ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: **TRADITION REVITALIZED: THE CHINESE PAINTING RESEARCH SOCIETY OF REPUBLICAN BEIJING**

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In 1920 a group of traditional artists in Beijing formed the Chinese Painting Research Society, an art institution that enormously influenced Chinese art in the twentieth century. This dissertation locates this society within contemporary social, historical, and cultural trends and argues that its use of traditional Chinese art, antiquities, and even archaeology to counter Western art influence was part of a larger search for national and cultural identity.

The first part of the dissertation focuses on the historical and theoretical foundations of the society. The second part sets the artistic activities of the group, including their exhibitions and journals, against contemporary cultural backdrops. The study accomplishes a number of goals. First, it sorts out the historical facts of this overlooked society in a way that reintroduces it to art historical scholarship. Second, it demonstrates that the seemingly conservative stance of the society was just a way to secure its standing and guard its goals. Third, it establishes the group's importance to

the field of modern Chinese art. Finally, by thoroughly examining the society and its accomplishments, this dissertation shows that the traditional artistic approach championed by the society is worth scholarly attention, and that the modernization of Chinese painting occurred not only in Chinese-Western synthesis. Innovation within tradition was equally viable.

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To my father and my son

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Introduction

The republican period of China (1912–49) was an era of transition: a self-centered Confucian empire became a modern nation in an emerging global world. This transition was not a naturally formed, gradual process but was forced and almost sudden. Many aspects of Chinese life were shaken to the roots by the impact of Western civilization.[1] In politics, the economy, and social structure, Chinese intelligentsia began to wonder, "What of the old (or traditional) is worth keeping? Can we keep it and survive in the modern world? What of the new (or foreign) is desirable? Must we take the undesirable too in order to survive?"[2] At the end of the last dynasty and the dawn of the Republic a new generation of intellectuals began to use Western ideas to reject tradition, which they felt was an obstacle to China's modernization.

Chinese artists shared the dilemma of other intellectuals who were seeking a future path for the country. The major concerns were how the thousand-year-old heritage of traditional Chinese painting might best respond to modernity and whether Chinese artists should fully discard tradition and participate in a "wholesale

[1] Starting in 1915, scholars and intellectuals began to lead a revolt against traditional Chinese and Confucian culture. This revolt developed into the New Culture Movement, which called for the creation of a new Chinese culture based on global and western standards, especially democracy and science. Students returning from France, Germany, and the United States helped to promote this movement. The New Culture Movement and May Fourth Movement will be discussed in detail in chapter one.

[2] Mary C. Wright, "Modern China in Transition, 1900–1950," in *Modern China: An Interpretive Anthology*, ed. Joseph. R. Levenson (London: Macmillan, 1971), 200.

Westernization," or instead entrench themselves in tradition to resist any Western influence. To answer these questions, intense debates on traditional Chinese painting circulated in art circles during the 1920s. The two groups that emerged are generally recognized as the "reformists" and the "national essence (*guocui* 国粹)" advocates, who, because they chose traditional painting as the preferred form of artistic expression, were also deemed "conservative."

The reformists, on the one hand, most of whom had received Western training in Europe or Japan, believed that the reform of traditional Chinese painting required assimilation to the methods of Western art. National essence painters, on the other hand, chose to work in traditional forms. They believed that modernizing Chinese art was necessary, but it must be based on Chinese art's own history, conventions, standards, and internal dynamics.[3]

But are labels like "reformist" or "conservative" appropriate for categorizing Chinese artists of the twentieth century? What criteria are to be used to distinguish the two? Shall artists that promote traditional forms of painting be considered conservative simply because they did not adopt Western art methods? And why did the so-called traditionalists choose such a stance against Western styles or media?

To answer such questions, this dissertation focuses on the Chinese Painting Research Society (*Zhongguo huaxue yanjiuhui* 中国画学研究会, herein the CPRS),

[3] The idea of two groups divided in their attitude toward Western art is stated in Maysching Kao, "China's Response to the West in Art, 1898–1937" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1972), 3–4; and Kuiyi Shen, "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 through the Cultural Revolution, 1840–1979* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, 2000), 107.

established by several leading figures of the national essence movement in 1920. It aims to examine this art group's struggles and achievements in the face of western influence, and the effect the society had on shaping Chinese art in the twentieth century. I argue that the CPRS members' choice to use traditional Chinese art, antiquities, and even archaeology as a foundation to counter western art influence was part of a larger search for national and cultural identity. Furthermore, the CPRS functioned as a hub in Beijing's art world during the Republic and indeed the whole territory of traditional art, seen in its founders' eager effort to promote the Chinese art tradition; its close relationship with the Beijing government; and its various attempts to evoke popular support for traditional Chinese painting by adopting modern strategies, such as the creation of the CPRS as an institution, the running of annual and international exhibitions, and the establishment of periodicals.

Regrettably, however, the CPRS has gradually faded to obscurity since the 1950s, because its close relationship with the warlord Beijing government and Japan[4] has made research into the CPRS an "off limits" subject for modern Chinese scholars. It has been almost entirely neglected in art historical scholarship, both in the West and in China. Thus, this dissertation seeks to reintroduce the CPRS to art historical scholarship. By doing so, I hope to reconstruct the traditional artistic landscape of Beijing and reassess the seemingly "conservative" approach of traditional Chinese artists in the first half of the twentieth century.

[4] From its beginning the CPRS had a close relationship with Japanese artists, cosponsoring with Japan four Sino-Japanese exhibitions in its early years. See detailed discussion in chapter three.

State of the Field

Scholarly interest in modern Chinese art has often focused on the reformist camp, evidenced in works such as Michael Sullivan's *Chinese Art in the Twentieth Century* (1956) and *Art and Artists in Twentieth-Century China* (1996); Maysching Kao's dissertation, "China's Response to the West in Art" (1972); Ralph Croizier's book *Art and Revolution in Modern China* (1988) and article "Post-Impressionists in Pre-War Shanghai: The *Juelanshe* and the Fate of Modernism in Republican China" (1993); and David Wang and Eugene Wang's research in *Chinese Art: Modern Expressions* (2001). Research into traditional art has not faded entirely from the modern Chinese art scene, however; it has surfaced recently, from time to time, in books and exhibition catalogues.[5] These studies often consider traditional art as a way to preserve the "essence" of Chinese art, not as an active response to the influence of Western art.

Recently, many scholars have turned their attention to artistic phenomena in Shanghai for its social, political, economic, and most importantly, artistic freedom. For example, Jo-Anne Birnie-Danzker, Ken Lum, and Zheng Shengtian's collectively edited catalogue (2004), *Shanghai Modern: 1919–1945*, strives to place Shanghai as the center for East-West artistic and cultural exchanges as well as for modernist movements. Lynn Pan's *Shanghai Style: Art and Design between the Wars* (2008) guides the reader through the rich history of Shanghai's art and culture, where an

[5] Many western collectors and scholars take up another extreme and favor traditional Chinese painting over those done in non-native media. See for example the three-volume publication of Ellsworth's collection, *Later Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, 1800–1950* and the exhibition catalogue on a private collection *Between Thunder and the Rain: Chinese Paintings from Opium War through the Cultural Revolution 1840–1979*.

urban population cried for all that was new and Western. Jason Kuo's edited volume *Visual Culture in Shanghai, 1850s–1930s* (2007) discusses the complexity and richness of visual culture in Shanghai and explores how it embodied China's search for a modern identity, and how Shanghai emerged as the center of Chinese cosmopolitanism.

Beijing, on the other hand, has been treated as the old capital city that refused the new energy of the modern world because of its long artistic tradition. Xu Beihong (徐悲鸿, 1895–1953), one of the leading figures of the reformists, recalled in 1950 the development of painting in Beijing since the Republic period, and declared, "although Beijing is the headstream for the May Fourth New Culture Movement, it is the most conventional and most conservative fortress of art. Strictly speaking, there is nothing worthy of discussion in the art field in the past 40 years, as Beijing is rarely related to any new art development."[6] Many recent scholars share Xu's observation. Michael Sullivan in *Chinese Art in the Twentieth Century* and *Art and Artists in Twentieth-Century China* labeled the republic Beijing art scene "Beijing Conservatism." He declared, "Beijing had by the mid-1920s become something of a backwater, living on the echoes of its great past. Shanghai, by contrast, was relatively stable, outward-looking, prosperous, and beginning to eclipse Beijing as a center of artistic activity."[7] Kuiyi Shen admits that "compared to many Shanghai and southern

[6] Xu Beihong, "Sishinian lai Beijing huihua lueshu" [四十年来北京绘画略述], in *Xu Beihong yishu wenji*, ed. Xu Boyang and Jin Shan (Taibei: Yishujia Chubanshe, 1987), 596.
[7] Michael Sullivan, *Chinese Art in the Twentieth Century* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), 41–42; idem, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 6, 12.

artists of the time, many northern painters have often been undervalued, dismissed as 'conservative.'"[8]

Generally speaking, the art scene in early twentieth-century Beijing has not attracted much attention, except for case studies of prominent traditional artists such as Huang Binhong (黄宾虹, 1865–1955) and Qi Baishi (齐白石, 1864–1957) for their innovation in tradition. This phenomenon is due partly to the complexity of political and ideological influences.[9] Nonetheless, Beijing occupies a special position in modern Chinese history. It was the capital city when the Qing dynasty collapsed, and it remained so during the warlord period until the nationalist government decided to move the capital to Nanjing. As Thomas Bender has stated in his forward to *Republican Beijing: The City and Its Histories*, capital cities are expected to represent the nation. Occasionally, some major cities are not the capitals of their countries, and some have had to deal with losing their status as capitals—such as Beijing during part of the Republican period. However, whether a major city is or is not a national capital, it inevitably retains its relation to national history, or what in China was often called the "national essence."[10] Beijing, in its transformation from an imperial capital into a

[8] Shen, "Entering a New Era," 110.
[9] Beijing fell in and out of power frequently during the republican period of China. After the collapse of the Qing dynasty, Sun Yat-sen, the first president of the Republic of China, declared the establishment of the new republic in Nanjing on January 1, 1912. But the Nanjing government lasted only three months. Between 1912 and 1928, the so-called Republic of China was under the control of a number of warlords, several of whom kept Beijing as their capital. During this period, China experienced the restoration of monarchy twice, and witnessed changes of government more than a dozen times. The shortest-lived government lasted for only two days. After the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, this chaotic warlord period of Beijing became a taboo subject for modern Chinese art historians, because it was a political "no-no" and writing about the subject would have endangered their freedom.
[10] Madeleine Yue Dong, *Republican Beijing: The City and Its Histories* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003): xiii–xvii.

Republican capital—and then a former capital—provides an excellent opportunity to examine the evolution of national history/national essence represented in the transition, in particular the significant changes caused in its art world.

With traditional art and its cultural foundations under attack, the adoption of a traditional manner of painting was no longer automatic and unconscious, but a matter of deliberate choice, a spontaneous response to the challenge of Western art. Traditional artists believed that the best way to preserve traditional Chinese painting and to counterattack the reformists was to introduce a sense of "national essence" to the public.[11] Launched in the 1910s, the single aim of the National Essence movement was to promote and preserve the great heritage of Chinese art and culture. Huang Binhong, one of the leading figures of the movement and a typical Chinese literati artist, insisted "there have been three thousand years since the tradition of painting began in Chinese civilization. The foremost desideratum in a painting is its brush-and-ink. One cannot talk about Chinese painting without brush-and-ink."[12] He further declared, "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."[13] *Guohua* (国画, national painting),[14] a term specifying modern paintings rendered in

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[11] Zheng Wuchang, "Xiandai Zhongguo huajia ying fu zhi zeren" [现代中国画家应负之责任], *Guohua yuekan* 1–2 (1934): 17.
[12] Huang Binhong, "Guohua jichu yaoyi" [国画基础要义], in *Wang Bomin meishu wenxuan*, ed. Wang Bomin (Hangzhou: Zhongguo meishu xueyuan chubanshe, 1993), 743.
[13] Huang Binhong, "Zhi zhi yi wen shuo" [致治以文说], *Guohua yuekan* 1–2 (1934): 6.
[14] As Julia Andrews states, "By the turn of the century, the Chinese no longer considered themselves to constitute the dominant culture of the world. From this point on, painting in ink rather than oil became a conscious choice, one that might have been motivated by personal, ideological, or commercial

traditional Chinese media—ink or water-soluble pigments on Chinese paper or silk—was coined by the National Essence movement. The *guohua* label was often used to promote Chinese heritage and nationalistic fervor in order to resist Western influences.

