pang Xunqin's paintings includes two line drawings of multiple figures of Miao people; one documents a Miao *tiaohua* ceremony (Fig. 104) and another depicts a fabric market. The ceremony drawing depicts thirteen Miao men and women, some of whom are dancing, some (two men) are playing the bamboo instrument, *sheng*, and some are merely observing. The other drawing shows a fabric market attended by Miao women, with ten figures being sketched (Fig. 129). These two drawings appear to have been created in a rapid and sketchy fashion. Perhaps they were drawn on location during his field work or intended as preparatory works for future more finished painting versions. In the *Fabric Market*, only the contours of the Miao women are sketched and most of these figures have their backs to the viewers, thus obscuring their facial features. These drawings betray Pang's virtuoso proficiency and the precision of his sketching skills; however, if they were produced during his field work, the quantity of these drawings that feature more than one Miao figure cannot be determined.⁴²⁹

The fourth group in Pang's repertoire is distinguished by the subject matter; they depict Miao women at work, variously gathering wood, fishing, or rafting (Figs. 130, 131, and 132). These young Miao women, featured in full figures, dressed in their native brocaded outfits and their heads covered with simple square headpieces, are placed against the backdrop of an idyllic landscape. Here Pang built his composition using a landscape of distant villages, misty mountains, and sparse foliage, but the young ethnic woman in her native attire dominates the quiet and pristine surroundings, and her presence emanates a touch of the exotic. For this group, Pang Xunqin adopted a Southern

⁴²⁹ Only these two sketches of multiple figures have been published. *Tiaohua* is in the collection of National Art Museum of China, Beijing, and *Fabric Market* is in a private collection. Pang may have drawn more than these two large line-drawings of multiple figures; however, the extant numbers remain unknown.

Song landscape idiom – the corner perspective, most noticeably in the two paintings (Fig. 131, and Fig. 132) where the tree branches with budding blossoms enter from one corner, framing the composition. In these paintings, Pang began experimenting more boldly with a traditional painting format even though he himself was suspicious of the literati tradition of landscape and figure paintings.

Using the pen name “guxuan,” Pang Xunqin began in 1943 to produce a daily column, *Yiyuan* (Garden of Art), which was devoted to art criticism, in the pages of the *Huaxi wanbao* (Western China Evening News), issued in Chengdu, Sichuan, during the 1940s. In those columns, Pang covered a wide range of art topics in short essay form, and in more than a dozen of them he criticized the traditionalists and realists. He once mocked the literati figure-painting tradition as having a set of formula which rendered it stultifying and predictable. He writes, “if an old bearded man with a book scroll in his hand is featured,” Pang charged, “then he must be Confucius; an old bearded man riding an ox, then he must be Lao Zi,⁴³⁰ an old bearded man with a chrysanthemum, then he must be Tao Yuanmin,⁴³¹ an old bearded man with a fan, then he must be Zhuge Liang.”⁴³² In another column, critical of those artists who abandoned the techniques of perspective and anatomic proportion while painting on *xuan* paper using Chinese brushes, Pang asked, “why must we be rid of perspective and proportion of the human figure when

⁴³⁰ Possibly a contemporary of Confucius, Lao Zi is regarded as the founder of Daoism. *Daodejin* (Book of the Way) is attributed to him.

⁴³¹ Tao Yuanmin, a fourth century Chinese poet and prose writer, is best known for renouncing his administrative post at the court and retiring to harvest a chrysanthemum field and lead a reclusive life.

⁴³² Zhuge Liang, a military strategist who pretended to be at ease, waving his fan and listening to music on the top of the city gate terrace, thus tricked his outnumbered enemy into retreating, in the belief he had a large army waiting inside the gate. In actuality, Zhuge had none. The famous story is often referred as “kongcheng ji (Empty City Strategy).” The quotation is from Pang Xunqin’s column entry for *Yiyuan* in *Huaxi wanbao* (Western China Evening Newspaper), August 1, 1944. Reprinted in Pang Tao, ed. *Pang Xunqin wenxuan: lun yishu, sheji, meiyu* (Selected Essays by Pang Xunqin: Discussions on Art, Design and Art Education) (Jiangsu Education Publishing House, 2007), 67.

painting on Chinese paper and why could we not achieve the blending of the techniques of perspective and anatomic proportion with a Chinese medium.”⁴³³ In raising this issue, Pang was attempting to bridge the gap between Chinese conventions and Western techniques.

Although such a synthesizing effort can be found in almost all of Pang’s colored ink paintings of Miao subjects, two such paintings in particular have achieved this tensionless harmonization of the two conventions. One of them, an album leaf (Fig. 133), is a colored ink painting on satin depicting a Miao girl as she pauses before a large waterfall, mesmerized. On her shoulders she carries two baskets of tangerines attached to a bamboo bar. The orange-red tangerines still attached to their green leaves are highlighted and shaded against the green to reveal a still-life quality, and the lush and voluptuous orange red, juxtaposed against the mostly gray-toned background landscape, brightens the entire composition. The distant hills shaded in light brown and gray, the fading village, the vaguely delineated field, and the giant waterfall, all in a gray tone, appear rusty and primordial. Dwarfed by the waterfall in front of her, the Miao girl’s back faces the viewers and the artist carefully delineates her entire outfit, including her short jacket, the ruffles of her full skirt, and the colorful decorative patterns on the sleeves around the collar and the hem, on the back of her shoulders, and on her arms. The two dominant patterns, the dots and tessellating squares on her skirt, are distinctively defined, and the skirt is shaded to reveal its voluminous shape. Although the landscape and the waterfall seem to dominate the composition, it is the human figure, the Miao girl,

⁴³³ Ibid., 79. Pang Xunqin’s column entry for *Yiyuan* in *Huaxi wanbao* (Western China Evening Newspaper) is dated July 28, 1945.

who is the most captivating and holds the artist's fullest interest.⁴³⁴ Adored in her full-bloom native outfit for a tangerine harvest, the Miao girl was, for Pang, the emblem of an untainted beauty, the innocence of interior China, one of the few places that still remained pure and pristine. Her presence permeates the entire painting with a flavor of exoticism and a sentiment of nostalgia.

Such romanticization of the native is just as pronounced in another painting, featuring a Miao girl standing at the tip of her raft as she is about to throw a fishing net (Fig. 134). By placing the girl and her raft in a vast open space against a backdrop of distant hills receding to the horizon, Pang focuses the viewers' attention on the girl and her raft. The vertical format and the empty space which suggests a vast body of water recalls the canonical Nizan-like Yuan landscape, vast and desolate. Here, however, in Pang's rendition, the Miao girl in her native attire standing on her raft substitutes for the middle ground reserved for Nizan's empty pavilion.⁴³⁵ Yet in his evocation of such a compositional structure of the literati landscape tradition, Pang refuses to sacrifice pictorial details. The raft, realistically delineated and shaded in tones of brown into a three-dimensionality, is slightly tilted to suggest the leaning of the raft toward the left, where the girl is standing. Her oar resting against the raft and the fishing basket inside it are highlighted and shadowed to underscore their three-dimensional form. The full figure of the Miao girl and the details of her outfit are carefully rendered, and her head, slightly turned towards the viewers, reveals her facial features. Her bare feet planted on one end of the raft are also carefully shaded to chiaroscuro to reveal their physical volume. With

⁴³⁴ Pang's Memoir, 157. Pang confessed that he was not particularly interested in landscape paintings and seldom painted them.

⁴³⁵ For Nizan's painting, see Michael Sullivan, *The Arts of China*, 5th ed (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 205.

her hair fastened into a bun with a floral fabric band, without a single strand of hair being misplaced, and in her neat native attire, the Miao girl stands gracefully at the top of her raft, about to fling a net. The fishing net, thinly sketched to reveal the fabric's transparency, is wrapped around her sleeves, billowing like a garment of silk. Her slender figure is wrapped in a long skirt tightened around her narrow waist, and – in a choreographic posture – her head is slightly tilted, her left foot is daintily lifted, and her arms are positioned to fling the fishing net as though it was a dancer's scarf. Under Pang brushes, the Miao girl fishes like a dancer (Fig. 135 and 136).⁴³⁶

The Miao girls, in these paintings, represent the artist's idealized and romanticized vision of womanhood: gracefully remote, pristinely innocent, seemingly docile, quietly engaging, and hardworking, uncontaminated by cosmopolitan vogue and fashion. As Pang tellingly revealed in the "Self Introduction" to his solo exhibition held in Chengdu on September 11, 1943, "My depiction of these fellow ethnic people from Guizhou is far from reality and cannot be held by any ethnographic standards because what lies underneath my brushes betrays my own self."⁴³⁷ His deep-seated sense of nostalgia and yearning for a kind of purity that he discovered among the native Miao people, in the context of their crafts, festivals, and hard work, has been superimposed onto these

⁴³⁶ Beginning in late 1942, Pang began to paint *baimiao* (line tracing) female dancing figures in album leaf format and sold ten to twenty leaves after his second solo exhibition in Chengdu, September, 1943. Using elaborate and sometimes dramatic linear forms to suggest the dancers' movement and to express light and shadow, Pang became extremely efficient and deft in producing these line drawings; at one time he finished an entire album in three days. In 1945, he gave four leaves to Khoan and Michael Sullivan. These line tracing drawings and colored paintings were well liked in the foreign expatriate community, and he managed to sell enough to purchase four airline tickets for his family to fly back to Shanghai. After leaving Chengdu in 1946, he seldom did these line drawings, works which, according to Pang, bored him and reminded him of the time he had to paint these uninspiring works to make a living. "For an artist who has to paint boring and uninspiring works, it was a painful experience." Pang's Memoir, 200-202.

⁴³⁷ Pang Xunqin, "Self Introduction," in *Zhongyang ribao*, Chengdu, September 12, 1943. Reprinted in Pang Tao, ed. *Pang Xunqin wenxuan: lun yishu, sheji, meiyu* (Selected Essays by Pang Xunqin, Discussions on Art, Design and Art Education) (Jiangsu Education Publishing House, 2007), 47.

paintings, which in turn have become the vehicle for his self-expression and self-actualization. In these deceptively simple paintings, informed by the tradition of Chinese literati ink painting, Pang's refusal to renounce perspective, proportion, and chiaroscuro, and most importantly, his evocation of various shades of colors – opaque, saturated, tinted, or shaded, some vibrant and some subdued – all these come together to break through and testify to a kind of synchronization, of the modern and the primitive, and of the East and the West.

The revered art historian, Michael Sullivan, a personal friend of Pang Xunqin, praises Pang's rendering of the Miao people for creating “in the Chinese medium an entirely *original* [my emphasis] style of painting that combined a painstaking record of the life, costumes and textiles of the Miao people, with a firm sense of formal design inspired by Braque and Léger, infused by a lyrical, poetic mood that no other Chinese painter of his time achieved.”⁴³⁸ These paintings and sketches, mostly done in Sichuan between 1941 and 1946, found more sympathetic viewers among the foreign expatriate community stationed in Chengdu and Chongqing during the war. As Pang recalled, before he and his family left Sichuan after the war in 1946, he sold two paintings featuring Miao people to two foreigner expatriates. One of them, a daughter of Belgium ambassador Jacques Delvaux de Fenffe (1909-1961), purchased Pang's painting of *Yizu Guniang* (Girls of the Yi ethnic tribe). Miss Fenffe praised her acquisition which was executed in colored ink on satin, as “bearing the mood of a classical oil painting with a Chinese sensibility.”⁴³⁹ Two daughters of the Indian ambassador, Kumar P. Siveshankar

⁴³⁸ Michael Sullivan, “In Remembrance of Pang Xunqin,” in *Pang Xunqin huaji* (Paintings of Pang Xunqin) (Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1997), 18 – 20.

⁴³⁹ Pang's Memoir, 206.

Mellon (1898-1982), both educated in Nanjing's Jinlin Female University and fluent in Chinese, acquired a colored-ink figure painting from Pang. Pang was also invited by the Indian ambassador for lunch at his residence.⁴⁴⁰

In October 1943, Pang staged a solo exhibition at the Sino-Indian Academic Association in Chongqin. Yet not everyone responded favorably to Pang's paintings, and one of those attending the opening reception was Zhang Daofan (1897-1968),⁴⁴¹ then a minister in charge of overseas affairs for the central government (*Zhongyang haiwai buzhang*) of the National Republic Party (KMT). According to Pang's memoir, upon viewing Pang's paintings of ethnic Miao people, Zhang criticized these works as "damaging the image of the nation" (*you shang guo ti*).⁴⁴²

Critical Analysis of Pang's Paintings of the Miao

How do we reconcile Zhang Daofan's negative comment with the positive response from Pang's foreign patrons? The daughter of de Fenffe, the Belgium ambassador, sees beauty and a synthesis of the East and the West in Pang's portrayal of the ethnic Miao people, while Zhang Daofan perceives them as an embarrassment to China as a nation.

Zhang Daofan's accusation suggest three possible explanations/implications. First of all, his condemnation indicated that Pang's paintings of the Miao people were not appropriate to represent the nation (*guo*) of China, but rather were damaging (*shang*) to

⁴⁴⁰ Pang could not remember which painting was acquired by these two young women. In 1942, Pang finished two paintings featuring a female beauty in traditional attire that were bought by the Ministry of Education and subsequently sent to India as gifts to the Indian government. Pang heard they were well received. *Ibid.*, 200-6.

⁴⁴¹ Zhang Daofan, educated in France and a painter himself, was best known for having an affair for decades with Jiang Biwei, then the wife of Xu Beihong, the well-known realist trained in Paris.