Therefore, the CPRS, founded by the leading traditional artists in Beijing, offers a unique reading of modern Chinese art history from a perspective other than that held by the active reformists. It has often been said that traditional artists or artistic groups turn away from the modern world to immerse themselves in their fascination with the old. Whether or not such an opinion is fully justified, these artists offer dialogue between old and new. They restore the old through their works, giving it a place in the modern world. Tradition thus becomes a part of modernity. As Shen Kuiyi has noted, "the complexity of pursuits and practices in the field of traditional painting is difficult to classify into simplistic categories of 'reformist' or 'conservative,' 'traditionalist' or 'innovative.'" In this unique transitional era, various artistic trends flourished, each with its own pursuits and its own response to current trends. Specifically for the CPRS, tradition became a self-conscious response to a very modern condition. Its members self-consciously pursued innovation within the

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considerations, but one that would never again be assumed in China as the 'natural' way for a Chinese artist to paint. A new Chinese term became necessary to label this art, as the old word for painting was no longer sufficiently clear. Modern painting with ink and/or water-soluble pigments on Chinese paper or silk is usually called *guohua* (national painting)." See Julia Andrews, "A Century in Crisis: Tradition and Modernity in the Art of Twentieth-Century China," in *A Century in Crisis*, 4. For detailed discussion of *guohua* and its connotations, see Michael Sullivan, "Some Reflections on *Guohua*," in *Chinese Painting in the Twentieth Century: Creativity in the Aftermath of Tradition*, ed. Cao Yiqiang and Fan Jingzhong (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 1997), 509–17.

Chinese tradition, and took the preservation of Chinese painting as a mission. Chinese modernity, for them, required Chinese cultural forms.

Art historians have started to pay attention to traditional artists and art societies in recent years. In 1997, the conference volume coedited by Cao Yiqiang and Fan Jingzhong titled *Chinese Painting in the Twentieth Century: Creativity in the Aftermath of Tradition* was published. The conference was the first internally sponsored international conference on twentieth-century Chinese art history held in the People's Republic. Both Julia Andrews and Kuiyi Shen contributed essays to the volume; the former discussed early Republican *guohua* painting societies in Shanghai in the article titled "Traditional Chinese Painting in an Age of Revolution, 1911–1937," and the latter explored activities of the National Essence camp in the article "On the Reform of Chinese Painting in Early Republican China." These articles have laid groundwork for the study of the CPRS.

Discussions related specifically to the CPRS also appear from time to time in recent English scholarship. Most of the accounts, however, are about important artists of the group. The founding of the society is often cited as part of the artistic activities of the members. For example, Sullivan has briefly described the Beijing art world, including two key members of the CPRS, Jin Cheng (金城, 1878–1926) and Chen Shizeng (陈师曾, 1876–1923), in his *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (1996), crediting the two artists with the establishment of the CPRS as one of their achievements. Julia Andrews and Kuiyi Shen have coauthored an exhibition catalog titled *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth Century*

China (1998). In addition to reproducing several artworks of CPRS members, the catalog also includes Kuiyi Shen's contributing essay titled "Traditional Painting in a Transitional Era, 1900–1950." Here Shen compiles two short biographies of Jin Cheng and Chen Shizeng, including their artistic styles and art theories. In another exhibition catalog titled *Between The Thunder and the Rain* (2000), Shen and Andrews contribute two essays—"Entering a New Era: Transformation and Innovation in Chinese Painting, 1895–1930" and "A Shelter from the Storm"—in which they discuss artists in northern China including, again, Jin Cheng and Chen Shizeng. The essays also briefly touch on the activities of the CPRS, particularly publishing journals and holding art exhibitions.

Aida Yuen Wong's book, *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in Modern China* (2006), emphasizes the important role that Japan played in the modernization of Chinese art in the early twentieth century. The book devotes a whole chapter to the four Sino-Japanese exhibitions held by the CPRS. This was the first time that activities of the CPRS were paid full attention in American scholarship.

Chinese scholars have more actively and thoroughly examined the CPRS and its activities in the past decade, partly because of recent reprints of the CPRS's journals and the relatively easy accessibility of archival and library resources in China on Republican materials. Li Shunlin, in his master thesis "Cong Jin Cheng tan minchu zhongguohua de fugu gexin" (On the Reform of Chinese Painting in the Early

Republican China, 1996), discusses in detail Jin Cheng's art theories and his involvement in the establishment of the CPRS.

Yun Xuemei's "Minguo shiqi de liangge jingpai meishu shetuan" (Two Art Societies in Beijing in Republic China, 2000) has a great overview of the history of the organization and its splinter group the Hu Society. Yun discusses the formation of the CPRS, its key members and exhibitions.

Wai-man Siu's 2001 doctoral dissertation, "A Study of Jin Cheng (1878–1926)," provides a comprehensive and in-depth reading of the artist. It examines in detail three aspects of Jin: his family background, his life story, and his artistic development. Jin's founding of the CPRS is an important part of the author's discussion of Jin's life.

Liu Ruikuan in *Zhongguo meishu de xiandaihua* (The Modernization of Chinese Art, 2008) discusses the CPRS through the art journals it issued. The recently published *Guwu chenlie suo* (The Galleries of Antiquities, 2010) by Song Zhaolin provides a comprehensive history of the Galleries of Antiquities (*guwu chenlie suo* 古物陈列所), which played a great role in the establishment of the CPRS.

Hushe Yanjiu (A Study of the Hu Society, 2010), a revision of Lv Peng's doctoral dissertation, is a detailed study of the Hu Society. It is an excellent reference and provides valuable materials for research on the Chinese Painting Research Society.

A number of painting anthologies and exhibition catalogues have been published in the past twenty years, providing rich image materials for the study of the

CPRS members' painting theories and techniques. These publications include Shi Yunwen's *Zhongguo jindai huihua: Minchu pian* (Chinese Modern Painting: Early Republican Selection, 1991); an exhibition catalog published by the National Museum of History, Taibei, titled *Modern Chinese Painting, 1911–49: Beijing* (1998); and *Jingjin huapai* (Beijing and Tianjin Art School, 2002) compiled by the Tianjin People's fine arts publishing house.

Previous scholarship has offered valuable information on certain aspects of the CPRS, such as its members and founding history. Most of the research, however, has touched on its history and activities only briefly. There has been no comprehensive and in-depth study of the society, its contributions, and its standing in modern Chinese art history. Julia Andrews once claimed, "One of the exciting aspects of working in later Chinese painting is that the territory has not yet been mapped." And "the infant state of the field," she believes, provides the "formidable task" of "locating, identifying, and authenticating twentieth-century art objects and documents."[15]

Using primary sources, including Republican-period journals, and building upon past scholarship, this dissertation attempts to penetrate the complex landscape of Chinese modern art history and provide insight into the constant struggle of modern Chinese artists to secure a national and cultural identity.

This dissertation emphasizes the CPRS's most active period, the 1920s and 1930s. By no means did its existence and activities stop after 1937, when the rate of

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

Japanese hostilities in China accelerated. In fact, the CPRS continued its artistic life during the war. The art journal remained in print until 1942.[16] Its annual achievement exhibition did not cease until 1947. However, the war inevitably interfered in Beijing's artistic and cultural life. The Republican government decided to move a large part of the Palace Museum collection to Nanjing and Shanghai, then to Chongqing, and eventually to Taipei.[17] Numerous academic institutions were relocated to the south as well. Moreover, a relative lack of printing facilities and a vaguely defined art audience and readership amid the chaos of war limited the influence and extent of Beijing's artistic production and activities after 1937.

The goal of this dissertation is not only to sort out the historical facts of the CPRS, but also recognize its contribution to the modern Chinese art field. Generally speaking, no individual member of the CPRS acquired an artistic status as important as what Qi Baishi and Huang Binhong enjoyed, but such masters depended for their growth upon the cultural foundation collectively formed by members of the CPRS. While most Chinese art historiography focuses on individual masters, it is also important to observe the collective activities of a group of artists: Why did they gather together in the first place? What was the rationale behind the founding of the organization? What did the members do to achieve their goal? How effective were their solutions? What influence did the organization have on the art world in general? This dissertation reconsiders the vital role that traditional artists played in the modern

[16] Liu Ruikuan, *Zhongguo meishu de xiandaihua* [The modernization of Chinese art] (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2008), 49.
[17] Na Zhiliang, *Gugong bowuyuan shanshinian zhi jingguo* (Taibei: Zhonghua wenhua congshu weiyuanhui, 1957), 99–206.

Chinese art scene and investigates their use of institutions to promote traditional art. By placing the CPRS in its broader historical and social environments, we can better reevaluate the "conservative" traditional artists in the early Republic and their confrontation with Western-dominated modernity.

Structure and Research Method

The Chinese Painting Research Society echoes some key movements in the first half of twentieth-century Chinese art: the reformers' blind belief in Western techniques; Chinese artists' contradictory feeling toward the Japanese art world; the government's need to promote Chinese art both indigenously and globally; and the public's demand to preserve national heritage. This dissertation not only investigates the formation and activities of the CPRS but also situates the role of the CPRS within these historical moments.

Chapter one discusses various social, historical, and institutional factors that made the formation of the CPRS possible, or even inevitable. Beijing is where everything begins. Being the source of the May Fourth Movement, Beijing became the center of conflict between tradition and modernity in the late 1910s and the early 1920s. As attacks on tradition grew, so too did the desire of traditional artists to gather, and to provide mutual support. In the meantime, the imperial collection was opened to the public for the first time. Accessibility to ancient pieces of painting and calligraphy made it possible for traditional artists to get together and study the artworks. Existing institutions in Beijing as well as those founded by the CPRS

members in other cities served as precedents for the formation of the CPRS. This dissertation then goes on to examine the launch of the CPRS, including its source of funds, key members' official background, its participants, its organizational structure, and its way of operation.

Chapter two delves into the lives and art of the three leading figures of the CPRS—Jin Cheng, Chen Shizeng, and Zhou Zhaoxiang (周肇祥, 1880–1945)—and explores their theories and propositions to discover what brought them together to form the CPRS. Their art and theories show remarkable stylistic pluralism yet reveal at the same time a unifying ideology. To put it simply, they all believed in the necessity of preserving and developing the Chinese painting tradition, even as they differed about the specific path to follow. Their art propositions were welcomed and accepted by a large number of artists in northern China. These artists were sometimes collectively recognized as the "Jingjin school" (*Jingjin huapai* 京津画派).

Chapter three investigates the CPRS's annual "achievement exhibitions" (chengji zhanlanhui 成绩展览会) and the Sino-Japanese exhibitions the CPRS cosponsored. Holding exhibitions was one way the institution promoted its members' skills and reputation. Recent art historians have undertaken historical investigation of the four Sino-Japanese joint exhibitions, in particular Siu Wai-man's dissertation and Aida Wong's book *Parting the Mists*. Yet very little has been written about the CPRS's exhibition efforts in relation to the government-sponsored national and international displays at the time. By placing the joint exhibits in the context of

exhibition practice in and outside China, the dissertation aims to explore their position in the global promotion of Chinese art.

The focus of chapter four is the art journal *Yilin xunkan* (艺林旬刊, Ten-Day Periodical of Art, later resumed as *Yilin yuekan* 艺林月刊, Art Monthly), published under the direction of the second leader of the CPRS, Zhou Zhaoxiang, in 1928. Publishing journals and periodicals was a common practice for private art groups and societies in modern China. What differentiates the CPRS's journal from others is its broad scope of topics, extending beyond Chinese painting. It covered materials such as painting in and outside China, calligraphy, sculpture, seal carving, archaeology, cultural relics, architecture, and photography. Its concern for retaining and preserving cultural relics and archaeological findings is prominent and echoes the archaeological fever and nationalist agitation of the time. Through publication of the journal, the CPRS presented itself as much more than a propagator of *guohua* or a conservative upholder of tradition.

A revealing anecdote is related by Pierre Ryckman. A great Buddhist monastery near Nanjing was famous for its purity and orthodoxy. The monks were following a rule that conformed strictly to the original tradition of the Indian monasteries. Whereas in other Chinese monasteries a meal was served every evening, in this particular monastery the monks received only a bowl of tea. Foreign scholars who visited the monastery at the beginning of the twentieth century much admired the austerity of this custom. These visitors, however, were quite naive. If they had taken

the time to look into the bowls, they would have found that what was served under the name of "tea" was in fact a fairly nourishing rice congee, similar in any respect to the food which was provided nightly in all other Chinese monasteries. Only in this particular monastery, out of respect for an ancient tradition, the rice congee was conventionally called "the bowl of tea."[18]

I wonder if, to some extent, the evaluation of traditional artists in Beijing is such a "bowl of tea." Everybody takes for granted that these artists were publicly labeled "conservative" and they themselves declared their "obsession with tradition." Deceived by such labels, few people actually "looked into the bowls" to find out the real contents. This study, by examining the CPRS and its various activities, uncovers the conservative veil that has long been associated with the CPRS.

It would be appropriate to employ the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of agent/agency and field to base the Beijing artists, especially the CPRS's choice of traditional art, on their own artistic aspirations and social positions. Bourdieu looked at an artist as an agent whose actions were conditioned by his "habitus" and his social situations. Habitus refers to a set of dispositions that incline an artist to act in a certain manner. It is generally cultivated through long-term processes such as education and family background. Although habitus conditions an artist's actions to a large extent, an artist has free will to decide which action he may take according to his social relations in the field in which he is situated, rather than being determined only by his habitus. It works the same way for an institution. In

[18] Pierre Ryckman, "The Chinese Attitude towards the Past," *Papers on Far Eastern History* 39 (1989): 10.