⁴⁴² Pang's Memoir, 203. According to Pang, Zhang Daofan also implied that Pang was someone who was not agreeable and non-collaborative with the ideology of Kuomintang. Again Pang may have exaggerated his anti-KMT image in his memoir.

the nation, thus implying that Pang's paintings could not represent China, the China that has been identified with the literati tradition. In the mind of a scholarly bureaucrat like Zhang, only the literati tradition and subjects such as landscape or lofty literati motifs could legitimately represent the image (*ti*) of the nation (*guo*).⁴⁴³ Secondly, given Zhang's position as an official minister of overseas affairs, his accusation may also have implied that Pang's depictions of the Miao, an ethnic minority, could not be used to represent the majority of the China nation, namely the Han Chinese. His accusation may have revealed an age-old bias which believed in the supremacy of the Han culture and regarded the minorities as peripheral and less civilized culturally.⁴⁴⁴ Pang's romanticized and favorable depiction of the Miao could have been viewed by Zhang as denigrating the majority Han Chinese. Thirdly, Pang's paintings of the Miao may have been considered by Zhang as being in line with the tradition of ethnographic paintings often produced by non-literary artisans who did not belong to the elite scholar class. Given Zhang Daofan's stature as a member of the ruling Han literati class that for nearly two thousand years had been responsible for constructing the official record and discourse of Chinese history based on the majority Han culture, his contempt for Pang's oeuvre of the Miao could represent an age-old bias that deemed the minority races inferior and barbaric.

In the traditional historical narratives, the Miao people were often referred to as "Miao man," meaning Miao barbaric, thereby implying "fierceness" and "rowdiness."

"Miao fan" is a comparable term to refer the Miao, implying their peripheral and tribal

⁴⁴³ In the hierarchy of the literati tradition, landscape painting has traditionally been held the highest status. Figure paintings were usually created by court and professional artisans, thereby having a lower status in the hierarchy of Chinese painting tradition.

⁴⁴⁴ The Han (or Sinitic), the majority of Chinese, are usually considered as the culturally Chinese who established the written form of the Chinese language and are in the mainstream of Chinese culture. For the genealogy and cultural construct of the term Han, refer to Leo J. Moser, *The Chinese Mosaic: The Peoples and Provinces of China* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1985), 1 – 49.

status. These culturally derogatory labels were undoubtedly suggestive of the Miao's marginality and foreignness.⁴⁴⁵ Although minority Chinese, such as the Miao, have been featured in Chinese paintings from as early as in the sixth century, they have always been treated as peripheral.⁴⁴⁶ Beginning at that time, illustrations of ethnic minorities and tributaries were painted in every dynasty. By the time of the Qing dynasty (1644 – 1911), and particularly during and after the Emperor Qianlong's reign (1736-1795), illustrations of peripheral people and tributaries reached epic proportions, expanding both in numbers and in varieties. In the Qing court, the official title for these illustrations was *Huang Qing zhigong tu* (Imperial Qing Illustrations of Tributaries).⁴⁴⁷ The multiplication of this type of illustrations was perhaps due to the edict issued by the Emperor Qianlong in June, 1751. His edict reads:

My dynasty has united the vast expanses. Of all the inner and outer barbarians (*nei wai miao yi*) belonging under its jurisdiction, there are none that have not sincerely turned toward Us and been transformed. As for their clothing, caps, appearance, and bearing, each [group] has its differences [from the other groups]. Gather the governors and governors-general near the borders (*bian*) and order them to take the Miao, Yao, Li, and Zhuang under their jurisdiction, as well the various outer barbarians (*wai yi fan zhong*), and according to their appearances, clothing and ornaments, make illustrations and send them to the Grand Counsel for classification and [make] arrangement for presentation and inspection [by the emperor] in order to exalt/celebrate/pronounce the glory of imperial unification.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁵ For the implications of the term “man,” used to refer to the Miao, see also Leo J. Moser, *The Chinese Mosaic: The Peoples and Provinces of China* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1985), 25.

⁴⁴⁶ Zhang Yanyuan. *Lidai minghua ji* (The Record of Famous Painters of Successive Dynasties), published in 847. vol. 7.2.1., recorded that Liang dynasty emperor Xiao Yi (reign 552 – 554) painted *Fan ke ru chao tu* (Minority Guests Coming to the Court) and *Zhigong tu* (Illustrations of Tributaries). From *Lidai minghua ji quanyi* (A Complete Translation of the Record of Famous of Painters of Successive Dynasties), trans. Cheng Zai (Guizhou renming chubanshe (1997), 494.

⁴⁴⁷ *Siku Quanshu* (vol. 71, History 27, Geography no. 4.), compiled in 1773 – 1795. An album leaf from *Huang Qing zhigong tu* (Illustrations of Tributaries) is printed in the exhibition catalogue, *China: The Three Emperors 1662 – 1795*, ed. Evelyn S. Rawski and Jessica Rawson (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2005), 173.

⁴⁴⁸ A partial translation was from Laura Hostetler's *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 46. The Chinese original is 我朝统一区宇，内外苗夷，输诚向化。其衣冠状貌，各有不同。著沿边各督

Pursuant to the emperor's order, illustrations of tributaries were painted or drawn and then mass-produced. Of the two most famous imperial albums, one is in the Beijing Palace Museum collection and the other at the Taipei Palace Museum. A part of the Beijing Palace Museum album was published in the catalogue, *China: The Three Emperors 1662 – 1795*, after the same-titled exhibition was staged at London's Royal Academy of Arts from November 14, 2005 to April 17, 2006 (Fig. 137).⁴⁴⁹ The album in the Taipei Palace Museum collection, edited by Xie Sui and published in 1805, is sometimes referred to as *Zhi Gong Tu* (Illustrations of Tributaries) (Fig. 138).⁴⁵⁰ These illustrations were presented to the emperors as evidence of their unified control beyond the border of his "central kingdom" and served as a pictorial record of the minority ethnics, people whose settlements were far removed from the capital and which the emperors may have had little opportunity to visit. Sometimes a symbolic alliance, often through marriage, had to be made between the ruling regime and a minority regional lord if a threat to the inland was perceived. Knowledge of the ethnic regions and people was necessary to protect the inland ruling dynasty and prevent local rebellious upheavals.

Following the Emperor Qianlong's edict, many versions of *Huang Qing zhigong tu* (Imperial Qing Illustrations of Tributaries) were produced between 1750 and 1850. The hand-scrolled album at the Beijing Palace Museum, measuring 33.5 centimeter in height and 1603 centimeter in length, features different ethnic groups. Each is represented

抚，于所属苗、瑶、黎、僮以及外夷番众，仿其服饰，绘图送军机处，汇齐呈览，以昭王会之盛 from *Daqing lichao shilu: Qing Gaozong chun huangdi shilu*, 390: 8 – 9.

⁴⁴⁹ Evelyn S. Rawski and Jessica Rawson, ed., *China: The Three Emperors 1662 – 1795*, an exhibition catalogue (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2005), 173.

⁴⁵⁰ For a detailed reference on *Zhi Gong Tu*, see *Xie Sui Zhigongtu manwen tushuo xiaojie* (Annotated Translation of the Man Language in Xie Sui's *Illustrations of Tributaries*) by Zhuang Jifa (Taipei: Gongli gugong bowuyuan, 1989).

by a male and female couple in their native costumes, holding a prop or engaging in different tasks that are often associated with their distinctive tribal characteristics (Fig 137). Painted in color on silk, each image is accompanied by a written text in both Chinese and Manchu, describing the locale of the tribe represented, their distinctive customs, their common family names, and their relationship to the Qing court.⁴⁵¹ That these illustrations were made for ethnographic purpose is indisputable for they provided some information regarding the minority regions and their utilitarian purpose served well for better controlling of these regions. The ethnographic functions of these illustrations are amply argued by Laura Hostetler in her book, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China*, and in her introduction to the book, *The Art of Ethnography*.⁴⁵² In addition to *Huang Qing zhigong tu*'s being housed in both palace museums in Beijing and Taipei, there existed another kind of ethnographic illustrations, commonly known as *Miaoman tu* or *Baimiao tu* in Chinese, and in English as "Miao barbaric pictures" or "One Hundred Miao pictures." Laura Hostetler's research uncovered over 180 copies of *Miao Albums* housed in various libraries and museums throughout the world.⁴⁵³ According to Hostetler, these albums were actively produced for over a century, from early 1730 to sometime beyond 1860.⁴⁵⁴ In these Miao albums, the

⁴⁵¹ The entire annotation can be found in Zhang Jifa's *Xie Sui Zhigongtu manwen tushuo xiaojie* (Annotated Translation of the Manchu Language in Xie Sui's *Illustrations of Tributaries*) (Taipei: Gongli gugong bowuyuan, 1989).

⁴⁵² Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 41-49, and *The Art of Ethnology: A Chinese "Miao Album"* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2006), xvii – xxiii.

⁴⁵³ Hostetler, "Introduction," in *The Art of Ethnology: A Chinese "Miao Album"* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2006), xxix.

⁴⁵⁴ Hostetler believed that the *Imperial Qing Illustrations of Tributaries* may have been based on the earlier "Miao albums" that were compiled by officials responsible for governing frontier areas during the late Yongzheng (r. 1723 – 35) or early Qinglong (r. 1736 – 96) period. See Hostetler, "Introduction," in *The Art of Ethnology: A Chinese "Miao Album"* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2006), xvii.

ethnic Miao people are often placed in a landscape background and distinguished from others by their clothing, customs, courtship patterns, funeral rituals, or locales (Fig. 139). These albums appear to be less refined in craftsmanship, indeed even crude, in comparison with the *Imperial Qing Illustrations of Tributaries*. This inferiority is understandable for they were produced mostly for local officials or for Han officials who were dispatched to govern the southwestern region, and thus not intended for the imperial eyes. Yet both the imperial illustrations and the Miao albums served a similar ethnographic, informative, and utilitarian function.

Despite their pronounced differences in artistic and material quality, in layout, and in size, both the imperial hand-scrolls and the Miao albums depicted the ethnic people in a caricature mode; their figures were somewhat deformed or hunch-backed, their facial features crude and deeply wrinkled, and their disposition rough and bucolic. The textual description on each album leaf, derogatory and discriminatory in tone, is often laced with Chinese characters carrying a radical that denotes a reference to an animal or a dog: the radical – *quan* or 犬, suggesting an animal-like and “primitive” association.

Pang Xunqin must have known of the existence of these Miao albums and may have seen some versions of them while working as a research fellow at the Academia Sinica in Kunming.⁴⁵⁵ Moreover, Rui Yifu, the anthropologist with whom Pang conducted his field work in the Miao regions, must have been quite familiar with the Miao albums and their various copies and editions while working at the Academia Sinica in Kunming during the war years, and he eventually became the chief editor responsible

⁴⁵⁵ At least two copies of Ban Miao Tu were housed at the Academia Sinica and later brought along during the relocation of the Academia Sinica in Taiwan in 1949. See the following note.

for producing the two photographic copies based on two versions of Miao albums currently housed at the Fu Sinian Library affiliated with the Academic Sinica in Taiwan.⁴⁵⁶ Despite Pang's familiarity with these albums, his visual depiction of the Miao bears little resemblance to the unflattering ethnographic images found in the Miao albums or in the *Imperial Qing Illustrations of Tributaries*. Pang's attractive and sympathetic portrayal of the Miao and his painstaking effort to record the Miao's native costume and embroidery patterns, thereby documenting their originality, testifies to Pang's respect and admiration for the ingenious creativity and artistry of the Miao.

Pang Xunqin and the “Global Fellowship of Primitivism”

Despite its dramatic departure from the derogatory portrayal of the minority in the Qing Miao albums, Pang's sympathetic portrayal of the Miao does not warrant a simple explanation for his apparently “innocent” motivation. Pang's depiction of the Miao, however respectful and beautified, betrays a complex relationship between himself and the Miao people. If these two “agents” (Pang and the Miao) are conceived as occupying the ends of spectrum, at one end one finds Pang, an elite Han, a Western-educated intellect, and an active visual spectator, while the other end is occupied by the Miao indigenous minority, mostly women, and aboriginal, the passive recipient of the outside “gaze.”

It must be noted that Pang Xunqin's “primitive” encounter with the Miao was not without ambivalence. When initially assigned the fieldwork of collecting Miao ethnic

⁴⁵⁶ *Miao Men Tu Ce*, the original, housed in Fu Sinian Library at the Academia Sinica in Taipei, was published in the 1970s in a photographic format with an introduction written by Rui Yifu. He was also responsible for editing the photographic version of another edition, the *Fan Miao Hua Ce* in the 1970s while serving as the chief anthropologist at the Academia Sinica in Taiwan. See Li Hanlin's *Bai Miao Tu Xiaoshi* (Guizhou minzu chubanshe, 2001), 299 – 301.

artifacts, Pang was reluctant, because of concerns about derailing his artistic pursuit and of being associated with ethnic folklore studies, a path he was hesitant to pursue.

Although undeterred by sensational rumors about the ethnic Miao's "barbaric" treatment of outsiders, he, nonetheless, uncritically accepted the biased perception of the "barbaric" or "primitive" condition of the ethnic Miao. Shored up by his social, economic, and cultural superiority, Pang lured the Miao women and children into trusting him by giving them "candies," a metropolitan commodity and still a rare "luxury" for the Miao villagers. His patronizing stance/gesture and his funding capital enabled him to acquire the Miao women's embroideries and an entire set of costumes for which these women had expended their life-savings and on which they had lavished all their embroidery talents.

As Pang himself frequently noted, he strove to be faithful to the original patterns and motifs of the Miao's costumes in his representations of them. His "savior's mentality" and his self-imposed intellectual responsibility to permanently rescue the ethnic craft from possible extinction also speaks to his social and cultural superiority altitude. Pang's appropriation of the Miao ethnic craft patterns clearly expanded and amplified his creative oeuvre, and his debt to the ethnic craftwork is indisputable. This pattern of an intellectual's harvesting of the ethnic craftwork and finding inspiration from its art forms was not necessarily unique to Pang's case.