Bourdieu's theoretical model, field is a structured social space which accommodates the agents who are occupying diverse positions engaged in competition for the control of power and for the legitimacy of what "is" and what "is not" the thing at issue.[19] This sociological investigation is important for understanding the CPRS's self-positioning and its relevant art endeavors. Using this field model, my dissertation looks at the CPRS's "conservative" stance not merely as a passive mode of "Western impact—Chinese response," but as a result of the artists' purposeful decision to take a position within China's conflicts over art.

[19] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993): 29–73, 161–75.

Chapter One: The Chinese Painting Research Society:

Its Genesis and Inner Dynamics

> Some cities are like palimpsests. The imperfectly erased past is visible even though only the imprint of the present can be clearly deciphered. By contrast, Beijing in the 1920s, as a human and physical entity, clearly preserved the past, accommodated the present, and nurtured the basic elements of several possible futures. Few cities in China in the 1920s looked so traditional and Chinese and at the same time harbored the essentials of modern and Western urban life.
>
> –David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing*

At the end of the last dynasty and at the dawn of the Republic, Chinese intellectuals began to turn their eyes to the West and question the viability of tradition in China's modernization. Temporally and spatially, Republican-era Chinese were caught between China's imperial past and its national future, between Chinese culture and that of the rest of the planet.[20]

Beijing remained China's political, cultural, artistic, and academic center throughout the early years of the Republic. Its art world, however, was later branded as "conservative." This reputation partly arose from its "close relationship with the warlord government and later with the Japanese, or [from their opposition] to aspects of the May Fourth [Westernizing] Movement, which has been canonized as a great

[20] David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing: City People and Politics in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), xiii.

marker of cultural progress."[21] But this was not the complete picture. Due to Beijing's historical status, the imperial household had gathered in one place a rich collection of paintings and calligraphies of past dynasties. This imperial possession was made accessible to the public in the Republic, first through the opening of the Galleries of Antiquities in 1914, then of the Palace Museum in 1925. Thus, compared to those from other cities such as Shanghai and Guangzhou, artists in Beijing (whether local-born or immigrant) had the advantage of sharing common resources (the imperial painting collection). They also undertook a stronger sense of responsibility for carrying on Chinese cultural heritage.

In spring 1920, the Chinese Painting Research Society was founded in Beijing by Jin Cheng (Fig. 1), Chen Shizeng (Fig. 2), and Zhou Zhaoxiang (Fig. 3). This chapter examines the critical aspects of the social, cultural, and institutional context in which the CPRS arose and flourished.[22] I will begin with the May Fourth Movement and its influence on Beijing's art world. Then I will discuss the institutional support to the CPRS from organizations and groups that were established in Beijing or related in some way to members of the CPRS. The establishment of the CPRS was also greatly influenced by the opening of the Galleries of Antiquities. I argue through these discussions that the CPRS was more than simply a gathering of passive and conservative artists that strove to hold on to the past, but instead an active and self-conscious response to the turbulent social backdrops in Beijing. After looking at this

[21] Shen, "Entering a New Era," 110.
[22] In this dissertation, I do not focus on historical changes over time, but rather concurrent trends from about 1900 through the 1930s.

background, I explore the inner dynamics of the CPRS, covering its launch, its internal governance, and its teaching philosophy and methods.

1.1 Social and Cultural Preparations

The May Fourth Movement and Its Impact on Beijing's Art World

As mentioned earlier, the CPRS was established in 1920, one year after the May Fourth Incident and amid the active years of the May Fourth Movement. It is necessary to take a brief look at the May Fourth Movement and its impact on Chinese art in general and Beijing art circles in particular.

China underwent increasingly unsettled social and political upheavals after the founding of the new Republic, torn as it was by the power struggles of the warlords at home and the encroaching threat of foreign powers. The Chinese felt the urgent need to save their nation. This anxiety was greatly accelerated by the Twenty-one Demands from Japan in 1915, which virtually put the whole country under Japanese control. The day on which the agreement was signed was designated National Humiliation Day.[23]

From 1915 onward, Chinese intellectuals and students returning from abroad brought with them new ideas and began to rebel against traditional Chinese culture. They used Western ideas to reject tradition, calling for the creation of a new Chinese culture based on Western standards, especially science and democracy. Traditional Chinese ethics, literature, history, culture, and social and political institutions were

[23] Chow Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement* (Cambridge: Harvard Unversity Press, 1964), 19–25.

fiercely attacked.[24] These new literary and intellectual activities later came to be called the New Culture Movement.

On May 4, 1919, students in Beijing demonstrated against the government's humiliating handling of the Shandong question at the Versailles Peace Conference,[25] and promoted anti-imperialist nationalism. This student demonstration was called the May Fourth Incident, and it was followed by a series of strikes and related events that ensued in social ferment and intellectual revolution. Patriotic sentiments increased, and the New Culture Movement gained great popularity.

This era of restlessness and confusion, from the late 1910s to early 1920s, has been generally defined as the May Fourth Movement,[26] with the May Fourth Incident as the pivot of all related activities and developments. It embraced on one hand the social and political activities of the students and intellectuals, and on the other, new literature and new ideas collectively known as the New Culture Movement.

During the May Fourth Movement, intellectual leaders claimed that to achieve modernization, China must be westernized. A good example of this impulse is found in Chen Duxiu (陈独秀, 1879–1942), who declared:

> To Build a Westernized new country and a Westernized new society so that we can survive in this competitive world, we must solve the basic problem of importing from

[24] Kao, "China's Response," 96–97.
[25] At the conference, the Chinese delegates were asked to sign a treaty that transferred Germany's rights in Shandong Province to Japan, even though China was one of the Allies.
[26] In this dissertation, I generally accept Chow Tse-tsung's view of the May Fourth Movement in the broader sense. It is not confined to the May Fourth Incident in 1919, but includes the series of political and cultural developments of the late 1910s and early 1920s. See Chow, *May Fourth Movement*, 1–15.

> the West the very foundation of the new society…. We must get rid of the old to achieve the new.[27]

The quest for importing new ideas from the West in the field of culture soon reached the art world. Western art and theories were vigorously introduced into China while traditional Chinese painting was declared dead by scholars and intellectuals. Kang Youwei (康有为, 1858–1927) in his 1917 preface to *Painting Catalogue of the Thatched Hut among Myriad Trees Collection* (万木草堂藏画目) began with the following words: "Chinese painting from the recent era has declined to the utmost."[28] Chen Duxiu in 1918 called for an "art revolution." He wrote:

> If you want to reform Chinese painting, you must first revolutionize paintings of the Four Wangs. In order to reform Chinese painting, you must adopt the realistic spirit of Western Painting…. Some people said that the painting of Wang Shigu was the peak of the Chinese painting, but I think his landscape painting was the true end of the bad paintings represented by Ni [Zan] (倪瓚), Huang [Gongwang] (黄公望), Wen [Zhengming] (文徵明), and Shen [Zhou] (沈周)…. If the Four Wang manner is not

[27] Chen Duxiu, "Xianzheng yu Rujiao," *Xin qingnian* 2, no. 3 (1916): 1–4. Translated in Kuiyi Shen, "Concept to Context: The Theoretical Transformation of Ink Painting into China's National Art in the 1920s and 1930s," in *Writing Modern Chinese Art*, ed. Josh Yiu (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum, 2009), 45.
[28] Lang Shaojun and Shui Tianzhong, eds., *Ershi shiji Zhongguo meishu wenxuan* [二十世纪中国美术文选] (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1999), 1:21–25.

abandoned, it will be the largest barrier to importing Western realism and to reforming Chinese painting.[29]

Thousands of young men switched from traditional to western art and dedicated themselves to building a new art for China's modern society. The critique and rejection of traditional Chinese art and culture reached such an extreme that it was argued, "The scope of their [the intellectuals leaders of the movement] moral iconoclasm is perhaps unique in the modern world; no other historical civilization outside the West undergoing modern transformation has witnessed such a phoenix-like impulse to see its own cultural tradition so completely negated."[30] These new intellectuals of the movement were advocating not partial reform but rather a vast and fervent transformation, to undermine the very foundation of the old tradition and to replace it with a completely new art and culture.[31]

However, in addition to being the gathering place for thousands of radical students and intellectuals, Beijing had long been dominated by traditional culture (Fig. 4). Except for a few brief interludes, the city had remained the capital for some six hundred fifty years after the Mongols moved their capital there in 1264. Since the lengthy reigns of Kangxi and Qianlong Emperors, the city had set the cultural taste and style for all of China. With this legacy of imperial taste, Beijing was a fortress of

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[29] Chen Duxiu, "Meishu geming" [美术革命], *Xin qingnian* 6, no. 1 (1918). Translation from Shen, "Concept to Context," 45.
[30] Hao Chang, "Neo-Confucianism and the Intellectual Crisis of Contemporary China," in *The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China,* ed. Charlotte Furth (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 281.
[31] Kao, "China's Response," 97.

traditionalism. Many of the leading painters in Beijing in the early Republic were those who had former court associations. Perhaps the best known were members of the former imperial family: Pu Jin (溥忻, 1893–?), Pu Quan (溥佺, 1913–1992), and Pu Ru (溥儒, 1896–1963). These artists remained committed to Chinese art tradition.

With Beijing being the center of conflict between new and old, its art world fostered different theories and ideas on the future of Chinese painting. At least eight different positions can be identified.

First, Kang Youwei proposed the idea of "restoration for reformation (以复古为更新)." In 1917, Kang in his *Painting Catalogue of the Thatched Hut among Myriad Trees Collection* (万木草堂藏画目), after discussing paintings of Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, concluded that Chinese painting deteriorated to its lowest point in the Republic. He stated that the decline of Chinese art occurred during the mid-Ming period, when European art adopted a realistic, humanistic path. By way of contrast, in China literati painting lost contact with reality, causing it subsequently to decline.[32] He emphasized the importance of discarding the style of the Four Wangs[33] and the Two Shis[34] and the need to adopt Western realism and painting techniques instead.

Kang advocated the reconciliation of tradition and modernity. To reform and revitalize Chinese painting, he proposed overturning the art theory of *xieyi* painting

[32] Lawrence Wu, "Kang Youwei and the Westernization of Modern Chinese Art," *Orientations* 21, no. 3 (1990): 48.
[33] Wang Shimin (王时敏, 1592–1680), Wang Jian (王鉴, 1598–1677), Wang Shigu (王石谷, 1632–1717), and Wang Yuanqi (王原祁, 1642–1715)
[34] Shi Tao 石涛 (1642–1707) and Shi Xi 石谿 (1612–ca. 1671)

(写意, sketching the idea and feeling, a freely expressive style) that the literati praised. He declared instead the new orthodoxy in *xieshi* (写实, realistic description) "academy painting" of the Tang and Song dynasties.[35] For him, rectifying the faults of Chinese painting required a return to the standards of an earlier era, when realism was the norm. He concluded, "If we adhere to the old way without change, Chinese painting will become extinct. Now, at this historic moment, it is time for those who are up to the challenge to arise. They must begin a new era by combining Chinese and Western art."[36] He praised Lang Shining (郎世宁, Giuseppe Castiglione, 1688–1766) as a great master who merged Chinese and Western art.

Second, as stated earlier, Chen Duxiu advocated an art revolution in 1918: "If you want to reform Chinese painting, you must first revolutionize paintings of the Four Wangs." He launched the heated attack on literati painting. He argued that the only way to paint one's own paintings instead of imitating the ancients was to adopt the Western realistic spirit. He attacked specifically the practices of copying, emulating, or responding to the old masters in Chinese painting. He also criticized the absence of thematic titles and the lack of individual creativity in Chinese painting.

Chen's "art revolution" was based on a cultural point of view. He asserted that painting should be able to depict reality. His idea of adopting Western realism was

[35] For definitions of *xieshi* and *xieyi* and their use in traditional and modern Chinese paintings, see Cheng-hua Wang, "In the Name of the Nation: Song Painting and Artistic Discourse in Early Twentieth-Century China," in *A Companion to Asian Art and Architecture*, ed. Rebecca Brown and Deborah Hutton (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), 548–50.
[36] Kang Youwei, *Wanmu caotang yigao* [万木草堂遗稿] (Taibei: Cheng-wen chubanshe, 1976); translation from Wu, "Kang Youwei," 49.

similar to Kang's. Yet he differed from Kang in that Kang considered *xieshi* to be China's own artistic tradition while Chen promoted Western realism.

Third, Cai Yuanpei (蔡元培, 1868–1940) in 1917 proposed for the first time "Replacing Religion with Aesthetic Education," the title of a speech he delivered at Shenzhou Society (神州学会) in Beijing. He ranked aesthetic education equal to universal military education, utilitarian education, moral education, and education for shaping a worldview. He attached to the term "aesthetic education" an ethical aim—to foster a new kind of character and to enrich one's spiritual nature.[37] Cai argued that the traditional attitude of regarding art as a kind of ink-play in China was no longer appropriate to fulfill the needs of a modern society.