Pang's portrayal of the Miao should be placed in the larger context of the avant-garde's fascination and appropriation of the "primitive" during the early twentieth century. The modernist tendency to appropriate and to exalt the "primitive" and to seek affinity with it has been explored in the historiography of Western modern art since the early half of the twentieth century. Robert Goldwater's *Primitivism in Modern Art* (1938)

first theoretically linked primitivism with modern art, and the landmark 1984 MOMA exhibition, *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art*, in its effort to seek the "Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern" stirred up a series of debates regarding the validity of such a claim of "affinity."⁴⁵⁷ In his *Primitivism and Modern Art* (1994), Colin Rhodes contended that "Primitivism in modern art has traditionally been seen in the context of artists' use of nominally primitive artifacts as models for development in their own work, beginning in the first decade of the twentieth century in France and Germany, and spreading quickly throughout Europe and to the United States."⁴⁵⁸ Such a claim that primitivism in modern art is a unique phenomenon in the Western context is echoed in E. H. Gombrich's *The Preference for the Primitive: Episodes in the History of Western Taste and Art* (2002). Partha Mitter, the Oxford art historian of Indian origin, takes a much broader view of the concept of primitivism. He suggests that "Primitivism may be defined as an intellectual tendency that rejects the benefits of civilization in favor of a simpler society... A term of multiple meanings that lies at the heart of Western intellectual history, primitivism occurs in Mayan, Aztec, ancient Indian, and Chinese societies."⁴⁵⁹ In his analysis of Indian modernists turning toward the rural Bengal and peasant art for inspiration, Mitter has identified some common threads that bind what he calls "this global fellowship of primitivism": the intellectual elite's inherent suspicion of the Western industrial capitalism, the urban intelligentsia's fascination with and turn to the naïve art as an

⁴⁵⁷ See Hall Foster's "'Primitive' Scenes," *Critical Inquiry*, xx/1 (autumn, 1993): 69-102, and Susan Hiller, ed. *The Myth of Primitivism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991).

⁴⁵⁸ Colin Rhodes, *Primitivism and Modern Art* (Thames and Hudson, 1994), 7.

⁴⁵⁹ Partha Mitter. "Primitivism," in *Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology*, ed. D. Levinson and M. Ember, III (New York, 1996): 1029.

expression of purity and authenticity, and their eventual appropriation of native art.⁴⁶⁰ In this “global fellowship of primitivism,” Picasso, Modigliani, Sunayani Devi, Amrita Sher-Gil, Jamini Roy, and Pang Xunqin would equally claim membership.⁴⁶¹ The discovery of the rural India or aboriginal China allowed artists like the Hungarian-Indian, Amrita Sher-Gil, or Pang Xunqin to latch their expression of the modern alienated-self onto their “stylized and melancholy vision” of the village India or the Miao China. For artists like them, the turn to the native became part of a search for an artistic identity and self-actualization.⁴⁶²

The urban intelligentsia’s interest in the native and “the elite valorization of ‘low’ art as the cultural site of the nation” was by no means a Western preoccupation in the early twentieth century. In her elucidation of Japanese intellectuals’ discovery of folk art or “*mingei*” in *Kingdom of Beauty: Mingei and Politics of Folk Art in Imperial Japan*, Kim Brandt argues that “In many respects, we can understand the emergence of folk art in Japan as part and parcel of a more common, indeed a global, phenomenon.” She recognizes that “the middle-class intellectuals, who embraced folk culture and folk art in the 1920s Tokyo or in Beijing, or Berlin, Paris, Dublin, New York, or Mexico City, were also doing something new, for reasons and in ways that were peculiar to their own, very modern moment.”⁴⁶³

⁴⁶⁰ Partha Mitter, *The Triumph of Modernism: India’s Artists and the Avant-garde 1922-1947* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2007), 29 -36.

⁴⁶¹ Sunayani Devi, Amrita Sher-Gil, and Jamini Roy are all Indian modernists whose turn to the rural India is extensively discussed in Partha Mitter’s book. *Ibid.*, 29 – 65.

⁴⁶² Both Sher-Gil and Pang Xunqin had expressed the notion that art must be connected with the native soil and their vision of the village Indian and Miao ethnic people revealed part of their self-realization. Mitter (2007), 55 – 58, and Pang’s *Memoir*, 86. See also footnote 327.

⁴⁶³ Kim Brandt, 1-2. Thanks to Professor Alicia Volk who introduced me to Kim Brandt’s beautifully elucidated book, *Kingdom of Beauty*.

Investigation of the Chinese urban intelligentsia's becoming concerned with folk culture starting in the second decade of the twentieth-century has concentrated scholar's attention on the group of intellectuals associated with the then Peking University, the circle of Zhou Zuoren (1885 – 1967), his student, Gu Jiegang (1893 – 1980), and Liu Fu or Liu Bannong (1891 – 1934). This movement, known as *Zhongguo minjian wenxue yundong* (the Chinese folk-literature movement), was essentially a literary one, concentrating on colloquializing Chinese classical language and literary tradition by turning to the folk and folk literature. Their intellectual endeavors in collecting and cataloguing folk songs, legends, and proverbs and theorizing about them have been amply researched and critically analyzed by literary historians both in China and in the West.⁴⁶⁴ Although Chinese folk art, woodblock prints (*banhua*), and *nianhua* (New Year's pictures), the so-called "low" art forms, have received substantial scholarly attention in recent years, individual artists' appropriation of and involvement with Chinese folk art, including, in particular, folk prints, has been mentioned only in passing.⁴⁶⁵ Little scholarly work has been produced on Chinese artists' direct engagement with ethnic art and craft.⁴⁶⁶ Indian modernists' quest to build their national and artistic

⁴⁶⁴ See Chang-tai Hung, *Going to the People: Chinese Intellectuals and Folk Literature, 1918 – 1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985); Yi-tsi Mei Feuerwerker, *Ideology, Power, Text: Self-Representation and the Peasant "Other" in Modern Chinese Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Zhao Shiyu, *Yanguang xiangxia de geming: Zhongguo xiandai minsu xue sixiang shilun* (1918 – 1937) (Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 1999); Chen Qinjian, *Ershi shiji chu Zhongguo xuejie minsu zijue yishi de fasheng* (*Minjian wenhua*, 2001), and Li Xiaoling, *Hu Shi yu Zhongguo xiandai minsu xue* (xueyuan chubanshe, 2007).

⁴⁶⁵ See Felicity Anne Lufkin, "Folk Art in Modern China, 1930-1945" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2001); James A Flath, *The Cult of Happiness: Nianhua, Art, and History in Rural North China* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004); Francesca Dal Lago, "Between High and Low: Modernism, Continuity, and Moral Mission in Chinese Printmaking Practices, 1930-1945" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 2005).

⁴⁶⁶ In his study on the intellectual and the folk culture, Hung did mention the modern writer Shen Congwen's connection with the Miao people and Shen's initial collection of Miao crafts. See Hung Chang-tai, *Going to the People*, 173.

identity through their direct engagement with rural and primitive India and the Japanese Yanagi-led *mingei* movement in its nostalgic pursuit for the primitive purity and beauty have received substantial attention from historians of Indian and Japanese modern art.⁴⁶⁷ Nevertheless, Chinese modern artists' relationship with ethnic art, such as Pang Xunqin's prolific engagement with the Miao ethnic crafts, seems to have attracted little attention from historians of Chinese modern art.

The massive retreat to the Chinese interior during the war created opportunities for many artists like Pang to have their first encounters with the ethnic peoples. Another French-trained artist, Wu Zouren (1908-1997), inspired by his travels to the western regions of China, including Gansu, Qinghai, and Xichang, southwest of Sichuan, painted ethnic Tibetan people in a sketchy and impressionistic manner (Fig. 140); he paid no attention to the details of their unique outfits or their facial expressions. During his retreat to the interior, Lin Fengmian also used the Miao people as a subject for his painting.⁴⁶⁸ Lin rendered his subjects (Fig. 141 and 142) in broad strokes, using his typical quick dashes of colors, and he abbreviated the facial details of the Miao women and the patterns of their clothing. These Miao women, fishing or harvesting in the field, became the vehicle for Lin's expressive calligraphic strokes and bold colors, the results reveal no ethnographic interest in the distinctive identity of the Miao or their ethnic costumes. In sharp contrast, Pang Xunqin refused to sacrifice the details of the native outfits and jewelry worn by the Miao, and instead painstakingly preserved and recorded their ethnic

⁴⁶⁷ See Kim Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty: Mingei and Politics of Folk Art in Imperial Japan* (Duke University Press, 2007), and Yuko Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory: Cultural Nationalism and Oriental Orientalism* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004).

⁴⁶⁸ Liang Shaojun. *Lin Fengmian* (Hebei Jiaoyu chubanshe 2002), 64-66. Two images of Lin's works on the ethnic Miao people are included on page 64; both are dated to 1939. One depicts a woman fishing scene and the other includes two females carrying large bundle of wood to the river shore.

decorative patterns, “like an embroiderer, carefully tracing each line and each pattern, sometimes at the expense of losing the liveliness of his composition.”⁴⁶⁹

Pang’s respect for Miao women’s creativity and his detailed portrayal of them has much to do with his three-month long direct experiences in the Miao villages. By no means was Pang Xunqin alone in idealizing the interior of China, the virgin land, and the hardworking Miao people. To Pang and Chinese intellectuals whose cosmopolitan life was interrupted by the war, retreat to the interior gave them rare opportunities to be closer to the bare hills and the cleansing rivers that remained unspoiled; such encounters with the natives awakened their primordial sensibilities and longings for the authentic, the primitive, and the pristine. Writing in 1939 as a preface to a collection of folksongs, *Xinan caifeng lu*, recorded and edited by Liu Zhaojie, Wen Yiduo, a literary scholar associated with the Peking University, proclaimed “If you consider these songs primitive and uncivilized, then you are right. These are exactly what we need now. We have long been too civilized!”⁴⁷⁰ These folksongs were collected from small towns and villages along the retreat route from Hunan to Kunming traveled by the university students and their teachers like Liu Zhaojie and Wen Yiduo. The southwest of China was where this cluster of intellectuals settled during the war years, and where upon relocation, they did not cease their habitual field research and endeavor.⁴⁷¹

At his point one cannot help linking Pang to another his contemporaries, his next-door neighbor at Qingyun jie in Kunming, the writer Shen Congwen. Shen’s nostalgic

⁴⁶⁹ Pang Xunqin, “Self Introduction,” in *Zhongyang ribao*, Chengdu, September 12, 1943. Reprinted in Pang Tao, ed. *Pang Xunqin wenxuan: lun yishu, sheji, meiyu* (Selected Essays by Pang Xunqin, Discussions on Art, Design and art Education) (Jiangsu Education Publishing House, 2007), 47.

⁴⁷⁰ Wen Yiduo, Preface to Liu Zhaoji, *Xinan caifeng lu* (Survey of folk-songs in southwestern China) (Taipei: Dongfang wenhua shujiu, 1971), 3.

⁴⁷¹ Kunming was where Pang Xunqin met Wen Yiduo.

and lyrical portrayal in literary form of the Miao in many ways parallels Pang Xunqin's detailed and equally lyrical portrayal of the Miao in pictorial form.⁴⁷² Shen, a Hunan native with Miao blood running in his veins, began casting his Hunan folks as the characters for his novels and introducing them to the cosmopolitan literary scene as early as the 1920s, when he moved from Hunan to Beijing and then to Shanghai.⁴⁷³ Via stories like the *Border Town* (published in 1934) and *My Early Education* (published in 1929), encounters with remote Hunan villages and the people left in readers' minds an indelible vision of the beauty and innocence of the Xiangxi (West of Hunan). Shen's portrayal of the Miao was often intimate and witty, whereas his neighbor Pang depicted them with a degree of remote and melancholy detachment. Yet both of them revealed modern literary and visual artists' admiration for and imaginative attention lavished on the native and the "primitive." In the 1930s and 1940s, both Shen and Pang fiercely guarded their artistic independence, being reluctant to claim any political allegiance. Their crossed path in Kunming makes one wonder whether it was purely coincidental that Shen Congwen and Pang Xunqin chose similar titles for the former's novelette *Picking Tangerines* and the latter's *Tangerine Harvest* (Fig. 29), both produced in 1942. Shen wrote his work in Kunming while Pang created his painting in Sichuan immediately after his move from Kunming.⁴⁷⁴ Although one is in a literary and the other a visual mode, both evoked the busy harvest labor of the Miao women surrounded the vibrant colors of the tangerine

⁴⁷² The literary scholar David De-wei Wang evoked the term "critical lyricism" in analyzing the poetic nature and style of Shen Congwen's fiction. See David Wang, "Critical Lyricism: The Boundary of the Real in the Fiction of Shen Congwen," in David Wang, *Fictional Realism in Twentieth-Century China: Mao Dun, Lao She, and Shen Congwen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 201-245. The art historian Michael Sullivan also used "lyrical" to describe Pang Xunqin's paintings of the Miao. See Michael Sullivan, "In Remembrance of Pang Xunqin," in *Pang Xunqin huaji* (Paintings of Pang Xunqin) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1997), 19.

⁴⁷³ Shen's paternal grandmother was a Miao woman.

⁴⁷⁴ Pang Xunqin and Shen Congwen met in Kunming.

field and taking pride in its abundance. The earthy simplicity and the honesty of the Miao villagers was the common thread that linked these two individualists with the phenomenon that Partha Mitter called the “global fellowship of primitivism.”

Both Pang Xunqin and Shen Congwen became politically alienated and relegated to obscurity after 1949. However, Pang Xunqin’s foreign expatriate friends in Chengdu and Chongqing during the 1940s found his romanticized vision of the Miao people enticing and desirable, and after the war, his friend, art historian Michael Sullivan, has tried tirelessly to promote Pang’s works to the outside world after the war. In Shen’s case, when Shen Congwen still remained obscure in China, his literary oeuvre was resurrected in 1977 via a first doctoral dissertation written by Jeffrey Kinkley, an American student of Chinese modern literature. One has to ask the question, what it is about Pang’s and Shen’s works that these non-Chinese found so admirable and inspiring. One could argue that it was perhaps, because of their “colonial vista” or “nostalgic gaze” that these foreigners found in Pang’s and Shen’s works about the ethnic Miao something that satisfied their curiosity for the exotic, the “other” China they wanted to see – an innocent and primordial, an “imagined” land that was eroding and disappearing under the “invasion” of Western capitalism.

The editor of *The Myth of Primitivism* (1991) commences her volume by stating that “all known human societies seem to formulate ideas of the ‘other’ in order to define and legitimate their own social boundaries and individual identities... The ‘other’ is always *distant* as well as *different*, and against this difference the characteristics of self and society are formed and clarified.”⁴⁷⁵ The “otherness” of the ethnic Miao enriched

⁴⁷⁵ Susan Hiller, “Editor’s Introduction,” in *The Myth of Primitivism* (London: Routledge, 1991), 11.