In 1918, Cai Yuanpei established *Huafa yanjiuhui* (画法研究会, Institute for Research on Chinese Painting Practice) at Beijing University. In his speech for the institute in the following year, he maintained that Chinese art should learn from the West, and that "Chinese painting should incorporate the realistic aspect of Western painting to depict objects and field landscapes."[38] Cai had a clear view of different characteristics of Chinese and Western paintings. He admitted that the Chinese way of learning painting from copying had its own benefit, yet he pointed out the importance of adopting the merit of Western art in the contemporary era of "East meets West."

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[37] Cai Yuanpei, "Yi meiyu dai zongjiao shuo" [以美育代宗教说, Replacing Religion with Aesthetic Education], *Xin qingnian* 3, no. 6 (1917): 509–13; English translation by Julia Andrews, in Kirk Denton, ed., *Modern Chinese Literary Thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 182–89.
[38] Cai Yuanpei, "Zai Beijing Daxue huafa yanjiuhui zhi yanshuoci" [在北京大学画法研究会上的演说], in Lang and Shui, *Ershi shiji Zhongguo meishu wenxuan,* 1:37.

Thus, in terms of specific art techniques, Cai advocated replacing copying with the skill of Western realistic painting, a concept similar to that of Chen Duxiu. However, as an art educator, Cai focused more on the conceptual and educational aspects of art, not its actual practice.

Fourth, Xu Beihong proposed to "keep the good of ancient [art] tradition, inherit those that are endangered, change the bad, add those that are lacking; incorporate aspects of Western painting that can be assimilated."[39] Xu strongly criticized traditional Chinese painters for their mindless imitation of ancient masters. He had a firm standpoint when it came to what aspects of Western painting to incorporate. He argued that Western naturalistic techniques were the central way to save Chinese painting (Fig. 5). Xu urged Chinese artists to adopt Western-invented materials and techniques to depict real objects.[40]

Xu's theory was similar to those of Kang, Chen, and Cai in that they all advocated adopting Western realism. The former three figures, however, were all social and political reformers. Their ideas on art were for the service of social and cultural reforms. As an artist, Xu's propositions were more concrete and operational. He brought the transformation of art theories from an ideal to reality.

[39] Xu Beihong, "Zhongguohua gailiang zhi fangfa" [中国画改良之方法], *Beijing Daxue Rikan* [北京大学日刊], May 23–25, 1918.
[40] Ibid.

Fifth, Gao Jianfu (高剑父, 1879–1951) advocated an eclectic approach.[41] He suggested a combination of the Chinese literati tradition and the Western academic tradition in reforming traditional Chinese painting (Fig. 6).[42]

Sixth, Liu Haisu (刘海粟, 1896–1994) recommended "Euro-American and Japanese viewpoints on painting study," and opposed "[those] of Chinese."[43] He did not take Western realism as the only choice for the reformation of Chinese painting, but accepted Western strands of modernism such as impressionism and fauvism (Fig. 7).

These six art propositions all belonged to the reformist camp, which believed that traditional Chinese painting had to assimilate the methods of Western art. Another camp of artists, however, chose to work in traditional forms. They alleged that modernizing Chinese art must be based on Chinese art's own history, convention, and standards.

Seventh (and first in the traditional camp), Jin Cheng had ideas similar to those of Kang Youwei in that they both proposed "restoration for reformation." His "restoration," however, had a broader scope, covering paintings from the Jin dynasty to the Yuan dynasty. He also emphasized the orthodoxy of Song- and Yuan-dynasty

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[41] Gao was a leading figure of the Lingnan School of Paitnting, which combined elements of local style, Western realism, and Japanese realist painting. Gao went to Japan in 1906 and was strongly influenced by the nihonga style of painting then popular in Japan. See Ralph Croizier, *Art and Revolution in Modern China: The Lingnan School of Painting, 1906–1951* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Ellen P. Conant, Steven D. Owyoung, and J. Thomas Rimer, eds., *Nihonga: Transcending the Past; Japanese-Style Painting, 1868–1968* (St. Louis: The Saint Louis Art Museum, 1995).

[42] Gao Jianfu, "Wo de xiandai guohua guan" [我的现代国画观], in Lang and Shui, *Ershi shiji zhongguo meishu wenxuan*, 497–519.

[43] Liu Haisu, "Huaxue shang biyao zhidian" [画学上必要之点], in *Ershi shiji zhongguohua taolunji*, ed. Shao Qi and Sun Haiyan (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2008), 26–29.

painting and stressed the importance of learning from nature. Jin Cheng did not promote a synthesis of Chinese and Western painting, as Kang did. Instead, he advocated reforming Chinese painting through its own tradition. He sought the value of traditional Chinese painting through extensive research and by copying ancient works.

Eighth, Chen Shizeng was the defender of literati painting. He noted that the progressive nature of literati painting lay in its stress on "moral character," "learning," "capabilities-feelings," and "thoughts." He argued that neither Western painting nor Chinese painting could be ranked as high or low relative to each other; each tradition just focused on different aspects. The propositions of Qi Baishi and Huang Binhong were quite similar to Chen's. They both recommended finding the solution for Chinese painting in the spirit of literati painting.

Although different in approach, both Jin Cheng and Chen Shizeng proposed to recollect and reevaluate the Chinese art tradition and to innovate Chinese painting from within its own tradition.[44] They refused to reform Chinese painting through Western painting; rather, they sought to preserve the "purity" of Chinese painting in the process of transformation.

These two camps of theories coexisted in the early Republic. The reformist group, those who advocated using methods and materials of Western painting to reform Chinese painting, gained extensive support and gradually became dominant because of the call of cultural giants Kang Youwei, Chen Duxiu, and Cai Yuanpei

[44] See chapter two for detailed discussions of Jin Cheng and Chen Shizeng's art theories.

and the echo of leading artists Xu Beihong, Liu Haisu, and Lin Fengmian (林风眠，1900–1991).

As literary historian Zhu Shoutong (朱寿桐) claimed, "When a culture becomes the mainstream and occupies the center of the society, especially when this mainstream culture forms a kind of cultural hegemony with a radical rather than gentle attitude, marginal heterogeneous cultures will unite to contend its domination."[45] After the May Fourth Movement, the Western style of painting became the fashion of the Chinese art world. Traditional Chinese painting gradually drifted into the periphery. The radical critiques and rejection of traditional art in the New Culture Movement resulted in a severe crisis of "value recognition" among the traditionalists.

It was under such circumstances that the term *guocuihua* (国粹画, painting of national essence) appeared in journalistic discussions of Chinese art in the late 1910s. It was connected to the National Essence movement of the 1900s to 1920s, an intellectual effort that sought to differentiate Chinese people and culture from the non-Chinese, formulated in response to the fear that Chinese civilization was threatened with extinction.[46] National Essence ideology urged the revitalization of native culture. It acquired a conservative aura when the first booms of the New Culture Movement were felt in 1915, and was forced into defensive and untenable positions by advocates of the New Culture Movement. Its attitudes toward Chinese

[45] Zhu Shoutong, "Shetuan unzuo yu zhongguo xinwenxue de wenpaizhiheng geju" [社团运作与中国新文学的文派制衡格局], *Shenzhen daxue xuebao* 6 (2003): 8.
[46] Julia Andrews, "Traditional Painting in New China: *Guohua* and the Anti-Rightist Campaign," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 49, no. 3 (1990): 557.

cultural heritage, however, significantly influenced the art circles of the 1920s and 1930s.[47]

Guocuihua distinguished traditional Chinese painting from oil painting, which was called *xihua* (西画) or *yanghua* (洋画, Western painting). Three articles in the journal *Fine Arts* (美术) published by the Shanghai Art Academy touched on *guocuihua*. In the first one, titled "The Origin of Painting of National Essence" (国粹画源流), the author applied *guocuihua* to painting that originated and developed in the geographic area of China throughout history, and revealed his deep pride in the Chinese painting tradition.[48] The other two articles appeared two years later and adopted a more objective and critical viewpoint toward traditional painting.[49]

Guohua was the more popular substitute for *guocuihua*. It inherited the overtly nationalistic undertone of *guocuihua* and comprised the two Chinese characters "nation" and "painting." Thus it was often translated as "native painting" or "national painting," elevating art to the status of a national symbol. As Aida Wong writes, "A consciousness of time is implicit in *guohua*, which legitimizes the continuity of the past as an answer to modern problems. More precisely, *guohua* in the early twentieth century satisfied the yearning for a diachronic unity of the old and the new in a way that Western-Style painting never presumed, as the latter offered

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[47] Laurence Schneider, "National Essence and the New Intelligentsia," in Furth, *Limits of Change,* 58–59, 88–89.
[48] Tang Xiong, "Guocuihua yuanliu" [国粹画源流], *Meishu* 1, no. 1 (1918): 35–42.
[49] Huang Zhuoran, "Baocun guocuihua yao cong gailiang rushou" [保存国粹画要从改良入手], *Meishu* 2, no. 2 (1920): 97–98; Xu Shiqi, "Wo dui guocuihua de guannian" [我对国粹画的观念], *Meishu* 2, no. 3 (1920): 104–7.

itself first and foremost as a product of the modern age."[50] Traditional artists, or *guohua* artists, thus undertook the mission—and faced the challenge—of carrying on Chinese painting traditions (the past) in a modernizing China (the present). To better confront Western influence and to promote national traditions, they chose to unite as groups or societies.

Societies of traditional artists also provided the necessary institutional tool for members to market their art and earn their living. As Julia Andrews stated, "throughout the twentieth century, private citizens organized to preserve elements of classical Chinese art, inspired by a range of personal commitments, which sometimes included cultural nationalism. The institutional structure that provided a sense of identity and some practical assistance for Chinese painters and calligraphers before 1949 was, in fact, the privately organized painting group."[51] The CPRS was one of those groups.

Institutional Support

Art societies and institutions were a popular phenomenon in China in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, among which private groups and societies that were devoted to the promotion of traditional Chinese painting occupied a significant position. The earliest was established in Shanghai in the late nineteenth century. Others followed in quick succession at various cultural and economic centers, such as Suzhou, Hangzhou, Guangzhou, and Beijing. It is estimated that almost a hundred

[50] Aida Yuen Wong, *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in Modern China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006): 13.
[51] Andrews, "Mapping Chinese Modernity," 296.

traditional painting societies (or sometimes called *guohua* societies) came into being from the 1890s through the 1920s.[52] This was caused by the professionalization of the art practice that relied to some degree on social networking. In addition to providing places for gathering and exchanges, these institutions were key in promoting the reputation and status of their members through exhibitions.[53]

Private art societies were important organizations for the preservation, promotion, and evolution of Chinese painting. As Aida Wong stated, "In an age when the collapse of the old order cast doubt on all forms of traditionalist culture, these art societies furnished the critical infrastructure for *guohua*'s survival and sustained its wide appeal, at least until the 1930s."[54]

Prior to the launching of the CPRS, many art organizations were established in Beijing. Also, several of the CPRS's leading members had acquired experience in founding art groups, either in Beijing or in Shanghai.

In 1906, Jin Cheng arrived at Beijing from Zhejiang to serve in the Ministry of Agriculture, Commerce, and Industry. He cofounded in the following year the Wusheng Poetry Society (无声诗社),[55] with Hu Junshao (胡君劭) and other friends who "are good at painting and calligraphy."[56] Jin was elected president. This society

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[52] Xu Zhihao, *Zhongguo meishu shetuan manlu* [中国美术社团漫录, A record of Chinese art societies] (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1994).
[53] Wong, *Parting the Mists*, 101.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Qin Zengrong, "Hushe yuekan baiqi jinian" [湖社月刊百期纪念序], *Hushe yuekan* 100 (1937): 2.
[56] Jin Cheng owned a seal of "President of Wusheng Poetry Society" made by artist Chen Banding (陈半丁, 1876–1970). On one side of the seal, a detailed account of Jin's participation in the society was inscribed.

was most active during 1907 and 1908 and its performance adopted the form of an "elegant gathering."

"Elegant gathering" as a long literati tradition can be traced back to *Jian'an qizi* (建安七子, Seven Scholars of Jian'an, 196–220) of the late Han dynasty. The gatherings became very popular in the Ming and Qing dynasties, when they were the favored form of intellectual and social communication. During such meetings, scholars assembled in teahouses or gardens to enjoy food and wine, compose poems, create paintings, and appreciate antiques. In the late Qing dynasty and the early Republic, artists often displayed their own works and attempted to sell them to other participants during the assemblies. Private collections of old artworks were sometimes exhibited as well. These gatherings were predecessors of formally organized modern art societies and institutions that thrived at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The founding of the Wusheng Poetry Society was the beginning of Jin Cheng's art activities in Beijing. He was then renowned among official colleagues and nobilities for his expertise in painting. The Wusheng Poetry Society had the old style of elegant gathering that had no clear purpose and organizational structure.