Pang and Shen's aesthetic repertoire and helped define their unique artistic style, and meanwhile Pang's and Shen's Western admirers found "the otherness" of their works echoing their ambivalence towards their own capitalistic society and their skepticism about "modernization." Is there any fundamental difference between these two kinds of "otherness"? Or do they both reflect the same kind of insatiable human desire to seek and to reconstruct the "otherness" of a certain group or a certain society in order to define ourselves?

While the turn to the primitive that characterized much modern art may be contested as potentially another form of cultural "colonization," it unquestionably furnished a new and exciting domain for artists to explore. Artists as different as Stravinsky in music, D.H. Lawrence or Shen Congwen in literature, and Picasso or Pang Xunqin in art drew on the primitive as sources of artistic inspiration and as a means of providing an alternative to counteract the turmoil and catastrophe of modern culture – what Ezra Pound called our "botched civilization." Far from merely exploiting the primitive, these artists, I believe, appropriated the beauty and wisdom of aboriginal cultures to renew their artistic projects. For Pang, his venture into the Miao culture as evidenced by his artistic output was an act of respect and love for a people outside the mainstream of the Chinese literati culture and beyond the increasingly modernized metropolitan centers. He saw in these people and their arts new aesthetic possibilities, ones that were vibrant and truthful qualities, sorely lacking in the monochromatic, often brutal world of political authority and dominance.

Chapter 5: *Guohua* (Chinese Painting), *Xihua* (Western Painting), or *Youhua* (Oil Painting): Chinese Painting Categories and Pang Xunqin's Place

A Chinese, using Chinese brush and ink on Chinese satin, paints lives of ordinary Chinese people. Why are they not considered Chinese paintings? Even the oil paintings I did, I have never considered them as Western paintings.⁴⁷⁶ – Pang Xunqin

Authenticity in my formulation refers primarily to an order or regime which invokes various representations of authoritative inviolability. A regime of authenticity derives its authority from “being good for all times,” which is tantamount to being beyond the reach of time.⁴⁷⁷ –Prasenjit Duara.

On December 5, 1942, the Third National Art Exhibition was inaugurated by the Education Ministry in Chongqing, showcasing 633 art works, including a set of 180 oil paintings.⁴⁷⁸ Numbered among those art works were two out-of-place ink on satin paintings that constituted part of a series of *Guizhou Shanmin tu* (Paintings of Mountain Villagers of Guizhou). The series was produced between 1940 and 1941 (e.g., Fig. 115, 116) by Pang Xunqin while he was a professor at Chengdu West China University and Chongqing Central University.⁴⁷⁹ According to Pang, when he initially submitted his two paintings of the Miao people for the exhibition's *Guohua* (National Painting or Chinese Painting) category, the committee screening that category rejected them and transmitted them to the *Xihua* (Western Painting) committee. Also turning them down, the *Xihua* committee sent them along to the *Tu'an* (Graphic Design) committee, which similarly rejected them. Eventually, the pair ended up by default among the oil paintings, all of which were arbitrarily categorized as *xihua* (Western painting).⁴⁸⁰ Pang Xunqin himself later voiced this lament: “a Chinese, using Chinese brush and ink on Chinese satin, paints

⁴⁷⁶ Pang's Memoir, 202.

⁴⁷⁷ Prasenjit Duara, “The Regime of Authenticity: Timelessness, Gender, and National History in Modern China.” *History and Theory* 37, no. 3 (October 1998): 294.

⁴⁷⁸ Zhao Li and Yu Ding, eds., *Zhongguo youhua wenxian* (Documents of Chinese Oil Painting, 1542-2000), 782.

⁴⁷⁹ Pang's Memoir, 201–202, and also see chapter four of this dissertation.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 202.

lives of ordinary Chinese people. Why they are not considered Chinese paintings? Even the oil paintings I did, I have never considered them as Western paintings.”⁴⁸¹

The categorical bifurcation between *Zhongguo hua* (painting of China) and *xiyang hua* (painting from the West or Western foreign painting) was established gradually in the late nineteenth century to differentiate painting produced in China and in Chinese media and painting imported from the West and executed in Western media.⁴⁸² It was only after 1920s the term “guohua,” omitting “zhong,” began to circulate and gradually take on its nationalist connotation, evolved from “painting of China” into “national painting.” *Guohua* was not a simple shortening of *Zhongguo hua*; this metamorphosis from *Zhongguo hua* reflects a urgent need to construct a national identity through art as the encounter with Western art styles and techniques intensified with the advent of returning students from Japan and Europe. The 1922 publication of Chen Hengke’s “The Value of Literati Painting” prepared the discursive foundation for the literati painting (*wenren hua*) to fulfill the role of the legitimate representative of *guohua*, “national painting.”⁴⁸³ As art historian Aida Wong aptly argued and concluded, “After 1920s, literati painting in China was gradually subsumed into the generic category of *guahua*.”⁴⁸⁴

This transformation of literati painting as it took on its “modern” persona of *guohua* attests to the overarching and persistent authority possessed by the literati elite

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

⁴⁸² For the evolution of the term *guohua*, see Shui Tianzhong, “Zhongguohua mingcheng de chansheng he bianhua (The Origin and Evolution of Terms on Chinese Painting); Julia Andrews, “Traditional Painting in New China: *Guohua* and the Anti-Rightist Campaign,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 49, no. 3 (August 1990): 555-585, and Aida Yuen Wong, *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), xxiii.

⁴⁸³ For Chen Hengke’s role in giving new currency to the literati painting, see Aida Yuen Wong, *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in China* (2006), 63 – 76.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 79.

who were able to imbue antecedent tradition with a contemporary currency. These artists who claimed to be the heirs of the literati tradition began recasting themselves as the arbiters and promoters of *guohua* in exhibitions and media.

The “Contemporary” Chinese Painting Exhibitions in Europe from 1931 – 1935

On March 19, 1931, the Exhibition of Contemporary Chinese Painters (*Ausstellung chinesischer maler der Jetztzeit*), jointly organized by the China Institute of Frankfurt and the Kunstverein Frankfurta, opened at the latter’s location and would remain on view until April 8. With its intended focus on the works of contemporary Chinese painters, this exhibition inaugurated a nearly five-year period of intense courting of the European viewers through the endeavors of Liu Haisu and Xu Beihong.

In February, 1929, the self-styled “traitor of art,” Liu Haisu traveled for the first time to Europe on a so-called “examining” (*kaocha*) tour financed by the Ministry of Education and under Cai Yuanpei’s auspices. By then Liu was already an established and famous artist in Shanghai and the principal of the Shanghai Art Academy, an institution that pioneered in introducing into its curriculum Western drawing and sketching techniques based on live-models.⁴⁸⁵ Liu’s widely-publicized rebuttal to persuade the warlord, Sun Chuanfang, from banning live nude-models in Shanghai Art Academy classrooms earned him a life-long reputation as an iconoclast and the epithet “traitor of art,” a label Liu proudly endorsed and perhaps well deserved.⁴⁸⁶ When Liu was in Europe, besides touring major art museums in France, Italy, and Germany, he also appointed

⁴⁸⁵ It was one of the first art academies in China that divided its curriculum between the Chinese painting division (*guohua ke*) and Western painting division (*xihua ke*). See Shui Tianzhong, “Zhongguohua mingcheng de chansheng he bianhua (The Origin and Evolution of Terms on Chinese Painting).

⁴⁸⁶ Liu’s letter to Sun and Sun’s response were originally published in *Shenbao*, June 10, 1926. One biography on Liu Haisu is titled “*yishu pantu*” – *Liu Haisu* (“Traitor of Art” – Liu Haisu) by Shi Nan, Shidai wenyi chubanshe, 2003.

himself a spokesperson for contemporary Chinese art (“Xiandai Zhongguo yishu”) while exhibiting his own works and making contacts for future exhibitions of Chinese art in Europe.⁴⁸⁷

To accompany the opening of the *Ausstellung chinesischer maler der Jetztzeit* at the Kunstverein Frankfurt (March 19 – April 8, 1931), Liu was invited by the China Institute of the Frankfurt University to deliver a series of lectures on Chinese art. He chose as his topic the Six Principles of Xie He (act. 6th century), titled *Zhongguo huihua shang de liu fa lun* (Six Principles of Chinese Painting).⁴⁸⁸

For the exhibition’s opening ceremony, Liu delivered a speech on the development of modern Chinese painting (*Die Richtungen in Der Modernen Chinesischen Malerei*) which was transcribed in German and published in *Sinica*, March 31, 1931.⁴⁸⁹ In this talk, Liu divided Chinese paintings into four different schools or directions: (1) The Antiquarian School (*Die antikisierende Richtung*); (2) The School of the Middle Way (*Die Richtung des mittleren Weges*), *zhezhong pai*; (3) The Southern (Academic) School (*Die Südrichtung*); and (4) The Literati School (*Die literarische Richtung*). Liu, who considered himself to be most closely related to the Literati school, suggested that the Shanghai Art Academy he established had helped promote the proliferation of the school of Literati Painting, thereby democratizing the otherwise aristocratic-associated style and achieving its dominance within contemporary China.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁷ The more appropriate translation for *xiandai* in this case is “contemporary” rather than “modern.”

⁴⁸⁸ It was published in November, 1931 by Zhonghua shuju chubanshe in Shanghai, according to the reference in Zhu Jinlou and Yuan Zhihuang, eds. *Liu Haisu Yishu Wenxuan* (Selected Essays by Liu Haisu) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1987), 261.

⁴⁸⁹ *Sinica* 6, no. 2 (March 31, 1931): 49 – 55, and also referred to in Jo-Anne Birnie-Danzker, et al., eds., *Shanghai Modern, 1919 – 1945*, 27.

⁴⁹⁰ *Sinica* 6, no. 2, 1931, 52ff, and also see Jo-Anne Birnie-Danzker, et al., eds., *Shanghai Modern, 1919 – 1945*, 28. The German original from *Sinica*: “Der Verfasser, dem diese Richtung besonders nahesteht, hat

The irony was that before Liu traveled to Europe, both he and the Shanghai Art Academy of which he had been the principal since 1915 at the young age of nineteen, were well-known in Shanghai as active promoters of Western learning. He had built a reputation as an expert in Western oil paintings long before his European tour. In his 1922 trip to Peking, at the invitation of the eminent Cai Yuanpei, Liu presented at Peking University a lecture on “The Direction of Modern Western Painting.”⁴⁹¹ Introducing Liu’s one-man show in Peking, Cai Yuanpei pronounced Liu’s paintings as being in line with the post-impressionists, and in 1928, while commenting on Liu’s recent works, Cai wrote, “the strong strokes and vibrant colors [in his paintings] are close to those of Gauguin and van Gogh, yet [Liu] never directly imitated them.”⁴⁹² Liu Haisu had to wait another two years before he actually saw an original van Gogh or Gauguin. Before his European tour, Liu’s oil painting career in China had been developing for more than ten years.⁴⁹³ During his aforementioned brief Peking sojourn, Liu painted thirty-six oil paintings whose subject matter ranged from city walls and temple facades to historical sites.⁴⁹⁴ With the same kind of felicity and efficiency, while he was touring major metropolitan centers in France, Italy, Germany, Belgium, and Switzerland, he dashed off,

sich sehr bemüht, ihre Verbreitung zu fördern. Er hat zu diesem Zweck eine Kunstschule in Schanghai gegründet. Jährlich gehen Hunderte durch diese Schule. Infolgedessen ist diesem sonst so aristokratische Richtung innerhalb ziemlich kurzer Zeit in ganze China durchgedrungen, und man kann sagen, daß in der neuen Strömung der chinesischen Malerei gerade diese Richtung die maßgebende geworden ist.”

⁴⁹¹ Liu Haisu who was largely self-taught, never undertook any formal university education, and his two tours to Europe were not for study purposes, in contrast to Lin Fengmian, Xu Beihong, and Pang Xunqin. See Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 72-76.

⁴⁹² *Cai Yuanpei Meiyu lunji* (A Collection of Cai Yuanpei’s Essays on Art Education), edited by Gao Pingshu (Hunan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1987), 183.

⁴⁹³ Wu Changshuo, the patriarch figure of the Shanghai School of ink painting, told Liu sometime in the twenties, “your oil paintings contain Chinese sensibility, you should work hard to improve your *guohua*, never lose the foundation of *guohua*.” Cited from Ke Wenhui, *Yishu dashi Liu Haisu zhuan* (Biography of Master Liu Haisu) (Shandong meishu chubanshe, 1986), 116.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 86.

in monochromatic ink instead of in oil, on *xuan* paper, famous scenic sites, producing ink paintings like the *Snow of Luxemburg* and *Souvenir of Swiss Mountains* (Fig.143).

The paintings Liu selected for showing at the contemporary Chinese painting exhibition resembled in style his *Souvenir of Swiss Mountains*, being quickly dashed off, monochromatic, and infused with calligraphy. In a short text included in the catalogue of the 1931 Frankfurt exhibition, a Chinese scholar, W. Y. Ting [Ding Wenyuan], observed that “most of the works belong to the Literati or ‘literary’ school of ink painting. Also included are works of the Antiquarian Style, the School of the Middle Way (approaching naturalism), which strives to unite Chinese and European styles, and the Southern School, which seeks ties to the Masters of the early Yuan.”⁴⁹⁵ One hundred works, of which 23 came from Liu Haisu’s own hand were exhibited. One painting by Huang Binhong was listed in the catalogue, and Wu Changshuo was featured as well.⁴⁹⁶ The omission of Western-style oil paintings in Liu’s selection was conspicuous.

Due to his successful public relations effort in promoting Chinese “modern” painting during his first European trip (1929 – 1931) as well as his gregarious personality, Liu managed to secure a German commitment for future exhibitions of Chinese contemporary paintings, a project for which he obtained Cai Yuanpei’s blessing upon returning China in summer 1931.⁴⁹⁷ After a year-long gathering of art works from contemporary *guohua* painters, initiated by Liu’s first preparatory exhibition (*yuzhan*) on

⁴⁹⁵ Cited from Jo-Anne Birnie-Danzker, et al., eds., *Shanghai Modern, 1919 – 1945*, 27-28.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁷ Liu Haisu left for Europe for the first time, arriving in Leon, France, in February 1929, and returned to Shanghai in September 1931. His second European tour, starting from Shanghai on November 14, 1933, arrived in Berlin on December, 8 1933. The Berlin Exhibition began on January 20, 1934.

November, 7, 1932 in Shanghai, Liu finally embarked on his second trip to Europe on November 14, 1933, with six crates of paintings.⁴⁹⁸

His first stop was Berlin. The exhibition, titled *Chinesische Malerei der Gegenwart* (Chinese Contemporary Painting), was set up at the Academy of Berlin from January 20 – March 4, 1934. Two hundred ninety seven “modern works” were showcased; they were all *guohua* (national painting).⁴⁹⁹

In both Liu Haisu’s 1931 Frankfurt exhibition and the 1934-35 traveling exhibition, he excluded Western-style oil paintings despite the fact that for more than ten years he himself had been painting in oil in the manner of Monet and Van Gogh and fashioned himself as an oil painter and educator of Western leaning in China. His reason for casting himself as being closely related to the literati school of Chinese painting, as suggested by Jo-Anne Birnie-Danzker, may have had something to do with his direct encounter with a Japanese modern art exhibition during his first European trip. In one of his post-European trip articles published in 1935, Liu specifically mentioned the exhibition of *Moderne Japanische Malerei* (Modern Japanese Painting Exhibition, January – February of 1931, Berlin) and criticized the art works in the exhibition as “catering to the European sensibility.”⁵⁰⁰

In the early spring of 1931, the Japanese held a large exhibition in Berlin, where most of the exhibited works were produced mainly to cater to the European sensibility. These

⁴⁹⁸ Jo-Anne Birnie-Danzker, et al., eds., *Shanghai Modern, 1919 – 1945*, note 78.

⁴⁹⁹ The catalogue lists 274 works, but an additional 22 works, all by Liu Haisu, were added in its addendum. The majority of works were of literati style, 153 in total, and the rest belong to the antiquarian style and the Southern academic school. Only 29 works belong to the so-called “middle way (*zhengzhong pei*).” See Jo-Anne Birnie-Danzker, et al., eds., *Shanghai Modern, 1919 – 1945*, 36 and note 87.

⁵⁰⁰ Liu Haisu, “Promoting Chinese Painting,” in Birnie-Danzker, et al., eds., *Shanghai Modern, 1919 – 1945*, 378, and Shen Hu, ed. *Liu Haisu yishu suibi* (Selected Writings on Art by Liu Haisu) (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 2001), 72.

Japanese works convinced the European audience that Oriental art sought to westernize some of its superficial elements without expressing any of its own character.⁵⁰¹

Ironically, an English review of Liu's 1934-35 European traveling exhibition whose last stop was London reads:

Professor Liu Hai-Su, the Director of the Academy of Fine Arts, Shanghai, is mainly responsible, in conjunction with Dr. Tsai Yuan-pei (Cai Yuanpei), President of the Academia Sinica, for the contents of this exhibition, and he has also contributed a large number of paintings. Perhaps his painting of "Mount Branchard, Switzerland" is best calculated to demonstrate to our Western vision the essentials of the Chinese approach.⁵⁰²

Liu's mentor, Cai Yuanpei, in his brief introduction to the catalogue of Liu's Berlin (January 20 – March 4, 1934) and Hamburg exhibitions (March 24 – April 22, 1934), declared that "from the German [side], the wish was expressed to see *pure* Chinese works and indeed especially those which express that which is characteristic of Chinese painting."⁵⁰³

We have to wonder whether Liu's best *calculated* selection of the Chinese paintings to express the characteristics of Chinese painting was not another form of "catering to the European sensibility" or at least to the Europeans' desire to see the so-called *pure* Chinese painting.

European Responses to Contemporary Chinese Painting Exhibitions

⁵⁰¹ Liu Haisu, "Promoting Chinese Painting," in Birnie-Danzker, et al., eds., *Shanghai Modern, 1919 – 1945*, 378. The original was published, with the title as *Lü ou sui bi (Miscellaneous Writings on my European Trip)* (Shanghai, Zhonghua shuju, March, 1935). His harsh criticism of the Japanese exhibition may be due to the fact that the Modern Japanese Painting Exhibition organized by the Society for East Asian Art and the Prussian Academy of the Arts) in Berlin, with the support of the Japanese government, coincided with Liu's 1931 Chinese contemporary painting exhibition in Frankfurt. Over 25,000 visitors attended the Japanese exhibition, presumably drawing attention away from Liu's exhibition in Frankfurt. See Birnie-Danzker, et al., eds., *Shanghai Modern, 1919 – 1945*, 30.

⁵⁰² "Exhibition of Modern Chinese Painting at the New Burlington Galleries," in "Notes of the Month," *Apollo* 21, no. 124 (April, 1935): 233.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*, 43 - 44, note 106.

Leaving Berlin, Liu's exhibition continued on to Hamburg with a total of 261 paintings presented, among them 120 literati works and only 18 paintings belonging to the so-called "middle way." After Hamburg, the exhibition stopped at Düsseldorf (April 5 – May 5, 1934), Amsterdam (May 5 – June 1), The Hague (June 8 – July 5), Geneva (July 9 – August 19), and Berne (August 25 – September 25), before finally arriving in London in 1935.

The "Exhibition of Modern Chinese Painting" held at the New Burlington Galleries in London between February 21 and March 23, 1935, featured 230 works.⁵⁰⁴

The anonymous review in *Apollo* included this passage:

We are told in the valuable preliminary matter of the catalogue, amongst other things, that 'the majority of Chinese painters are men of learning' and that 'this fact explains the importance of literary taste and lyrical feeling in their paintings,' the painters being 'almost all poets as well, and masters of calligraphy.' This fact is strikingly illustrated in this exhibition, in which the great majority of 'paintings' are executed in black ink and in the shape of long, narrow, vertical panels of unrolled paper-strips.⁵⁰⁵

The Chinese art exhibition in London generated a renewed interest in things Chinese. The anthology, *Chinese Art: An Introductory Handbook to Painting, Sculpture, Ceramics, Textiles, Bronzes and Minor Arts* with an introductory essay by Roger Fry titled "The Significance of Chinese Art" was republished in December, 1935, shortly after the International Exhibition of Chinese Art from the Imperial Collection was held in Burlington House.⁵⁰⁶ It should be noted that this anthology makes no mention of any

⁵⁰⁴ Shelagh Vainker, "Modern Chinese Painting in London 1935" in Birnie-Danzker, et al., eds., *Shanghai Modern, 1919 – 1945*, 118 – 123.

⁵⁰⁵ *Apollo* 21, no. 124 (April, 1935): 233.

⁵⁰⁶ In 1935, an exhibition of Chinese art from the Imperial Palace collection was held at Burlington House, London. The selection for this exhibition was made by a group of Chinese connoisseurs led by Huang Binhong. The selection includes bronzes, jades, paintings, and calligraphy dated to the Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, numbered in more than a thousand of pieces. The preparatory exhibition of the imperial collection was held in Shanghai from April 8 to May 5, 1935 before it traveled to London. This exhibition of Chinese classical art stirred a renewed interest in Chinese traditional art in the West.

contemporary works of Chinese ink painting. Lawrence Binyon's essay titled "Painting" traces the history of Chinese painting from the Tang up to the Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644). His comment on the Ming and later period of Chinese painting was:

The vast majority of Chinese pictures which one sees date from the Ming period or later. Yet our interest centres on the earlier periods, because the later work is so derivative, so dependent on the inspiration of a past time. Beautiful design, exquisite colour, charming motives, have been transmitted; but not the interior life which, even from the little left to us, the older art exhales.⁵⁰⁷

Binyon's comment seems to have resonated with the views of a Frenchman, Paul Albert Laurens (1870-1934), a teacher of Chang Shuhong who was then studying at the Académie Julian in Paris, when another exhibition focused on the works of contemporary painters was held at Musée du Jeu de Paume from May to June 1933. The *Exposition de la Peinture Chinoise* (Exhibition of Chinese Painting) was organized by Xu Beihong and André Dezarrois, Curator at the Musée des Écoles Étrangères et Contemporaines Paris. Chang Shuhong invited his teacher Paul Albert Laurens to join him in visiting the exhibition.⁵⁰⁸ Afterwards, Chang wrote an essay on May 31, 1933, titled "Exposition of Chinese Painting in Paris and the Future of Chinese Painting," and sent it from Paris to the Shanghai art journal, *Yifeng* (Art Breeze), which published it in the August issue.⁵⁰⁹

Chang's essay documented in detail the comments made by his French teacher and the exhibition curator who briefly guided them through the exhibition. The exhibition was arranged in two halls, one reserved for the contemporary paintings and the other for the paintings from antiquity. After viewing the works from both sections, Chang's teacher, Paul Albert Laurens, declared to Chang, with a comment much like Binyon's,

⁵⁰⁷ Laurence Binyon, "Painting," in *Chinese Art: An Introductory Handbook to Painting, Sculpture, Ceramics, Textiles, Bronzes and Minor Arts* (London: B. T. Batsford LTD., December 1935), 14.

⁵⁰⁸ Paul Albert Laurens was the son of Jean-Paul Laurens (March 28, 1838 – March 23, 1921), one of the chief exponents of the French Academic style.

⁵⁰⁹ *Yifeng* 1, no. 8 (August, 1933): 9-15.

“the old paintings dated from the 10th to 18th century... are ‘suréponpue,’ transcending time. Your ancestors have paved an endless road for you; as long as you strive and persevere, do not be afraid that there is no treasure for you to discover.”⁵¹⁰

The Musée du Jeu de Paume curator, possibly André Dezarrois (Chang’s article did not cite his name), who took them around the exhibition, also expressed similar views regarding the displayed art works. While hailing Zhang Daqian’s poetic and virtuoso style, labeling Qi Baishi a true “Monsieur” and praising Zhang Yuguang’s calligraphic strokes in delineating a golden fish, the curator was particularly critical of the young Asian artists like Chang Shuhong who came to Europe, in the curator’s own words, “like sparrows with wings.” “I just don’t like the fact they came here to move things from here back home,” the curator grumbled. “I believe Chinese painting should preserve its Chinese character.... We are told that Western painting of recent decades has been under the influence of Japanese art. In fact, the history of Chinese painting is older than that of Japan by three or four hundred years. In the Far East, there is only Chinese painting and no Japanese painting. Naturally we should have been influenced by Chinese painting. It is extremely unfortunate that the Chinese have strived aggressively to mix Western painting into their national-essence painting (*guocui hua*).”

The curator continues, “These exhibitions we have opened are meant for the purpose of ensuring the art of every region would preserve their unique characteristics and avoid their gradual dilution. Unfortunately, these young students, like Fujit, disgusted by their own heritage, came here to retrieve things that [we] have grown tired of.”

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., 13.

Taking them to Xu Beihong's paintings in the contemporary section, the curator claims, "but, this Chinese, strangely enough, was a student at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris several years ago under Western painting instruction. After he returned to China, he managed to apply the skills he received in Europe onto their national essence paintings (*guocui hua*, Chang's Chinese original). He is not a sparrow with wings; he is the kind of contemporary artist *our Westerners* are hoping for."⁵¹¹

The curator's contradictory remarks seem puzzling. On the one hand, he was appalled by some Chinese painters who had tried to blend Western painting elements into the Chinese national-essence painting (*guicui hua*); on the other hand, Xu Beihong's blending of his skills he acquired in Europe with his Chinese painting seems to be tolerable to the curator. We must make a note of caution about Chang's interpretation of the French curator's comments. First of all, Chang was a protégé of Xu Beihong before leaving for Paris to study at the *Académie Julian*. Chang may have intended this article to please and flatter his teacher, Xu Beihong, to display Chang's pupil's filial piety. We should also be mindful that Chang's French teacher, Paul Albert Laurens, and the curator of the *Musée du Jeu de Paume*, André Dezarrois, were closely affiliated with the French Academic School. Their aversion toward modernists such as Fujita reflects the antagonistic tension between the academic institution and independent modernists and Chang's own rejection of modernists. The anti-Japanese tone in the conversation, the documenting of Lauren's and the curator's dismissal, and their "aversion" toward Fujita may reflect Chang Shuhong's own antagonism toward Japan, something obviously caused by the current Japanese military aggression in China. Setting aside Chang's self-

⁵¹¹ Ibid., 11.

motivations, his essay provides a valuable first-hand documentation of the views expressed about the exhibition by two Westerners and also attests to the nearly instantaneous transmission of information between Paris and Shanghai in the 1930s.

The Paris exhibition organized by Xu Beihong featured 85 art works from antiquity and 191 by contemporary artists. Most of the latter were leading figures from Shanghai, including Liu Haisu and Lin Fengmian as well as modern literati masters Huang Binhong (1865 – 1955) and Pang Tianshou (1897 – 1971).⁵¹²

In a brief article included in the catalogue of the *Exposition de la Peinture Chinoise*, Xu Beihong praised not only the accomplishments of the ancient masters but also the contributions by contemporary masters, like Huang Binhong. Xu claimed that the exhibition was an indication of the “Renaissance of a Chinese national art (*guohua*).”⁵¹³ After the exhibition, a number of paintings were offered to and accepted by the French state, among them Fang Yaoyu’s *Xiaoniao* (Little Bird); Zheng Manqing’s *Mokui* (Ink Sunflowers); Wang Yiting’s *Damo* (Bodhidharma); Gao Qifeng’s *Fan chuan* (Sail Boat); Qi Baishi’s *Yingshu* (Cherry Tree); Chen Shuren’s *Bajiao* (Banana Leaf); Wang Yachen’s *Xiaoxia* (Summer Leisure); Zhang Daqian’s *Hehua* (Lotus Flowers); Jin Heyi’s *Lan Shi* (Orchid and Rock); Zhang Yuguang’s *Cuinioniao* (Green Bird); Zhang Shuqi’s *Taohua* (Peach Flower); and Xu Beihong’s *Baigu* (Ancient Pine).⁵¹⁴ Taking note of the titles of these paintings, one can easily recognize that the majority of art works were Chinese ink paintings representative of the subject of “flower and bird” within the literati tradition.