In 1909, the Yuyuan Calligraphy and Painting Charitable Association (豫园书画善会) was founded in Shanghai. The founders included artists of different styles and approaches, including Gao Yongzhi (高邕之), Zhang Shanzi (张善子, 1882–1940), Wu Changshi (吴昌硕, 1844－1927), Qian Hui'an (钱慧庵), and Wang Yiting

(王一亭, 1867–1938). Several artists, such as Jin Cheng, were from Jiang-Zhe families but worked in Beijing. Many members of this group were influential in other societies. Jin Cheng's experience in the Yuyuan Association prepared him for organizing his own art society.

The Yuyuan association first met in the Yu Garden, thus its name. The main activities of its members included creating art, exchanging research, and selling artworks. The association is believed to be the first painting society dedicated to raising money for charity. Its goal was to preserve the national essence and relieve suffering. All works done by the group, except calligraphy, would be collaborative. If a single hand completed a painting, a colleague would provide its inscription. Half the price of work sold would be returned to the artists. The other half would be invested in a Chinese-style bank (*qianzhuang* 钱庄). The interest was used for charitable purposes.[57] A large number of collaborative works by artists of this group still exist; many circulate in auctions.

The Xuannan Art Society (宣南画社) was founded by Yu Shaosong (余绍宋, 1883–1949) in 1915 in Beijing. Yu invited his teacher, Tang Dingzhi (汤定之, 1878–1948), to be the director. Being one of the earliest art societies in Beijing, it assembled a large number of famous artists, such as Chen Shizeng, Liang Qichao (梁启超, 1873–1929), Chen Banding, Yao Hua (姚华, 1876–1930), He Lvzhi (贺履之, 1861–1937), and Xiao Junxian (萧俊贤, 1865–1949). The society would gather once

[57] Julia Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, "Nationalism and Painting Societies of the 1930s," paper presented at the conference Urban Cultural Institutions in Early 20th Century China, April 13, 2002, published at http://mclc.osu.edu/rc/pubs/institutions/andrews.htm (accessed January 12, 2014).

per week. Although Jin Cheng did not join this society, he had a close relationship with many of its members. Several even became members of the CPRS.

The Xuannan Art Society lasted about twelve years. It was one of the longest-running art societies in Beijing. It brought together a group of artists from various places of China who had settled in Beijing. The Xuannan Art Society promoted the succession of tradition and appreciation of art works. Its regular meetings adopted and developed the style of elegant gatherings of the late Qing and the early Republic. The nature and function of the Xuannan Art Society set an institutional model for later traditionalist art societies in Beijing and elsewhere.

The Institute for Research on Chinese Painting Practice (中国画法研究会) was established by Cai Yuanpei at Beijing University on February 25, 1918. It was the product of Cai Yuanpei's ideas of aesthetic education. Its goals were "researching on painting methods, developing aesthetic education (研究画法，发展美育)."[58] Chen Shizeng was invited by Cai as Chinese painting advisor. The institute offered a set of painting classes, including landscapes, flowers, black-and-white painting, charcoal painting, watercolors, and oil painting. While landscapes and flowers belonged to *guohua*, all the other painting classes were normal classes taught in the manner of a Western-style art institution, aiming to train the students' observation and sketch skills.

The institute emphasized "education" and "research." Teachers and students would meet once or twice a month to discuss painting methods. It also held

[58] "Beda huafa yanjiuhui huizhang" [北大画法研究会会章], *Huixue zazhi* 1 (1920): 13.

exhibitions of artworks by teachers and students each semester, and encouraged them to participate in other art exhibitions outside the institute. Also, as many of its teachers were related to important figures in Beijing's literary and artistic circles, the institute often communicated with other art groups and raised funds through painting exhibitions and charity sales.[59] On June 1, 1920, the institute distributed the first issue of its journal, *Huixue zazhi* (绘学杂志, Fig. 8). Many key members of the CPRS published articles in the journal, advocating their art theories.[60]

In the early Republic, professional art education was still at its initial stage. Teaching philosophy, teaching methods, and the curriculum of modern art education were yet to be formed. Cai Yuanpei made the most successful pedagogical attempts. The curriculum practiced at the Institute for Research on Chinese Painting Practice advanced and popularized the modern sense of art education in Beijing. Chen Shizeng brought much of his experience in the institute to the founding of the CPRS.

The Opening of the Galleries of Antiquities

Throughout Chinese history, collections of ancient masterpieces had been kept in imperial or private hands, inaccessible to the general public. Siccawei Museum (徐家汇博物院, Fig. 9), a natural history museum built on the western outskirts of the French Concession by the French Jesuit priest Pierre Heude in 1868, was perhaps the

[59] Qiao Zhiqiang, *Zhongguo jindai huihua shetuan yanjiu* [中国近代绘画社团研究, Studies on art societies in modern China] (Beijing: Rongbaozhai chubanshe, 2009), 212–13.
[60] For example, Chen Shizeng contributed such articles as "Schools of Qing Dynasty Landscape" [清代山水画之派别], and two of his most important papers on Chinese art, "The Value of Literati Painting" [文人画之价值] and "Chinese Painting is Progressive" [中国画是进步的]. Jin Cheng published "Beilou on Painting" [北楼论画].

first attempt to show to the public what were once privately owned collections.[61] Before then neither imperial nor private collections in China had been displayed before a public audience. The museum was open free of charge to the public on Wednesday afternoons.

In 1905, the industrialist Zhang Jian (张謇, 1853–1926) founded the first domestically conceived and managed museum in Nantong (Fig. 10). It was also the first museum in China to include art as part of its display. Initially called *bolanguan* (博览馆, hall for the studious and adventuring eye), the Nantong Museum attempted to educate Chinese youth in the subjects of art and science and at the same time demonstrated Zhang Jian's and his fellow intellectuals' acute sensitivity toward cultural loss and the possibilities for cultural maintenance.[62]

Before founding his own museum, Zhang Jian had already twice petitioned the Qing court to establish an imperial institution in the capital, Beijing, and museums in each province. The request did not succeed and Zhang had to rely on support from his friends to build a local museum. With the downfall of the Qing dynasty in 1912, the new government paid more attention to museums. In October 1914, the Internal Affairs of the Beiyang government opened the Galleries of Antiquities (*guwu chenlie suo* 古物陈列所, Fig. 11) on the grounds of the Forbidden City. It was the first national museum, the first palace museum, and the first art museum in China. It

[61] Guo Hui, "Writing Chinese Art History in Early Twentieth-Century China" (PhD diss., Leiden University, 2010), 139.
[62] Lisa Claypool, "Zhang Jian and China's First Museum," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 64, no. 3 (2005): 567–604.

heralded the transition of the Forbidden City from an imperial palace to a public museum.

Imperial collections had always been assembled with the intention, on the one hand, to cultivate and entertain a coterie of emperors and imperial family members. On the other hand, they served as symbols of power and cultural legitimization. As such only a highly select group of people had the privilege to view the imperial collections.[63] Private collections in imperial times were also available only to their owner's intimate circle of families and friends. Artists had to rely on personal contacts for opportunities to examine any great work of art. With the opening of the Galleries of Antiquities, ancient masterpieces of superb quality were for the first time in Chinese history displayed, and in great quantity.

Since the inner court of the Forbidden City was still occupied by Puyi (溥仪, 1906–1967), the last emperor of China, it was decided that the Galleries of Antiquities should be built at the outer court of the Forbidden City. Its collections were to include antiquities and cultural relics (bronzes, ceramics, paintings, and calligraphy) from the Shenyang and Rehe palaces of the Qing court, amounting to more than 230,000 pieces (Fig. 12).[64] On October 10, 1914, the Galleries of Antiquities was officially opened to the public, with an exhibition held at Wuying Hall (武英殿, Fig. 13). The Galleries had two types of exhibitions: exhibits that

[63] Guo, "Writing Chinese Art History," 139.
[64] Song Zhaolin, *Zhongguo gongting bowuyuan zhi quanyu—Guwu chenlie suo* [中国宫廷博物院之权舆——古物陈列所] (Taibei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 2010), 32.

displayed everyday court life and those that presented art works, including paintings, bronzes, jades, ceramics, decorative arts, and so forth.[65]

The Galleries started to sell tickets for public visits the second day after its inauguration. It was recorded that over 2,000 tickets were sold that day.[66] Within twenty days of the Galleries' opening, more than 11,000 people at home and abroad came to visit the exhibition halls. Due to popular demand, Wenhua Hall (文华殿, Fig. 14) was remodeled as a showroom in 1915. As novel and attractive as the exhibits were, the Galleries' ticket price was relatively expensive for ordinary workers in Beijing, about one third of their monthly salary. Thus, at the beginning of the Galleries' opening, visitors were mostly high-income and well-educated persons such as government employees, university teachers, scholars, and business owners. This situation changed when half-price tickets (for academic communities during normal days and for the general public during holidays), military coupons (Fig. 15), and free tickets (for students and staff members of the Qinghua University) were provided by the Galleries in 1916. During the three-day holiday of National Day in 1917, the number of domestic visitors to the Galleries reached 16,000.[67]

Following the Galleries' founding, more museums and galleries were established, reaching 146 by 1937. The National Palace Museum of Beijing (国立北平故宫博物院) was inaugurated in the Forbidden City on October 10, 1925, shortly

[65] Ibid., 41.
[66] *Shen Bao* [申报], October 16, 1914.
[67] Song, *Zhongguo gongting bowuyuan zhi quanyu*, 40–41.

after the expulsion of Puyi.[68] Now the Forbidden City opened its doors fully to the public. The Nanjing Center for the Preservation of Antiques was nationalized in 1928.[69] In 1931, the museum of the National Beijing Research Institute began to display over 5,000 pieces of painting, sculpture, and calligraphy.[70] These treasures opened the eyes of the Chinese people and renewed their pride in their national heritage.

Jin Cheng, who would later serve as the president of the CPRS and who was then procurator of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, participated in the preparation of the founding of the Galleries. When studying in Britain,[71] Jin Cheng frequently visited art galleries and museums to see cultural relics and art works, evidence of his concern for art organizations and institutions in the West. He had seen plenty of Western art before returning to China, which contributed to his opinions and understanding of the similarities and differences between Chinese and Western art.

Jin Cheng's experience in Europe and America informed his proposal for the founding of the Galleries of Antiquities. Hu Qifan recounted:

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[68] Jeannette Shambaugh Elliott and David Shambaugh, *The Odyssey of China's Imperial Art Treasures* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 71.
[69] Zhuang Wenya, *Quanguo wenhua jiguan yilan* [全国文化机关一览] (Shanghai: Zhongguo chubanshe, 1934), 334–35.
[70] Ibid., 215–16.
[71] After the Hundred Days' Reform—a failed 104-day national cultural, political, and educational reform movement in 1898 in the late Qing dynasty—and the invasion of the Eight-Power Allied Forces, the late Qing government realized the importance of learning Western technologies and political systems. Thus, large numbers of students were sent out to study and travel abroad and to bring back useful knowledge from the West and Japan. Jin Cheng was one of them. See chapter two for a detailed account of his life.

> During his incumbency as the consultant to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, [Jin Cheng] with his profound knowledge in museology proposed the establishment of the Galleries of Antiquities. The proposition was immediately accepted and [Jin Cheng] was appointed as the administrative head. [He] adopted the conventions of Euro-American museums, blending those with China's own cultural traditions, and founded the first public gallery in Chinese history. This is a great contribution to the preservation, management and promotion of national cultural relics as well as to the prevention of cultural losses and damages.[72]

Jin Cheng's knowledge and understanding of Western museums was also reflected in the records of the Ministry of Internal Affairs about the founding of the Galleries. The ministry commented in its October 1912 decree that museums in European and American countries that held great collections of rare arts and objects not only showcased the power of their manufacture but also preserved their artistic traditions. Their people could thus create and invent new things based on inherited traditions. China, on the other hand, had the longest history in the world and all kinds of great treasures, yet was unable to protect and preserve its national heritage. This was a shame to all Chinese people.[73] These words echoed what Jin Cheng observed and lamented in his *Travel Diary of Eighteen Countries* (十八国游历日记).

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[72] Hu Qifan 胡岂凡, *Jinxiandai shuhua mingjia xuanjie* [近现代书画名家选介, Selective introduction to modern artists] (Taibei: Jiuyi shuhua chubanshe, 1985), 306–7.
[73] Zhongguo Dier Lishi Dang'anguan, "Neiwubu sheli guwu chenliesuo youguan wenjian" [内务部设立古物陈列所有关文件], in *Zhonghua minguoshi dang'an ziliao huibian* [中华民国史档案资料汇编], vol. 3 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1991), 268.

Jin Cheng made great contributions to the Galleries of Antiquities. He assisted Zhu Qiqian (朱启钤, 1872–1964, then the minister of Internal Affairs) in founding the Galleries and was in charge of some specific projects. He proposed to Zhu in 1913 that the Galleries be set up to collect and exhibit imperial artworks following the example of the Louvre, in France.[74] He was also responsible for the reconstruction of Wuying Hall as a showroom, and was involved in many aspects, from contract negotiation to construction supervision.

Jin drew from museums in Western Europe for the basic regulations of the Galleries. For example, exhibits were displayed according to categories (Fig. 16). He also suggested that the Galleries invite archaeologists from China and abroad to decide on the names of the exhibited objects as well as their catalogue entries in both Chinese and English.[75] This suggestion resembled the modern Western museum practices he had witnessed on his visits abroad.