⁵¹² Jo-Anne Birnie-Danzker, et al., eds., *Shanghai Modern, 1919 – 1945*, 31 – 32.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, notes 71, 72, and 73.

⁵¹⁴ See Xu Zhongnian’s short review of Xu Beihong’s European exhibition tour, “The Duty of the Chinese Art Exhibition in Europe,” published in *Meishu shenghuo*, no. 7 (October, 1934), no pagination.

Xu's exhibition left Paris for Milan (December 1933 to January 1934), and his Milan showing happened to coincide with the Liu Haisu-organized Berlin exhibition (January 20 – March 4, 1934).⁵¹⁵ These two famous rivals continued to duel on the European exhibition stage, competing for the crown of “cultural ambassador” (*wenhua da shi*) for Chinese contemporary painting.⁵¹⁶

Despite their antagonistic relationship with one another, Liu Haisu and Xu Beihong seemed to be in agreement with regard to the selection of art works to represent Chinese contemporary painting for their European exhibitions. However their selection and their strategies to promote their exhibitions were by no means lacking in paradoxes. First of all, Liu and Xu were the two best-known oil painters in China before their European exhibition tours. Although Xu was well trained by his artist father in the Chinese ink painting tradition before his Parisian schooling, nevertheless, he spent nearly seven years in Paris, building on his academic oil painting credential from the *École des Beaux-Arts* (1925). Liu Haisu, although lacking formal schooling in both traditions, nevertheless spent more than ten years cultivating his oil painting skills prior to his European trip. However, when these two artists were out of China, they exhibited only their ink paintings and demonstrated in public using ink brush on vertically-laid rice papers (Fig.144). In public lectures, they delivered talks on the tradition of the literati

⁵¹⁵ Xu's Milan exhibition showcased 329 ancient and modern works. After Milan, Xu's exhibition stopped at Frankfurt, and from there continued on to Moscow and Leningrad. *Ausstellung Chinesischer Malerei* opened at Städel Museum in Frankfurt. For the Milan exhibition, the English journal *Apollo*, 19, no. 111 (March 1934), published a review written by Y.M., 168.

⁵¹⁶ Xu Beihong and Liu Haisu had an open quarrel in 1931 when Xu disclaimed publicly in *Shenbao* against the suggestion made in a review article that he was once a student of Liu Haisu at the Shanghai Art Academy in the early 1920s. Xu accused Liu Haisu's Shanghai Academy of being illegitimate, a “wild chicken” school. To Xu's accusation, Liu's response was equally heated and adamant. Their public and contentious exchanges triggered a life-long antagonistic relationship which was even perpetuated into their students' generation.

school and the canon of the six principles which was developed in the sixth century. Identifying themselves as members of the literati elite, they succeeded in impressing the Westerners with the rich heritage of Chinese classical art forms and in casting themselves as the legitimate heirs of that tradition. This double-sided role play (metamorphosis) by artists like Liu Haisu and Xu Beihong betrays an uneven and unequal playing field between the Chinese artists and their European patrons, who only desired to see “pure” Chinese painting. By extension, the Europeans became the arbiters of what constituted “pure” Chinese painting. By disguising the other side of their artistic identity as oil painters, Liu and Xu had also submitted themselves to the Western discourse suggesting the inviolability of the Western oil painting tradition, to which Chang Shuhong’s French teacher, Paul Albert Laurens, and the curator of the Musée du Jeu de Paume, André Dezarrois, believed no non-Westerner could lay claim, and they were adamantly attempting to prevent any “Asian” contamination. Liu and Xu’s tireless effort in promoting contemporary Chinese painting also reveals an ambiguous relationship between the Japanese and Chinese art worlds, their hidden desire to compete for the European acknowledgement of Chinese rather than Japanese art, as the legitimate representative of the Asian heritage, and their refusal to be relegated to a secondary position among Asians. By recasting themselves as the true heirs of the enduring literati tradition and reinventing the literati painting’s contemporary currency, Liu and Xu were able to inculcate a national imaging of China that was lofty, timeless, and highly literary.

William Cohn, a sinologist who was then on the staff of the Department of East Asian Art and the Berlin State Museum, dismissed even Gao Qifeng’s new *guohua*, the *zhengzhongpai* (the middle way), as being not Chinese enough because calligraphy was

omitted from Gao's paintings. Cohn, in his 1934 review of the Liu Haisu-organized Berlin show, wrote:

Where the dynamic of the brush stroke has expired, where the entire surface of the painting is covered with ink or color so that the calligraphic element is completely eclipsed, the result, as appealing as it may be, could hardly be considered Oriental painting any more. The works by Kao [Gao] brothers (117/121) and Hsiung-t' sai (Li Xiongcai) (131/132) in the Berlin show were particularly popular with visitors, who were attracted by the European look of things Chinese. One cannot but note, however, that these works retain only faint traces of the Chinese spirit.⁵¹⁷

To Cohn, the only "true" inheritors of Chinese painting were those remaining "faithful to the traditional repertoire of motifs...while ink and watercolor are the media employed," and calligraphy "occup[ies] a large part of the painting's surface." "As in past eras, contemporary Chinese painting can only be fully understood if its close affinity to calligraphy is kept in mind – the two representing branches of the same tree."⁵¹⁸

Although claiming that "the old art, of course" is "by far superior," and "the subject range of recent painting is impoverished compared with that of painting of the past," Cohn nevertheless praised works by Liu Haisu, Zhang Daqian, and Qi Baishi for bringing their "indigenous tradition" to "a new and modern life."⁵¹⁹

To what kind of "new and modern life" could these contemporary Chinese paintings relate? An unnamed German viewer of the Berlin exhibition remarked that "the mountain scenes and landscapes were [their] particular delight," and he continued, "I can assure you that this seemingly so exotic exhibition.... is much less unfamiliar to [us] than most futuristic, distorted, and sick works of big-city German art, which offend a natural

⁵¹⁷ Originally published in *Ostasiatische Rundschau* 15, no. 6 (1934), 141 – 43, and republished in English in Jo-Anne Birnie-Danzker, et al. (eds), *Shanghai Modern, 1919 – 1945*, 112-117.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*

(rather than naturalistic) sensibility.”⁵²⁰ Cohn echoed this sentiment by quoting the above-quoted statement in his article. He further argued that the “landscape, for the artist, is the environment of the recluse who has fled the hustle and bustle of city life.... It is most of all *this dissociation from the present* [emphasis added] and this immersion in the eternal beauty of nature that lends this art such a powerful appeal for many Westerners.”⁵²¹

What was then the “present” or rather current political circumstance in Germany? In January 1933, a year before the Berlin exhibition, the Nazi government (The National Socialist Party) came to power and fundamentally altered Germany’s political climate and cultural policies. In fact, the eloquent William Cohn was in 1933 removed from his post at the Department of Eastern Asian Art for being “not of the Aryan race.” He was reinstated in 1934, just in time for the Chinese exhibition in Berlin under the auspices of the secretary of the Society for East Asian Art. In 1938, Cohn exiled himself to England to lead a fruitful intellectual life at Oxford.⁵²²

The Chinese landscape paintings’ “disassociation from the present” perhaps provided a solace to Cohn and the German audience who probably wished to be able to escape to an “environment of the recluses who fled the hustle and bustle of city life.” Through their heirs, the Yuan literati painters who created the mystical (Zhao Menfu), the empty and desolate (Ni Zan), the infinite (Huang Gongwang), and the dense (Wang Meng) landscapes to which they imaginatively fled in protest against the new Mongolian regime in the thirteenth century, found their echoes across seven centuries in a foreign

⁵²⁰ The letter, according to Cohen, was published in the Feb. 11, 1934, edition of *Deutsche Zukunft*. Cohn considers that the letter “clearly expresses the response of the majority of visitors.” Birnie-Danzker, et al., eds., *Shanghai Modern, 1919 – 1945*, 112 – 114.

⁵²¹ Birnie-Danzker, et al., eds., *Shanghai Modern, 1919 – 1945*, 115.

⁵²² Cohn became Oxford University’s first adviser on East Asian art and the founder of what is known today as the Ashmolean Museum’s Department of Eastern Art. Shelagh Vainker, “Modern Chinese Painting in London 1935,” in Birnie-Danzker, et al., eds., *Shanghai Modern, 1919 – 1945*, 119.

country. These monochromatic ink paintings of desolate landscapes, and the tranquility and the “loneliness” imbued in the paintings of the Berlin exhibition resonated with the German viewers, who, living under a repressive regime, were perhaps desperately attempting to “disassociate” themselves from their present political condition and simultaneously feeling isolated from the rest of the world. The sad irony was that the symbolism imbedded in these literati landscape paintings remained relevant between their thirteenth-century incubation and their twentieth-century incarnation.

It is sobering to recall that the German modernists who challenged both their political regime and the art institutional establishment with their semi-abstract woodblock prints or the utilitarian Bauhaus designs were condemned and forced into exile. And from China’s side, Pang Xunqin’s socially conscious and contemporary-engaging anti-war paintings, like the *Son of the Earth* (1934) and the work he painted in 1945 depicting the war-caused destitution which drove an intellectual family to the verge of starvation (Fig.145), would have no chance of being selected for any overseas exhibitions of Chinese contemporary art, or of being included in the privileged category of *guohua*, the kind of Chinese contemporary paintings that numbed their German viewers into denial of their present.

In his review of the Berlin exhibition, Cohn did acknowledge that “equally popular in China is a school of painting which employs the same techniques and subjects as Western oil painting, but this does not concern us here, since it was not included in the exhibition, and *rightly* [emphasis added] so.”⁵²³

⁵²³ Birnie-Danzker, et al., eds., *Shanghai Modern, 1919 – 1945*, 117.

The imbalanced selection for these overseas exhibitions and the desire of the Westerners to see only the so-called *pure* Chinese paintings was troubling to Chinese artists like Chang Shuhong who, along with his French teacher, visited the *Exposition de la Peinture Chinoise* in Paris (May – June 1933). With his first-hand colonial experience living in Paris as a foreign student for nearly ten years (1926 – 1936), Chang was keenly aware what kind of “China” his Western counterparts wished to see:

For the Exhibition of Chinese Painting in Paris, many French artists and critics implied that Chinese painters should paint Chinese painting (*zhongguo hua*). The art works selected for the exhibition were all *guocui* (national essence) paintings, either painted on satin or on xuan paper mounted with silk frame on hanging scrolls. No single Western-inclined art works were accepted. The Chinese, in their mind, should still wear long plait and women with bound feet, belonging to a semi-civilized or uncivilized race. They seem to be jealous of us if we are dressed in Western suits and wearing Western-style shoes. They would prefer us still adhering to the old way, never evolving.⁵²⁴

By keeping non-Western art in its pre-modern stage, the West has its claim to the ownership of modernity and its progressive originality. Their refusal to acknowledge any art style or form that blended elements that originated in either the East or the West suggests the binary construct of the West and the East, the West being future-oriented and the East belonging to the bygone “primitive” age, and justifies their self-imposed responsibility to rescue and preserve the “native art.” The Western-constructed *pure* Chinese painting continues to be collected under the economic auspices of Western colonialism and its agents – of collectors, auction houses, and their associates.⁵²⁵

Nearly half of a century later, the American compatriots of Cohn and Chang Shuhong’s French teacher proudly presented the fruitful harvest of their efforts to rescue

⁵²⁴ Chang Shuhong, “Zhongguo xin yishu yundong guoqu de cuowu yu jinhou de zhanwang (Chinese New Art Movement, its Past Mistakes and Future Hopes),” in *Yifeng* (Art Breeze) 2, no. 8 (August, 1934): 34.

⁵²⁵ Both James Hevia and Shu-mei Shih have explored the types of Western economic and cultural imperialism/colonialism operated by the West in its contact with semi-colonial China in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. See Hevia, *English Lesson*, 4-13, and Shih’s *The Lure of the Modern*, 5-7.

and preserve “native art.” In the Afterword to the beautifully-illustrated catalogue *Between the Thunder and the Rain: Chinese Paintings from the Opium War through the Cultural Revolution 1840-1979*, the collector, the Reverend Richard Fabian, metaphorizes his collecting of Chinese art as “plucking all the finest sprays in reach – for a bouquet that would evoke what abounded in that Chinese earth.” He moans, “Tragically, China’s most profuse artistic growth, sown, budded and still blooming under the thundering guns of foreign invasions, has lately drowned in a deluge meant to wash away the soil for good.”⁵²⁶ It is the responsibility of the Western art collectors, Fabian believes, to rescue the withering bouquet with their economic resources and their appreciative eyes for “the stout harness of written brush work that yoked Chinese painters and collectors together since the Yuan dynasty.”⁵²⁷

Among the beautifully photographed reproductions from Richard Fabian’s personal collection that fill the catalogue’s pages, there is no representation of Chinese painting done in any media other than water and ink (*shuimo hua*). The subjects of the featured paintings are largely landscape, flower and bird, and rocks and huts amid rivers and mountains. It is as if Chinese paintings would be rendered “impure” or “unauthentic” should they be “tarnished” by Western media or style, and therefore, unworthy of collecting.

Esther Pasztory, historian of Pre-Columbian art at Columbia University, while visiting a 1976 exhibition at the Santa Fe School of Indian Art, unexpectedly viewed an exhibition of “abstractions and modernist paintings with native titles.” The native painters

⁵²⁶ Richard Fabian, “Collector’s Afterword” in *Between the Thunder and the Rain: Chinese Paintings from the Opium War to the Cultural Revolution, 1840-1979* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 2000), 246.

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

“wanted the chance to be Picasso,” claimed the exhibition curator. However, Pasztory was subsequently informed by her guide that a market existed only for traditional crafts and none for contemporary native art. No one had bought the Indian abstractions. Reflecting on her experience, Pasztory somberly asserted, “For Anglos the good Indian remains the *traditional* Indian [emphasis is added].”⁵²⁸

The Reverend Richard Fabian is undoubtedly not the only collector who favors Chinese paintings rendered in an indigenous media over paintings done in non-native media. In 1987, the Metropolitan Museum of Art received a generous gift of 471 pieces of Chinese painting and calligraphy from Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, a prominent and influential New York City collector and dealer in Chinese art, thereby endowing the Met with “one of the largest and most visible collections of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Chinese painting and calligraphy outside China.”⁵²⁹ Ellsworth’s personal collection of Chinese art of this period, including the 471 donated paintings and calligraphy, have been catalogued in a monumental three-volume publication, entitled *Later Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, 1800-1950*. Any research student who studies Chinese art of this period can hardly avoid consulting these volumes for biographical and visual references (the color reproductions are of superb quality). One must point out, however, that the entire Ellsworth collection excludes any Chinese paintings rendered in oil or in a manner other than “traditional Chinese.” Such an omission results, in the words of eminent art historian

⁵²⁸ Esther Pasztory, *Thinking with Things: Toward a New Vision of Art* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 94.

⁵²⁹ Richard Barnhart, “A Review of *Later Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, 1800-1950*, 3 vols.,” *Orientation* (October, 1988): 66.

Richard Barnhart, in “a survey that misrepresents the history of Chinese painting since the nineteenth century.”⁵³⁰

Just as traditional Chinese painting (*guohua*) of the past two centuries has profited foreign collectors so it has simultaneously served the national agenda of its countrymen as Chinese culture was encroached upon by all types of foreign aggressions, military, cultural, and economic.

The *Guohua* and *Xihua* Divides

The same kind of rhetoric/predisposition that privileged *guohua* – the literati painting – must have persuaded the *Guohua* committee of the National Art Exhibition in 1942 to reject Pang’s paintings from the *guohua* category and shift them to the *xihua* section. The bifurcation of “*guhua*” and “*xihua*” reflects a categorical confusion and value judgment with regard to what constitutes Chinese painting. As art historian Craig Clunas states succinctly: “The creation of ‘Chinese art’... allowed statements to be made about, and values to be ascribed to, a range of types of objects. These statements are all to a greater or lesser extent statements about ‘China’ itself.”⁵³¹

Reflecting on past mistakes made in the new art movement since 1911, Chang Shuhong identifies the bifurcation of *guohua* and *yanghua* or *xihua* (Western painting) as the primary error, resulting in an antagonistic opposition among artists.

Our Chinese *guohua* painters, like the situation between Chinese national medicine (*guoyi*) and Western medicine (*xiyi*), treat those artists who employ plaster, still life, and life models and who employ charcoal or oil medium as their adversaries. On the other side, the artists who are called painters of Western style (*yang huajia*) would be cautiously on guard against the artists who use rice paper (*xunzhi*), cyanine (*huaqing*), ochre (*zheshi*), and black ink. Consequently, art schools have divided *guohua* (national

⁵³⁰ Ibid., 68.

⁵³¹ Craig Clunas, *Art in China* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997), 9.

painting) and *xihua* (Western painting) disciplines and exhibitions would have separate labels for *guohua* or *xihua* paintings.⁵³²

The *guohua* and *xihua* debate clearly divided Chinese artists into different camps.

The conservatives, like Jing Yiyuan (1875 – 1938), claimed in 1936, in a sentiment much like Cohn's:

The survival of *guohua* depends on the success of calligraphy, especially the cursive script. As long as Chinese calligraphy does not cease to exist, damage could not be done to *guohua*. If the cursive calligraphy meets its demise, then the origin and root of *guohua* will terminate, and there will not be brushes and strokes (*haobi*) in the world.⁵³³

The leading member of the Storm Society, *Juelanshe* (1931-35), Ni Yide, an artist traditionally categorized as a *xihua* painter, was critical of the “*xihua*” vs. “*guohua*” bifurcation. Ni wrote in 1941:

So called Western painting is no longer found only in the West, It has become a painting medium used by artists internationally. Paintings produced by Chinese artists, whether they are of the old or new style, can all be regarded as Chinese painting. In classifying types of painting, the only criterion we can properly use is the material employed, for example, oil, watercolor, ink, and so on.⁵³⁴

Fu Baoshi (1904 – 1965), the artist who painted in the Chinese traditional medium, water and ink on *xun* paper, strongly called for reforming Chinese traditional painting (*guohua*). A painter and a scholar of Chinese painting history, Fu had spend two years in Japan (1933 – 1935), studying with Kinbara Seigo (1888 – 1958) at the Imperial University of Fine Arts (present-day Musashino University of Fine Arts). Criticizing the conservatives whose “brain and eyes are filled with and fixed on ‘the ancient,’ yet could not properly digest the ancient [methods] while insisting on clinging to the established

⁵³² Ibid., 34.

⁵³³ Jing Yiyuan, “He wei guohua (What is Guohua)?” *Zhongguo meishu hui ji kan* 1, no. 2 (June, 1936): 44.

⁵³⁴ Ni Yide, “On Issues of Western Painting,” originally published in *Shengliu*, 5, 1941; see Lin Wenxia, ed., *Collected Essays of Ni Yide on Art* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Art Press, 1993), 79.

methods,” Fu, in his 1937 essay, offered his reflections on the evolution of *guohua* since the founding of the Republic China (1911):

For the past twenty six years, the interior of our country is still in chaos. The oppression and invasion from the exterior is expanding aggressively. But the Chinese art arena is definitely detached and distantly isolated from the present circumstances; it seems to be existing in another world. Even if any productions are made, they are still the “leisurely-admiring-the-southern-mountain” kind (*youran jian naishan*). Painters cannot be blamed for their lack of brains. The fortress-like solidity of the “sectarianism” is only to blame. If you slightly try out a new style, you are guaranteed to be scolded and condemned like a bleeding dog.⁵³⁵

The power of the traditionalists is too strong; those painters who “obey” and “submit” will have tremendous difficulty to be able to reform.⁵³⁶

However so, Fu argued,

The paintings as we all understand as Chinese paintings (*zhongguo de hua*) are frozenly dead. [They] should be rejuvenated with new life, new face, and adapted to the new circumstance of our contemporary time.⁵³⁷

The eminent scholar artist Huang Binhong (1864-1955), an archetypal Chinese literati and a connoisseur of Chinese traditional art, also similarly called for the reformation of Chinese traditional painting. Huang stated in 1934, “if Chinese scholars do not reexamine themselves but only worry about others’ strong points, they will limit their own progress; if they do not study their own tradition earnestly, they will not maintain the honor of their tradition.”⁵³⁸ Instead of challenging the Western-inclined “*xihua*” artists, Huang and his followers sought to garner popular support for traditional Chinese painting by adopting modern publicizing strategies, such as exhibitions, advertisements, and periodical publications. They continued to paint in the manner of the Ming and Qing

⁵³⁵ Fu Baoshi, “Minguo yilai guohua zhi shi de guan cha (Observation on the history of “national painting” since the beginning of the Republic era).” *Yijing*, no. 34 (July 20, 1937): 30.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵³⁸ Huang Bihong, “Zhi zhi yi wen shuo” (About the Relationship between Culture and Country), *Guhua yuekan* 1, no. 1 (1934): 6. Translation from Shen Kuiyi “Entering a New Era: Transformation and Innovation in Chinese Painting, 1895-1930,” in *Between the Thunder and the Rain: Chinese Paintings from the Opium War to the Cultural Revolution, 1840-1979*, 102.

masters, while striving for innovations with deliberate brush delineations and more expressive forces; in essence, their paintings maintained a strong affinity and linkage to the Chinese literati tradition, which integrates calligraphy, painting, and poetry. Often regarded as the last patriarch of the literati tradition, Huang Binhong took on as his prime responsibility reinvigorating *guohua* and promoting national-essence painting (*guocui hua*) in a time of foreign aggression and expansion.

In an unlikely manner, the paths of Pang Xunqin, the protagonist of this dissertation, and Huang Binhong, the patriarchal figure of the literati tradition, crossed in 1947 when Pang's friend, Michael Sullivan, asked Pang's help in seeking biographic materials and copies of art works among currently active artists. Sullivan took an interest in the contemporary Chinese art scene while spending his wartime years in Chengdu among many dislocated artists. Pang was his neighbor and one of his closest friends in Chengdu. To help Sullivan, Pang drafted and dispatched a flier in early 1947 to all the artists he knew. His flier reads,

Sir: [My] English friend M. Sullivan is planning to write a book to systematically introduce fine artists and art movements of twentieth-century China to European readers. [He] asked [me], Qin, to represent him to request photographic copies or relatively high-quality prints of [your] art works, and a brief biographic essay. If [you] have written works on theory, please also include them in your mail. Please send the aforementioned materials to the following address: Shanghai disiwei Road, 1156 alley, no. 567 before April 15. [I] will forward them to England. Respectfully.⁵³⁹

In April 1947, Huang Binhong received Pang's flier from their mutual friend, the translator of French literature, Fu Lei, who was also a close friend of Pang Xunqin. Two days after receiving Fu's letter, Huang responded to Fu with unusual enthusiasm:

⁵³⁹ *Pang Xunqin wenxuan* (Selected essays written by Pang Xunqin) (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2007), 109.

I have respectfully read your letter, learnt that Mr. Pang, on behalf of his European friend, [on the basis of] cherishing friendship and valuing sentiment, requests my humble brush [works] to be made known overseas. The ancient could hardly have the fortune to meet the one who knows thee. Now in my life time, [I] have been bestowed with such elegant appreciation [of my works], how fortunate I feel....⁵⁴⁰

Not only did Huang Binhong send Sullivan an original of his album leaf, *Shuyong shanshui* (Traveling amid Sichuan Landscape); he also wrote numerous letters to his associates and students in different cities of China, informing them about Sullivan's request.⁵⁴¹

Huang's keen enthusiasm for Sullivan's writing project is revealed in his July 1947 letter to his Nanjing student, Li Sanzhi (1897 – 1989):

Friends, Pang Xunqin [and] Fu Nuan (Fu Lei), recently are having their summer vacation in Lushan. They, together with the European writer, Su Liwen [Sullivan], are collecting small works of contemporary creators to promote to the overseas. China and the West are conjoining into one, returning to the right track of the six principles (liu fa), what a delightful occasion. Eastern learning goes to the West with painting as its first loud and sharp arrow; it is the good fortune of the Chinese nation (*minzu*).⁵⁴²

Professor Hong Zaixing's research amply demonstrated Huang Binhong's enthusiastic response to Pang and Sullivan's request. Between April and December of 1947, Huang Binhong wrote at least six letters to various associates, informing them of Sullivan's writing project. On December 15, 1947, the weekly art column of Guangzhou's *Zhongshan* newspaper included a short biography of Huang Bihong sent by

⁵⁴⁰ I am grateful to Professor Chen Ruilin who made known to me the essay written by Professor Hong Zaixin in Chinese, "Shaojie xiren xueshu, hongyang dangdai guohua – guanyu Huang Bihong wannian he Su Liwen de yiduan jianjie duihua" (The Introduction of Western Scholarship on Modern Chinese Art and the Promotion of Twentieth-century Guohua [National style painting]: a preliminary study of Huang Bihong's indirect dialogue with Michael Sullivan in the late 1940s), *Meishushi yanjiu*, no. 6 (2004): 71-103. Huang Binhong's letter to Fu Lei was quoted in Hong's essay, 78.

⁵⁴¹ Hong Zaixin, "Shaojie xiren xueshu, hongyang dangdai guohua – guanyu Huang Bihong wannian he Su Liwen de yiduan jianjie duihua" (The Introduction of Western Scholarship on Modern Chinese Art and the Promotion of Twentieth-century Guohua [National style painting]: a preliminary study of Huang Bihong's indirect dialogue with Michael Sullivan in the late 1940s), *Meishushi yanjiu*, no. 6 (2004): 76 – 79.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*, 78 – 79.

the artist himself to his Guangzhou friend to be published. In this short brief, Huang again mentioned Pang Xunqin's request and Sullivan's project.⁵⁴³

Huang Binhong's unusually enthusiastic response to Sullivan's prospective writing endeavor may have revealed Huang's faith in the potential of Sullivan's work. Sullivan did go on to write the first English-language anthology on twentieth-century Chinese art, which was published in London in 1956, only a year after Huang's death.⁵⁴⁴ Huang may have trusted that Sullivan's book on twentieth-century Chinese art would finally introduce the reformed traditional Chinese painting, an enterprise to which he had been devoted and had engineered, to the Western scholarship of Chinese art. Writing on May 23, 1947, to his Hong Kong friend Zhang Hong (1897 – 1968), Huang spoke hopefully, "Recently, people who talk about contemporary painters include an English man, Su Liwen (Sullivan); he has done a lot of writing. I heard Mr. Pang Xunqin, on his behalf, is collecting and requesting works in order to compare contemporary sages (shi xian) and to change the [general belief] that the European style is more progressive."⁵⁴⁵ Huang's interest in promoting works of contemporary artists overseas via writing and scholarship reflects Huang's own erudite and deeply seated *wenren* (literati) sentiment. Huang took tremendous pride and delight in believing that it was the "good fortune of the Chinese nation" that "painting" (*hua*) like "a loud and sharp arrow" would blaze the path for the "Eastern learning going to the West (*dongxue xijian*)."⁵⁴⁵ Obviously, in Huang's mind, the *hua* that blazed the path was the traditional literati painting he had helped

⁵⁴³ Ibid., 79.

⁵⁴⁴ Michael Sullivan, *Chinese Art in the Twentieth Century* (London: Faber and Faber, 1956).

⁵⁴⁵ Hong Zaixin, "The Introduction of Western Scholarship on Modern Chinese Art and the Promotion of Twentieth-century Guohua [National style painting]: a preliminary study of Huang Binhong's indirect dialogue with Michael Sullivan in the late 1940s," *Meishushi yanjiu*, no. 6 (2004): 78.

reinvigorate. He had earnestly hoped that Sullivan’s writing would help perpetuate this tradition and would publicize it to the world. Huang would not have been disappointed; the cover of the 1959 U.S. edition of Michael Sullivan’s book was graced by a Huang Binhong monumental landscape, one of his later works in a hanging scroll format.

The other crucial person who was indispensable for Sullivan’s writing project would have to be Pang Xunqin himself. Pang not only mediated what Professor Hong called the “indirect dialogue” between Huang Binhong and Sullivan; he also provided Sullivan a list of active contemporary artists of the early twentieth-century, which would have to constitute the first list of this kind. Pang Xunqin’s list, which he transmitted to Sullivan along with his April 19, 1948, letter includes painters, sculptors, designers, and cartoonists. He initially grouped the artists by different geographic regions but mixed in other arbitrary categories.