Jin Cheng also proposed making copies of paintings and calligraphy by ancient masters. As ancient paintings were unable to be reproduced once damaged, he recommended making two copies of each work—one to display in the Galleries and the other to store somewhere else—and the original work being treasured and archived forever.[76] Both Jin Cheng and some other members of the CPRS were engaged in the copying, according to surviving replications, such as Yu Ming (俞

[74] Qiu Minfang, "Minchu beifang huatan lingxiu: Jincheng shengping yu yishi" [民初北方画坛领袖: 金城生平与艺事], *Lishi wenwu* 3, no. 15 (2005): 84–85.
[75] "Jin Gongbei xiansheng shelve" [金拱北先生事略], *Hushe yuekan* 1–10 (1927–28): 3.
[76] Qiu, "Minchu beifang huatan lingxiu," 84–85.

明)'s copy of *Double Flute* (并笛图, Fig. 17) by Yuan dynasty artist Qian Xuan (钱选, 1239–1301).[77]

Other leading figures of the CPRS also made great contributions to or played critical roles in the development of the Galleries. For example, Zhou Zhaoxiang, another leading figure of the society, succeeded as the director of the Galleries of Antiquities in 1926. In 1927, with the permission of the Internal Affairs department, the Committee for the Authentication of Cultural Relics (文物鉴定委员会) was founded in the Galleries. Zhou served as the chairman. The Committee began to research the origins of cultural relics that were divided into four groups: painting and calligraphy, epigraphy, ceramics, and miscellaneous.[78] Zhou also launched "*Guohua* Study Room" (国画研究室) in the Galleries to study and copy famous ancient Chinese paintings and train numerous traditional artists (Fig. 18).

The opening of the Galleries of Antiquities made accessible a large collection of Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing paintings to the public. It exhibited a concise history of Chinese painting for the public to view. Artists and art historians thus had a chance to construct or confirm their theories of Chinese art history and find a way to innovate on the basis of tradition. For example, both Chen Shizeng's article "Different Schools of the Qing Flower Painting" (清代花卉之派别), published in 1920, and He Lvzhi's article "Kuigong on painting" (篑公论画), benefitted from

[77] The copy has Jin Cheng's inscription on it.
[78] Song, *Zhongguo gongting bowuyuan zhi quanyu*, 50.

visits to the Galleries.[79] Chen noted specifically in his article that he was able to differentiate and summarize various schools of flower painting by closely examining paintings housed in Wenhua Hall. He Lvzhi described his experience visiting the Wenhua Hall and appreciating paintings by various masters from the Song dynasty to the Qing dynasty. It became a routine activity for members of the CPRS to view ancient paintings exhibited and collected in the Galleries. They diligently studied the styles of ancient masters under the pursuit of the CPRS's mission, "careful research on ancient methods," a practice made possible by the availability of the elite art collections in the Galleries.

1.2 The Chinese Painting Research Society: A View from Within

As part of the larger historical and cultural developments discussed above, the CPRS was established in Beijing in 1920 (Fig. 19). *Chenbao* (晨报, the Morning Post) recorded this event on May 30, 1920:

> The Chinese Painting Research Society held its first meeting in the Shidazi Temple at 3:00 p.m. yesterday (May 29). More than thirty people attended the meeting, all of whom are famous artists. Sir Jin Cheng was selected as the president. It is said that the Society will meet regularly on the 3rd, 6th, and 9th of each month. Famous

[79] Both articles were published in *Hushe yuekan* [湖社月刊]: 11–20 (1928–29): 23 and 23 (1929): 8, respectively.

paintings and calligraphy were hung in the meeting hall for people to examine and appreciate.[80]

Wang Yichang in his *1947 China Art Yearbook* elaborated the reason for the CPRS's founding and its importance to the preservation and development of Chinese painting.

> Painting is one of the most important cultures of the East. China has a long and prosperous history of painting. However, it has been declining ever since the Qing Dynasty, and waned even more in the early Republic. When international exhibitions request paintings from China, nothing can be submitted. Zhou Zhaoxiang and Jin Shaocheng (i.e., Jin Cheng), together with He Liangpu, Chen Hengke (i.e., Chen Shizeng), Xiao Sun (萧愻, 1883–1944), Chen Handi (陈汉第, 1874–1949), Xu Zonghao (徐宗浩, 1880–1957), and Tao Rong (陶瑢, 1872–1927) sought to save and develop Chinese painting. That was the reason for the founding of the Chinese Painting Research Society. Supported by President Xu Shichang (徐世昌, 1855–1939, in office 1918–1922), the society was set up in Beijing in May 1920, its purpose being "*jingyan gufa, bocai xinzhi* (精研古法，博采新知, careful research on ancient methods and broad acquisition of new knowledge).[81]

[80] *Chenbao*, May 30, 1920.
[81] Wang Yichang, ed., *Zhonghua minguo sanshiliu nian meishu nianjian* [中华民国三十六年美术年鉴] (Shanghai: Shanghaishi wenhua yundong weiyuanhui, 1948), 16.

Through the CPRS's regular meetings and other art activities, numerous artists were united under its stated mission *jingyan gufa, bocai xinzhi*. It brought a semblance of order to Beijing's notoriously "loose and disorganized" art world.

Around the time of the CPRS's founding, many art groups focusing on traditional art had existed in Beijing. But they either expired, or were small, or were "just for amusement."[82] When Japanese artist Watanabe Shimpō (1867–1938) was introduced in 1918 to Jin Cheng and Yan Shiqing (颜世清, 1873–1929) through Bansai Rihachirō (1870–1950),[83] Jin, Yan, and Zhou Zhaoxiang felt the urge to build an organized art society, as they feared that it would be difficult to mobilize the "loose and disorganized" artists in Beijing.[84] After its establishment, the CPRS kept a close relationship with Japanese artists. Four Sino-Japanese exhibitions followed the founding of the CPRS. Aside from the importance of these four exhibitions, we must keep in mind that although the joint exhibitions provided the trigger for the CPRS's establishment, the heated debate on Chinese painting's tradition and reform in Beijing was the decisive reason for its formation.

Wang Yichang in his *1947 China Art Yearbook* summarized the following features of the Chinese Painting Research Society:[85]

(1) It held a proper and timely aim, that of preserving national essence.

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[82] Jin Kaifan and Jin Kaihua, "Huigu" [回顾], *Hushe yuekan* 34 (1930): 14.
[83] Bansai was the former military consul of Yuan Shikai (袁世凯, 1859–1916), the first President of the Republic of China.
[84] Ran Xi, "Dongfang huihua xiehui yuanshi keshu" [东方绘画协会原始客述], *Yilin xunkan* 62 (September 1929): 2.
[85] Wang, *Zhonghua minguo sanshiliu nian meishu nianjian*, 17.

(2) It sought to cultivate talented artists for the country and to support the living of its members.

(3) It offered free admission and lifelong membership.

(4) It held regular meetings every month for more than twenty years. It provided individualized advising for the members that made them improve rapidly on painting skills.

(5) Advisors and students encouraged and supported each other like families.

(6) It offered full assistance to any artists, art groups, or charities seeking help.

(7) It maintained an artistic dignity and a moderate attitude toward all parties.

(8) It launched a book club for research conducted by members and non-members.

Wang's yearbook was edited in 1947, twenty-seven years after the founding of the society. His summary was on the whole a proper reflection of the society's creation and evolution. When the CPRS was established, it had over thirty members. The number soon reached over two hundred with the effort of Zhou Zhaoxiang, Jin Cheng, and Chen Shizeng.[86] No admission fee was required, and members received lifelong membership once they joined the organization. The CPRS was undoubtedly the largest *guohua* group in Beijing, and supplied numerous *guohua* professionals to various art schools in Beijing. Many of its advisors concurrently taught Chinese painting in other art schools and universities in Beijing, including Beijing Art Academy and Jinghua Art School. Members of the group who had graduated from

[86] "Jin Gongbei xiansheng shilve" [金拱北先生事略], *Hushe yuekan* 1–10 (1927–28): 5.

these institutions would also teach in art schools. The society's art propositions were thus broadly disseminated in Beijing's art circle. Female members were not unusual in the CPRS. On multiple occasions *Yilin yuekan* published and reported photos and activities of its female members (Fig. 20).

There have been conflicting ideas regarding the leadership of the society. Some sources indicate that Jin Cheng was the president.[87] But Wang Yichang in his yearbook stated that the president was Zhou Zhaoxiang, and Jin Cheng was the vice president.[88] Yun Xuemei in her recent study asserts a third opinion, that Jin Cheng was the original president but ceded his title to Zhou Zhaoxiang, whom President Xu Shichang regarded highly and had a close relationship with. Although Jin would remain the actual leader, he took the lesser position as deputy president. Xu was awarded an honorary directorship because of his financial sponsorship of the institution.[89] He allocated funds from part of the Japanese remission of the Boxer Indemnity.[90] In any case, we can be sure that Zhou Zhaoxiang served as president after Jin's death.

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[87] *Chenbao*, May 30, 1920: "Sir Jin Cheng was selected as the president."
[88] Wang, *Zhonghua minguo sanshiliu nian meishu nianjian*, 17.
[89] Yun Xuemei, "Minguo shiqi de liangge jingpai meishu shetuan" [民国时期的两个京派美术社团, The two Beijing art societies in the Republican period], *Shoucangjia* 49 (Nov. 2000): 25–30.
[90] The Boxer Rebellion was a violent uprising around 1900 in northern China against the spread of Western and Japanese influence, led by a Chinese secret organization called the Society of the Righteous and Harmonious Fists. The rebels were referred to by Westerners as boxers. The movement spread to the Beijing area in 1900 and started a siege of Beijing's foreigner legation district. On August 14, 1900, the Eight-Nation Alliance (Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) captured Beijing, lifting the siege of the legation district. Uncontrolled plunder of the capital and the surrounding countryside ensued. In 1901, the Boxer Protocol was signed between the Qing government and the Eight-Nation Alliance, in which the Qing Empire was asked to pay 450 million taels of fine silver as indemnity. During and after the first World War, most of the countries of the Eight-Nation Alliance remitted their shares of the indemnity.

The sudden death of Jin Cheng in 1926 precipitated changes. Jin Cheng's son Jin Kaifan (金开藩, 1895–1946) left the society and established a splinter group named the Hu Society (湖社), out of respect for his father, whose informal name included the character *hu*. Although the two organizations competed with each other in many ways, they were closely tied to each other. Both were influential art societies that promoted *guohua*, both were supported by political and cultural elites in Beijing, and both maintained a close relationship with Japan.

A large portion of members of the CPRS can be regarded as scholar-officials or scholar-gentry of the Republic: they held office in the government, and were at the same time well versed in traditional painting. They played a major role in improving the group's social reputation and in winning support from every social circle. The bureaucratic background of its key members was a distinguishing feature of the CPRS. It helped to attract and unite numerous Beijing artists to join the group and campaign for *guohua*.

As stated earlier, the fifth president of the Republican government, Xu Shichang, financially sponsored the CPRS (Fig. 21). Xu maintained a strong interest in Chinese cultural traditions throughout his life. He was an art lover and collector, and was known as a poet, calligrapher, and landscape painter. He participated in several of the CPRS's member achievement exhibitions. His works were often published in the CPRS's journals (Fig. 22).

Many other leading members had also served in the early stage of the Republican government. Jin Cheng was an officer in the Ministry of Internal Affairs

and later became a Congressman and then secretary of State Affairs. Zhou Zhaoxiang served in various posts within the government of the Republic. He had been police commissioner in Shenyang, governor of Province Hunan, member of the State Council, and director of the Galleries of Antiquities. He kept a close personal relationship with Xu Shichang. Chen Handi was once the secretary-general of the State Council. Tao Rong served as secretary of the Ministry of Finance. He Lvzhi held a post in the Postal Department.[91] Chen Shizeng did not serve in the Republican government, but he was born in an official family. His father Chen Sanli (陈三立, 1853–1937) was a famous poet of late Qing, and held a post in succession in the Ministry of War and Ministry of Education.

The CPRS comprised president (会长), vice president (副会长), advisors (评议员), general members (一般会员), and students (研究员／学员). The president was in charge of the whole society, with one vice president assisting him in various institutional affairs. An administrator was hired years later, helping the president and vice president in the expansion of the CPRS. Advisors were the core of the society. They were responsible for research and the curriculum, aided by teaching assistants (助教) that were selected from outstanding students (Fig. 23). The aforementioned founding members in Wang Yichang's account were at the same time advisors of the CPRS. Besides them, the famous collector and painter Yan Shiqing, bird and flower painter Yang Guanru (杨冠如), and Jin Cheng's sister Jin Zhang (金章, 1884–1939, Fig. 24) were CPRS advisors as well. Newly enrolled members were also called

[91] Lv Peng, *Hushe yanjiu* [湖社研究] (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2009), 31.

students. “Regardless of gender, students need to be introduced by those with legitimate careers and that are capable of painting. Their works will be examined for admission. After five years of study, qualified students will get certificates and advance to teaching assistants.”[92]

Members of the society met regularly five or six times each month. With “careful research on ancient methods” as the guideline, students drew from paintings of ancient masters as well as of their advisors. By constant copying, they developed an in-depth understanding of the theories and techniques of Chinese painting.

Advisors taught either by group or individually. Group teaching was held regularly and had the dual function of instructing and exchanging. “Famous paintings and calligraphy were hung in the meeting hall for people to examine and appreciate,”[93] including ancient masterpieces and works by advisors. Group teaching adopted the traditional form of the elegant gathering—with advisors and students gathered to discuss and learn from each other. Many advisors were renowned art collectors as well. Thus paintings presented for examination during the meetings were most likely high quality works. Individual teaching was conducted in a one-on-one, “master and apprentice” mode. Subject matter in the course work included figure, landscape, bird and flower, and *jiehua* (界画, architecture painting, also called “boundary painting”—accurate depictions of architectural forms with the aid of a ruler).

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[92] Liang desuo, *Jindai zhongguo yishu fazhanshi-huihua* [近代中国艺术发展史——绘画] (Shanghai: Liangyou tushu yinshu gongsi, 1936), 33.
[93] *Chenbao*, May 30, 1920.

The society's teaching philosophy and methods revealed their emphasis on preserving and studying ancient painting techniques. Works of its members adopted both *gongbi* (工笔, skillful brushwork, interchangeable with *xieshi* in this discussion) and *xieyi* styles in their works. Resulting works in both types of styles displayed a solid foundation of skills. Advisors employed mainly the literati painting style of the Yuan and Ming dynasties, while teaching assistants and students focused on *xieshi* style of Song and Yuan dynasty paintings. These works thus displayed the flavor of the realistic *gongbi* approach.

The emergence of the CPRS was not an accidental phenomenon but the inevitable result of a confluence of social, cultural, and institutional factors. First of all, the appeal of Western-style painting exerted enormous pressure on traditional artists. Western-style art schools were established throughout China. Famous artists of the Beijing *guohua* world were invited to teach in those institutes and schools. Traditional artists in Beijing felt threatened by the overwhelming adoption of Western influenced techniques. They determined that it was time to unite and preserve China's native artistic tradition. Second, the opening of the Galleries of Antiquities provided invaluable opportunities for traditional artists to examine ancient masterpieces face-to-face. This was a prerequisite for the society to achieve its stated mission. Last but not the least, the rise of art societies in the very early twentieth century set precedents for the establishment of the CPRS. The CPRS's close connections with several

famous art societies of the time provided foundational experience for its leading members.

The Chinese Painting Research Society attracted the most famous traditional artists and collectors of the time and recruited a large number of members and students. Under its stated aim "careful research on ancient methods and broad acquisition of new knowledge," the CPRS cultivated a large group of *guohua* artists that were totally committed to the preservation and promotion of the most valuable elements in the Chinese art tradition in which they themselves were trained and from which they emerged.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Foundations:

Art and Theories of Leading Members of the Chinese Painting Research Society

Chapter one discussed the external factors—the social, cultural, and political context—that facilitated and promoted the founding of the Chinese Painting Research Society. It explained why the genesis of such a society was necessary and inevitable. This chapter, on the other hand, examines artistic theories and dispositions of key members of the society.

By delving into the lives and art of three principal artists—Jin Cheng, Zhou Zhaoxiang, and Chen Shizeng—all of whom were founding members of the CPRS, this chapter investigates the theoretical foundation that motivated this alliance of artists to preserve and promote the Chinese artistic tradition. It further answers questions such as how to understand the way traditional artists in Beijing approached Chinese painting. Rather than dismissing them as stifling conservatives who were trying to return to the "good old days," this paper argues that we should take their adoption of a traditional painting manner as a matter of deliberate choice, a spontaneous response to the challenge of Western art, and one that looked forward, not backward. The three leaders' theory and practice guided the society members' approach to art. Their propositions echoed throughout the work of many traditional artists in Beijing and thus had a great impact on the art world there.

2.1 Jin Cheng: "To Grasp Ancient Methods and Breed Novelties"

Jin Cheng (originally name Shaocheng 绍城; *zi*, Gongbei 拱北; *hao*, Beilou 北楼) was one of the critical figures in twentieth-century Beijing artistic circles (Fig. 1). A native of Wuxing in Zhejiang province, Jin Cheng came from a wealthy family of officials. At an early age he underwent classical training in, among other subjects, calligraphy, poetry, and painting, and he was well versed in Confucian studies as preparation for the imperial examination.

It was only after he failed the imperial examination and when Chinese officials and scholars realized the importance of importing Western knowledge that Jin Cheng was sent by his father Jin Tao (金焘, ?–1914) to Europe. In 1902, at the age of twenty-four, Jin Cheng traveled to England and attended King's College (one of the sixteen colleges of the University of London) to study in the School of Political Economy. Although this set the trajectory of his career toward politics, he spent every possible free minute to visit various museums and art galleries to observe and learn from Western art collections. He graduated within two years and toured other European countries to experience varieties in art and culture. Jin Cheng then traveled to America before returning to China in 1905, when he became an official of the judicial system in Shanghai. Two years later, he was relocated to Beijing and served in the Business Division of the Department of Agriculture and Commerce.[94]

[94] For further biographical information on Jin Cheng see Chu-tsing Li and Wan Qingli, *Zhongguo xiandai huihua shi: Minchu zhi bu, 1911–1949* [Modern Chinese painting history: Republican period, 1911–1949] (Taibei: Rock Publishing International, 2001), 68–70; Yu Jianhua, *Zhongguo meishu renming cidian* [Biographical dictionary of famous Chinese artists] (Shanghai: Renmin meishu

In 1910, Jin Cheng was dispatched as the Chinese representative to the Eighth Ten-Thousand-Nation Jail Reform Conference of America (美洲万国监狱改良会) at Washington, D.C. He took this opportunity to take a second trip around the world. After the conference, he crossed the Atlantic and traveled to England, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Serbia, Romania, Turkey, Greece, Italy, and Switzerland to study their judicial and prison trial systems. He also took time to visit local museums, cultural relic agencies, historical sites, churches, palaces, zoos, and botanical gardens—driven by his keen interest in learning from Western art and institutional practices. From 1910 to 1911 Jin Cheng wrote *Travel Diary of Eighteen Countries*. In the diary, he recorded many of his visits to museums, describing curious objects and interesting exhibitions he saw, and he lamented the loss of Chinese imperial cultural relics to countries overseas. Notes on famous Western art and artworks also constituted a large part of his diary.[95]

After the founding of the Republic in 1911, Jin Cheng served as the Secretary of State Affairs, and was in charge of establishing the first gallery to exhibit the cultural relics that had been collected by the Qing imperial family, the Galleries of Antiquities. This opportunity enabled him to gain a deeper understanding of Chinese tradition and a continued appreciation of its value in the process of China's modernization.

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chubanshe, 1987), 554–55; and Siu Wai-man, "A Study of Jin Cheng (1878–1926)" (PhD diss., The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2001), 37–63.

[95] Jin Cheng, *Travel Diary of Eighteen Countries*, in Jindai zhongguo shiliao congkan xubian [近代中国史料丛刊续编], vol. 205, ed. Shen Yunlong (Taibei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1976).

When he was young, Jin Cheng began to take interest in painting, and took every chance to practice after school hours. He specialized first in landscape painting, in which he gained a great reputation. His later work in birds, flowers, and animals was equally excellent. Jin Cheng was also known for his ancient calligraphy, both in writing and in seal carving, and for his general art connoisseurship.[96]

Jin Cheng's interest and aptitude in art was due to several factors. Wuxing's cultural legacy was a critical part. Many famous artists in Chinese history were born there, such as Yuan Dynasty artists Qian Xuan (钱选, 1239–1301), Zhao Mengfu (赵孟頫, 1254–1322), and Wang Meng (王蒙, 1308–1385). Wuxing was also the home town for several prominent art connoisseurs and collectors, including Lu Xinyuan (陆心源, 1834–1894) and Pang Yuanji (庞元济, 1864–1949). His father, Jin Tao, also built a rich collection of artworks and was good at painting himself. And through him, Jin Cheng had privileged access to all the great ancient masterpieces collected by local scholars.

When he became a government official in Shanghai and Beijing, Jin Cheng got the opportunity to know and communicate with local artists, thereby entering art circles in Shanghai and Beijing. Jin Cheng's capability in painting was even recognized by emperor Puyi, who bestowed upon him a plaque inscribed "Exemplar of Landscape" (模山范水).[97]

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[96] John C. Ferguson, "Obituary: Kungpah T. King," *China Journal of Science and Arts* 5, no. 4 (October 1926): 163.
[97] "Jin Gongbei xiansheng shilue" [金拱北先生事略], *Hushe yuekan* 1–10 (1927–28): 2.

Qin Zhongwen (秦仲文, 1896–1974), Jin Cheng's student, commented on his teacher's skill in painting:

> [Jin Cheng]'s landscape first imitated the fine brushwork of Dai Xi (戴熙, 1801–1860) and was close to Lu Hui (陆恢, 1851–1920). But he was never constrained to a single style. He favored copying old masters. Every time he encountered an ancient masterpiece, he copied it, sometimes more than once or twice. Jin Cheng devoted his whole life to studying painting and died at an early age of less than fifty. He left about two or three hundred fine copies…. Beyond landscape painting, he was also well versed in figures and bird and flowers. He strived to achieve innovation in his painting, but that was unfortunately obstructed by his short life. People often say that he can only copy but not innovate—that is not true.[98]

Jin Cheng's ideas on painting are preserved mainly in his writings "Beilou's Comments on Painting" (北楼论画) and "Lectures on the Study of Painting" (画学讲义)," and a few of his painting inscriptions.

"Beilou's Comments on Painting," originally called "Lecture Notes of Jin Gongbei" (金拱北讲演录), was the written form of a lecture he gave in 1920 to the Institute for Research on Chinese Painting Practice at Beijing University.[99] It clarified the pros and cons of *gongbi* and *xieyi*, and treated *gongbi* as the peak of Chinese painting. Jin Cheng called for the art world to reestablish the orthodox position of

[98] Qin Zhongwen, "Jindai zhongguo huajia yu huapai" [近代中国画家与画派], *Meishu yanjiu* 4 (1959): 29.
[99] Jin Cheng, "Beilou lunhua" [北楼论画], *Hushe yuekan* 1–10 (1927–28): 16–20.

gongbi and to carry forward the great artistic tradition of *gongbi* style. He thus hoped to encourage contemporary Chinese artists to inherit and promote the serious and meticulous aspect of Chinese painting so as to contend with the impact of Western art.

Jin Cheng in this writing divided the history of Chinese painting into roughly three periods: the first from the ancient era to the Han dynasty; the second from the Jin period to the Yuan dynasty; and the third from the Ming dynasty to the present. He considered the first period to be the embryonic stage of Chinese painting. As few paintings were left from this period, bronzes, jades, and steles became important evidence to understand art of that time. Jin Cheng pointed out that figure painting from this period had made some progress in line drawing and modeling; landscape was yet to develop, quite naïve as seen from unearthed Eastern Han murals. He inferred from literary records that everything—be it figure or object, mountain or water—was described meticulously to lifelike forms, as painting then was a substitute for language and words. Jin Cheng compared Chinese painting of this period to that of Rome (which he was able to see during his European travels) for their lifelike appearance.

Jin Cheng deemed the second period to represent the flourishing of Chinese painting. Three factors contributed to this prosperity: exquisiteness of ink, brush, paper, and silk; support from the imperial families; and the establishment of imperial art academies during the Tang and Song dynasties. Representatives of various painting subjects (flower, water, fire, goose, dragon) emerged, which marked the peak of *gongbi* representations. However, painting in the Song and Yuan dynasties

gradually shifted from *gongbi* to *xieyi* style. This phenomenon originated from the introduction of poetry and calligraphy into painting by great masters such as Su Shi (苏轼, 1037–1101), Mi Fu (米芾, 1051–1107), Zhao Mengfu, and Ni Zan (倪瓒, 1301–1374).

The transformation from *gongbi* to *xieyi* marked the division between the second and third periods in Jin Cheng's opinion. He took this transformation as a natural evolution. He pointed out that the real reason for the degeneration of Chinese painting since the Ming and Qing dynasties was that it lost the spirit of copying and learning from nature. He indicated that the purpose of copying ancient masters was to return to the *gongbi* spirit of Tang and Song painting in the second period. Jin Cheng at the end of the lecture proposed three elements for the study of painting: to learn from nature; to research ancient masters; and to experiment with one's own ideas while enriching oneself through constant reading. Although these concepts had been stated in traditional painting theories, Jin Cheng's reemphasis of them in an era when Chinese painting lost its direction revitalized the atmosphere of traditional Chinese painting.