This category list starts with each major city (Shanghai, Suzhou, Nanjing, Hangzhou, and Guangdong), then goes to the Linnan School (active in Guangdong), to Juelanshe (The Storm Society), Female Artists, Beiping (Beijing), Artists Staying in France, Art and Craft Design, Old Traditional Chinese Painting, and Cartoons.⁵⁴⁶ Under each label, Pang placed the names of artists who, in his opinion, should be identified with that particular category. The list positioned Huang Binhong under the “Old Traditional Chinese Painting” (*jiu chuantong zhongguohua*) category along with Pu Xinyu, Zhang Daqian, Qi Baishi, and Fu Baoshi. Such placement may have influenced Sullivan to make a subsequent comment regarding Huang Binhong, as being the most important

⁵⁴⁶ *Pang Xunqin wenxuan* (Selected essays written by Pang Xunqin) (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2007), 109 – 112.

representative figure of traditional *wenren hua* (literati painting).⁵⁴⁷ On several occasions, Michael Sullivan acknowledged the assistance and friendship he had received from Pang Xunqin. In the acknowledgements of the 1956 first edition of *Chinese Art in the Twentieth Century*, Sullivan placed the name of Pang Xunqin (P'ang Hsün-ch'in) at the head of his list of artists whose works were represented in his book and who had helped him with "valuable information."⁵⁴⁸ In his 2000 interview with Shelagh Vainker, Sullivan recalled, "I got my first glimmering of understanding of the modern movements from him [Pang] and that continued later on in correspondence after we went back to England."⁵⁴⁹ Unfortunately, Sullivan's notes on the conversations he had with artists in wartime Chengdu, "chiefly with Pang Xunqin," were stolen on a London subway in October, 1946. Sullivan preserved all their correspondence and a brief memoir of his visits to the Pangs in the 1940s.⁵⁵⁰ Regarding Pang as "a man of great cultivation and understanding, generous and tolerant," Sullivan expressed his indebtedness to him as the one who taught him "a great deal about modern Chinese art."⁵⁵¹

Sullivan's scholarly interest in twentieth-century Chinese art was unprecedented at the time, especially given the fact that his fellow Burlington intellectuals were still expressing their sole interest in the old arts of China and had dismissed all the later work

⁵⁴⁷ Hong Zaixin, "The Introduction of Western Scholarship on Modern Chinese Art and the Promotion of Twentieth-century Guohua [National style painting]: a preliminary study of Huang Bihong's indirect dialogue with Michael Sullivan in the late 1940s," *Meishushi yanjiu*, no. 6 (2004): 83. Sullivan made such a comment in 1949, not long after he received Pang Xunqin's list in 1948.

⁵⁴⁸ Michael Sullivan, *Chinese Art in the Twentieth Century* (London: Faber and Faber, 1956), 9.

⁵⁴⁹ Shelagh Vainker, "Interview with Michael Sullivan," *Orientalism* 32, no. 9 (November 2001): 55.

⁵⁵⁰ Michael Sullivan, "Recollections of Art and Artists in Wartime Chengdu," *The Register of the Spencer Museum of Art* 6, no. 3 (1986): 16.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

as “derivative, dependent on the inspiration of a past time.”⁵⁵² Sullivan’s passion for twentieth-century Chinese art stemmed from his experience of living in China among the artists, many of whom were educated in the West and could carry on conversations with him in English and French. His personal experiences and his sympathy and respect for these artists, and his acute observations of the art scenes in the 1940s situated him in a unique position to pioneer the studies of twentieth-century Chinese art and to lay the first brick in the foundation of twentieth-century Chinese art history scholarship for later generations to build upon. Sullivan’s approach in writing about twentieth-century Chinese art was intended to be inclusive, however limited by his historical time. He not only focused on the heirs of the literati school and the artists using traditional methods; he also introduced the West to a dynamic and a diversified stage of Chinese art in the first half of the twentieth-century. Michael Sullivan’s name as an eminent historian of Chinese art who has blazed the path for the subsequent studies of twentieth-century Chinese art will go down in history as one of most respected scholars and a guru in the field of Chinese art history.

Unfortunately history has not been so kind to Pang Xunqin, who mediated the dialogue between Sullivan and Huang Binhong and who was instrumental in the eventual conception of the first English scholarly text which strived to draw a balanced and inclusive picture of twentieth-century Chinese art. Despite Sullivan’s tireless efforts to include Pang in his numerous writings and books, Pang Xunqin and his art works, ill-

⁵⁵² Roger Fry, “Introduction,” and Laurence Binyon, “Painting” in *Chinese Art: An Introductory Handbook to Painting, Sculpture, Ceramics, Textiles, Bronzes and Minor Arts* (London: B. T. Batsford LTD., December 1935), 14.

favored in the political and ideological climate of twentieth-century China, gradually faded to obscurity.

Art historian John Clark finds the bifurcation between *guohua* (national painting) and *xihua* (Western painting) or later *youhua* (oil painting) to be theoretically problematic. “The category of national painting, *guohua*, confused painting media with visual aesthetics, and takes oil-painting as predicated on a culturally essential vision which is un-Chinese.” Such confusion, in Clark’s view, even produces “a contradictory self-identity” among many twentieth-century Chinese painters, especially those trained in the West or Japan in the early half of the twentieth century.⁵⁵³ Many painters, including Liu Haisu, Wu Zuoren, and Xu Beihong, gradually painted less in Western media or with Western-informed techniques. They turned instead to painting more in the Chinese indigenous media. In some cases, such gradual abandonment of Western media served almost as a cleansing process, washing away the artists’ Western-ness, purifying their Chinese-ness, and, thereby, rendering them more susceptible and desirable to national or socialistic agendas. Thus, they seemed to be more Chinese than their counterparts, like Pang Xunqin, who continued to paint in a style that claimed little precedence in the Chinese tradition. However, Xu Beihong’s galloping horses forever betray his poorly transformed *chiaroscuro* in Chinese ink medium, and Liu Haisu’s *Yellow Mountain* series in ink cannot conceal his early flirtation with van Gogh-like bold colors and broad strokes. Xu’s and Liu’s paintings in ink medium are largely collected as *guohua*, and their early paintings conceived in oil are usually found in small private collections and seldom

⁵⁵³ John Clark, “Problems of Modernity in Chinese Painting,” *Oriental Art* 32:3 (1986): 270.

published in widely-circulated exhibition catalogues of Chinese modern paintings.⁵⁵⁴ By identifying themselves with the *guohua* camp, their artistic legacy and political influence continues to loom large in post-1949 China.⁵⁵⁵

The decision of the National Art Exhibition *guohua* committee to place Pang's two paintings of the *Miao* people, executed in Chinese colored ink on satin, in the oil paintings category, ruled out Pang's "membership" in the privileged fraternity of *guahua* painters who could claim their legitimate descent from the great tradition of Chinese art and were thus duty-bound to protect the purity of Chinese *guohua*. In the eyes of the exhibition committee members, this pair of maverick pictures bore no resemblance to *guohua*, those lofty flower and bird and landscape paintings. Their refusal to discern any indigenous linkages and sources in Pang's paintings revealed a sectarian divide that was uncompromising and territorial.

Any fixed categories or labels are bound to both include and exclude. The *guohua* category served its historical purpose when art in China as a whole was undergoing a national identity crisis as Western-originated art styles began infiltrating its art field. Categorization is meant to fix a label on objects they come to identify. Any labels are bound to reflect the agenda of those who get to label, those who possess the authority to create categories and decide what to include and what to exclude. Such inclusion and exclusion, assigned by those who were in the position to decide and who were favored in the contemporary political atmosphere, would suppress the diversity of voices trying to

⁵⁵⁴ Both aforementioned collections, Ellsworth's and Fabian's, contain Liu Haisu and Xu Beihong's *guohua* style paintings.

⁵⁵⁵ After 1950, Both Xu and Liu held the presidency of art academies, one in Beijing, the Central Academy of Art, and one in Shanghai, the Huadong Art Academy. Although Xu's early death in 1953 cut short his institutional influence, his legacy as a prolific painter of *guohua*-style horses continues to this day.

be heard, privileging certain artists and marginalizing the others, resulting in an asymmetrical representation of history.

Unlike the case of Indian avant-gardes, Chinese avant-gardes, like Pang, lacking collective orientation, facing the rise of nationalism as a consequence of the Sino-Japanese War, and emerging in an environment in which the deeply-rooted Chinese literati art tradition was still largely upheld by patriarchal figures like Huang Binhong and Qi Baishi, failed utterly to repel the academic realism derived from the Western (French) academic tradition, against what the modernists of the late nineteenth century and the avant-gardes of the early twentieth century rebelled and eventually overthrew. In contrast to Japan and India where the avant-gardes prevailed, in China, we had to wait until the 1980s for their reincarnation.

The bifurcation between *guohua* (national painting) vs. *xihua* (Western painting), between ink vs. oil painting, between traditional vs. modern painting needs to be reexamined in order to understand the multiplicities and diversities in media and in the subject matter of twentieth-century Chinese painting. Should we continue to employ the bifurcation that distinguishes “traditionalists” who have been committed to the Chinese indigenous media from the “modernists” who have appropriated variations of Western modernist style or medium, thereby dividing early twentieth-century Chinese painters into dichotomous groups? Are labels like “traditionalists” or “modernists” still relevant in categorizing Chinese artists of the first half of the twentieth century?

As Michael Sullivan puts it, “[T]he infinity of choices, the free mixing of media and techniques so widely practiced by artists today, seem to put the whole question of *guohua* versus *xihua* in a kind of limbo. Has the issue been resolved, or simply become

irrelevant?⁵⁵⁶ For the post-1990 contemporary artists of China who have actively participated in the global art arena and have comfortably mediated across national borders, the issue of *guohua* and *xihua* may have been laid rest.

However, the advocacy and promotion of “*guohua*” and the highly contentious debate between *guohua* and *xihua* painters during the Republic era (1911-1949) as explored in this chapter has resulted in the marginalization of painters who utilized and worked in imported media, such as oil on canvas, who adopted certain stylistic trends inspired by their study in the West, and who synthesized all the styles to which he or she was exposed or at his or her disposal.

This study, through the case of Pang Xunqin, intends to participate in pluralizing and enlarging historical narratives, hoping thereby to give voices to the artists who have been silenced or who have been placed in the margin in the historiography of Chinese art.

⁵⁵⁶ Michael Sullivan, “Some Reflections on *Guohua*,” in Cao Yiqiang and Fan Jingzhong, eds., *Chinese Painting in the Twentieth-Century: Creativity in the Aftermath of Tradition* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 1997), 516.

Epilogue

What is art and craft? Art and craft is to employ form, color, and décor to express people's thoughts and emotions. It is an artistic creation, like painting and sculpture, a part of compositional art. It also belongs to the superstructures; its essence is within the scope of our cultural enterprise.⁵⁵⁷ Pang Xunqin, 1957.

Pang Xunqin's involvement in establishing China's first arts and crafts institute – the Central Academy of Arts and Crafts – had occupied his artistic life from 1947 to 1957. During those years, Pang painted scarcely any substantial and significant works; instead he devoted his energies to realizing his utilitarian dream, that of integrating art with craft, native with modern, decorative with graphic, and thereby creating a Chinese “Bauhaus.” Pang's over-zealous involvement in establishing a modern art and graphic design curriculum for China's first arts and crafts institute inevitably clashed with the ideology of the new regime which placed its emphasis on China's traditional handcraft industry. He openly questioned the placement of the Central Academy of Arts and Crafts under the leadership of the Central Light-Industry Ministry and argued for locating it under the Cultural Ministry. He adamantly believed art and craft is a part of cultural and academic activity, not entirely an industrial enterprise. His idealistic in tone open criticism published in the People's Daily, May 12, 1957, paved the way for his “fall” in the People's Republic of China's first political purge – the Anti-Rightist Campaign. during that ordeal, he lost his vice-presidential post at the Central Academy of Arts and Crafts and his professorship was removed from him. For the next two decades, between the intervals of political purges, Pang Xunqin devoted his time to researching and writing the *Zhongguo lidan zhuangshi hua jianjiu* (Studies on Chinese Decorative Paintings of the

⁵⁵⁷ Pang Xunqin, *Meishu*, April, 1957, and republished in Pang Tao, ed., *Pang Xunqin wenxuan* (Selected Essays Written by Pang Xunqin) (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2007), 278.

Previous Dynasties) which was eventually published in 1982. Although confined by limited space in his apartment, Pang continued to paint in oil, but now small-scale still lifes of blooming flowers in opulent colors that had brightened these dark years of his life and illuminated his hopes for the future.

One could argue that Pang was too far ahead of his time for China. Social realism and nationalist zeal for reviving the traditional modes of ink and water painting and handcraft was too urgently needed for the new country, and Pang's modernist propensity proved to be too "foreign" or "Western" for the political agenda of that new age.

As Pang Xunqin lay dying in 1985, the new '85 avant-garde movement (or the '85 New Wave) was on its way to igniting Chinese art to enter a new age.⁵⁵⁸ As one of the first generation of Chinese avant-gardes, Pang Xunqin could not see the movement's dynamic fruition, but the seeds he planted, after more than four decades of hibernation, are finally being harvested, and the spirit he and his fellow Storm Society members evoked in their manifesto continues to resonate.

"Don't judge us by what we are doing now, this is just the beginning" – Pang's parting words to Michael Sullivan in 1980 upon their first reunion after over a thirty-year separation still reverberates. Pang's metamorphosis from an aspiring young artist in Paris and Shanghai, to an artist of his own right, a graphic designer, an educator, and a scholar in the history of art and craft and his ceaseless effort to renew himself is a legacy that deserves an art historical recognition.

⁵⁵⁸ Vishakha N. Desai and David A. Ross, "By 1985 a definable avant-garde had emerged and moved rapidly from direct political statement through ironic commentary to a more personal expression, all the while adopting and adapting various media in a surge of creativity and experimentation," from the "Foreword," Gao Minglu, ed., *Inside Out: New Chinese Art*, exhibition catalogue (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 8.

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