"Lectures on the Study of Painting" was a lengthy article composed in 1921 for the purpose of instructing members of the CPRS.[100] It contained two parts. The first discussed four subjects of painting: figures, animals, flowers, and landscapes, with emphasis on the last two. It then went on to introduce painting tools such as paper, silk, and brush. Inscriptions and mounting were also mentioned. In the second

[100] Jin Cheng, "Lectures on the Study of Painting" [画学讲义], in *Hualun congkan*, ed. Yu Anlan (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1960).

part, Jin Cheng employed landscape painting as the focus, elaborating his artistic views, including retention and change, void and substance, new and old, literati painting and professional painting, brushwork, spirit resonance (气韵), and artistic conception (意境). The article covered a broad scope of subjects in painting and thus served as good teaching material for Jin Cheng's instructions to members of the CPRS. Jin Cheng's art theories represented in the article can be summarized as follows:

First, he emphasized the importance of "studying masters," "studying nature," and "self-innovation" and their inevitable interrelations. This idea was a restatement of the three elements he had mentioned at the end of his article "Beilou's Comments on Painting." It demonstrated his determination and confidence to inherit and develop the Chinese painting tradition. As Jin Cheng stated:

> To study painting requires both retention and change. One cannot paint without learning from old masters. But if one slavishly sticks to old rules, he cannot paint either. Only those who study tradition without blindly obeying it can become real masters. Many solo exhibitions of contemporary artists displayed hundreds of their paintings. Yet only by looking at two or three of the artworks, one can detect how the others look. This is because that the artists did not learn from the old masters. Their works are thus reduced to stereotypes with no variations. There are also artists who attempt to study ancient masterpieces. Their works look exactly like the ones they copy from, no personal styles inserted. These artists simply swallow the tradition without digesting it. Their paintings are thus no different than camera-produced

> images. Wang Shigu combined both Northern and Southern Schools of painting. He copied Song and Yuan dynasty paintings while maintaining his own style. That's why he combined the merits of all sages and became a great master himself.[101]

In Jin Cheng's opinion, studying masters was the foundation of painting. Studying nature was the next level of that foundation. Self-innovation was the final step, which could be achieved only by accomplishing the other two.

Second, Jin Cheng advocated the idea that "there is no old and new in painting." He believed that everything in the world could be divided into the old and the new. Yet in painting, it is hard for one to determine which one is new and which is old. He argued:

> All affairs in the world can be discussed as old or new, but the endeavor of painting is different, for its works cannot be simply characterized as old or new. In our country from the Tang dynasty until now, what period has been without its eminent masters? These famous people did not become famous by disparaging their predecessors' paintings as outdated; rather, they kept faith with the path of the ancients and perpetuated the intentions of the ancients. They were well aware that there is no such thing as old versus new; rather, what is new is also old, because when the old is transformed, its oldness is also new. If one sticks to mere novelty,

[101] Ibid., 722.

> then what is new will also be old. If you bear in mind that there exist both the old and the new, you will find it difficult to follow any rules when you paint.[102]

Thus to achieve "new," one has to put new spirit in it. Jin Cheng in this writing emphasized the periodicity of history. Everything that once was old would eventually become new again. Ancient rules and practice should be reintroduced to reinvigorate the present. New trends would eventually be outdated as their ideas become staid and unchallenging. Therefore one must discard the ideas of old and new to pursue the "rules" of painting.[103] For Jin Cheng such rules included the use of structured brushwork and careful study of earlier masters. This idea was forwarded against the fervent discard of tradition and wholesale Westernization in the early Republic. As tradition came under severe attack and Western ideas were exalted, Jin Cheng's insistence on "achieving the new through the old" was unique and meaningful to his contemporary artists. In an age when "reform equals Westernization," he made a distinct contribution to the healthy development of Chinese painting by advocating "innovation out of tradition." In his painting practice, Jin Cheng strived to study ancient painting theories and rules and apply them in his own artistic creations.

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[102] Ibid., 736. Translation revised from Lv Peng, *A History of Art in 20th Century China* (New York: Charter Books, 2010), 139.
[103] Stephen Little et al., *New Songs on Ancient Tunes: 19th–20th Century Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy from the Richard Fabian Collection* (Honolulu: Honolulu Academy of Arts, 2007), 409.

Although Jin Cheng had immersed himself in foreign culture in his travels to Europe and America, it was to his own national traditions that he always returned. As Jin Cheng stated:

> There is no artist in the history of Chinese art that is famous for his "unconventional" ideas (*techuang* 特创). Copiers and plagiarists are disgraceful, but those that strike out on a totally new path are not necessarily right.[104]

> China's thousand-year-old artistic tradition is admired by the whole world. Those ignorant youths, however, not only pay no attention to the preservation and development of our national essence, but also advance "art revolution" and "art betrayal" instead. Won't they feel ashamed after nights of self-contemplation?[105]

Jin Cheng's opinions represented the attitude of most National Essence artists at the time. They believed that the reform of Chinese painting should be based on the tradition of ancient art. Huang Binhong, one of the leading figures of the National Essence movement and a typical Chinese literati artist, insisted, "there have been three thousand years since the tradition of painting began in Chinese civilization. The foremost desideratum in a painting is its brush-and-ink. One cannot talk about Chinese painting without brush-and-ink."[106] He also declared, "if Chinese scholars do not reexamine themselves but only worry about others' strong points, they will limit

[104] Jin, "Lectures on the Study of Painting," 735.
[105] Ibid., 736.
[106] Huang, "Guohua jichu yaoyi," 743.

their own progress; if they do not study their own tradition earnestly, they will not maintain the honor of their tradition."[107]

Third, Jin Cheng valued "painter's painting" while not discarding "literati painting." Different from previous and contemporary scholars who strictly differentiated between the two, approving one or the other, he acknowledged the importance of the realistic *gongbi* painting, which he considered the right way to revitalize Chinese painting; yet at the same time, he affirmed the unique advantages and contributions of literati painting, advocating the necessity of self-cultivation. He continuously attempted to synthesize *gongbi* and *xieyi* in his work to form an ideal art format.

Fourth, Jin Cheng advocated the synthesis of Southern and Northern Schools of painting. Jin Cheng was termed by Chen Xiaodie (陈小蝶) to be the "orthodox of the Southern School of Painting."[108] However, besides learning from the Southern School of painting, he touched on the Northern style as well. He praised Northern School painters for their solid foundation and called for the followers of the Southern School to incorporate the Northern style. Only by integrating the two, he affirmed, could one perceive the true spirit of Song and Yuan dynasty painting. Many of Jin Cheng's landscapes assimilated the techniques of the Northern School, especially evident in his hard and cliffy rocks.

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[107] Huang, "Zhi zhi yi wen shuo," 6.
[108] Chen Xiaodie, "Cong meizhan zuopin ganjue dao xiandai guohua huapai" [从美展作品感觉到现代国画画派], *Meizhan* 4 (1929): 2.

These art theories were well represented in Jin Cheng's art. The earliest extant painting by him is a set of 1905 landscapes (discussed later in this chapter). From then till his death, in 1926, Jin Cheng's painting style remained roughly the same. Throughout those twenty-one years, Jin Cheng at once copied from old masterpieces, drew from nature, and made his own creations.

Jin Cheng strongly advocated constant studying and copying of ancient masters as the basic approach to revitalizing the outmoded orthodoxy of late Qing painting. He sought to perpetuate literati painting through mastery of the "three supremacies" of poetry, painting, and calligraphy.[109] As we have mentioned, the opening of the Galleries of Antiquities offered a new resource for artists in Beijing to study traditional Chinese painting. Jin Cheng, one of the most important contributors to this institution, benefited greatly from it as well. He had plenty of time and opportunity to study and copy rare masterpieces in the Galleries' collection. "[Jin Cheng] would sit and lie alongside the paintings with his pen in hand all day long, copying and imitating all of them, which resulted in enormous progress of his art."[110] Jin Cheng spent so much time in the Galleries that the person in charge of the Wuying Hall set a table for him to use specifically for copying. He would borrow a painting from the collection, copy it, return it, and exchange it for another one. Some of the paintings he copied more than once or twice. Qin Zhongwen mentioned that the

[109] Kuiyi Shen, "Traditional Painting in a Transitional Era, 1900–1950," in *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China*, ed. Julia Andrews and Kuiyi Shen (New York: Henry N. Abrams, 1998), 87.
[110] Chen Baochen, "Jin Beilou xiansheng muzhiming" [金北楼先生墓志铭], *Hushe yuekan* 24 (Nov. 1929): 9.

number of "exact copies" (临) Jin Cheng made were around two hundred or three hundred.[111] Regrettably, many of these copies are now lost.

Jin Cheng's 1916 painting *Imitating Bird and Flower Paintings from the Yuan Dynasty* (Fig. 25) is an exact copy of the bird and flower painting by Yuan dynasty artist Bian Lu (边鲁), *Living Peacefully* (起居平安图, Fig. 26). Bian Lu inherited from the Song dynasty court style features such as accurate modeling and meticulous drawing of bird and flower painting, and integrated them with the ink-and-brush technique of literati painting. This style marked a new change in Chinese bird and flower painting history. Bian Lu was thus recorded as "good at ink bird and flowers." In Bian Lu's painting, a beautiful long-tail pheasant looks out from a craggy rock by the lake, about to jump off. The orientation of its posture and that of the rock create a vivid balance in the painting. Wolfberries and bamboos stretch out from the rock, respectively signifying "living" and "peace," thus the name of the painting. Jin Cheng copied meticulously every single detail of the painting, even Bian Lu's signature on the top right side, with the addition of his own signature "copied by Wuxing Jincheng." Three seals existed on Bian Lu's painting, which Jin Cheng imitated as well, replacing them with his own seals. Jin Cheng's copy was even more detailed than the original painting, with veins added to the bamboo leaves and more folds to the rock. He also applied extra texture strokes and dry brushes when depicting the rock, making it look stiffer and more solid. This was evidence of his learning from Northern School painting.

[111] Qin Zhongwen, "Jindai zhongguo huajia yu huapai," 29.

Facsimile of the Painting of Dogs by Emperor Xuande (临宣德御制韩卢图) was another exact copy made by Jin Cheng (Fig. 27). It was done in 1916, four months after his copy of *Living Peacefully*. Emperor Xuande was the fifth emperor of the Ming dynasty. He was good at landscape, figure, animal, and bird and flower painting. The so-called original *Hemerocallis and Two Dogs* (萱花双犬图) by Xuande (Fig. 28) is now housed at the Arthur M. Sackler Museum in Harvard University and is said to be a fake.[112] Whether or not it is genuine is beyond the scope of our discussion. What matters here is Jin Cheng's technique and approach of copying through this facsimile. Xuande's painting has a simple composition, depicting a pair of Afghan dogs playing by a cluster of hemerocallis, one bowing its head to the ground and the other looking straight ahead. Jin Cheng's copy accurately captures the forms of the two dogs with respect to their depiction in Xuande's version. Hemerocallis is also depicted in the same style as in the original painting. Interestingly, Jin Cheng added a row of ribs to the dog in front, making it look thinner yet stronger.

Jin Cheng's interest in making facsimiles came from his passion for copying old masters. Exact copies of famous artworks brought him a sense of satisfaction and demonstrated his mastery of traditional painting. Making facsimiles also created for him social opportunities in officialdom. He would invite a couple of official friends for a viewing of each facsimile and ask them to write inscriptions on it.[113]

[112] Siu, "Study of Jin Cheng," 182.
[113] Ibid., 158.

Beside facsimiles, Jin Cheng also made copies or imitations, meaning that these works were based on the style and rule of some old masters yet with addition or transformation of his own ideas. In his painting practice, Jin Cheng largely followed the manner of artists of the Tang, Song, and Yuan dynasties. He also showed interest in the early Qing dynasty individualist painter Shi Tao (石涛, 1630–1724), whom he saw as "an antidote to the orthodox tradition."[114]

Jin Cheng's mastery of traditional painting is fully exhibited in the twelve album leaves collected in *Landscapes after Old Masters* (Fig. 29). Each leaf was a classical scene that depicted the typical landscape elements of mountains, rocks, trees, and water.[115] Inscribed on each leaf was the word *fang* ("imitate"), followed by the name of an earlier master, Cao Yunxi (曹云西, 1272–1355), Ke Jingzhong (柯九思, 1290–1343), Huang Gongwang (黄公望, 1269–1354), Mi Youren (米友仁, 1075–1151), Guo Xi (郭熙, ca. 1001–1090), Wang Meng, Dong Yuan (董远, active mid-10th century), Zhao Mengfu, Sheng Zizhao (盛子昭, active 1310–1360), Wang Mo (王洽, died 805?), Li Cheng (李成, 919–967), and Shen Zhou (沈周, 1427–1509), covering a broad time period from the Tang dynasty to the late Ming.

According to Jin Cheng's inscription on the final leaf, he gave the album to a friend, Hua'er, who intended to use it as a painting manual. It certainly could serve this function since it covered a wide range of artistic models. Orthodox and conventional styles guided the whole set. The album also revealed a vast vocabulary

[114] Aida Yuen Wong, "A New Life for Literati Painting in the Early Twentieth Century: Eastern Art and Modernity, A Transcultural Narrative?" *Artibus Asiae* 60, no. 2 (2000): 312.
[115] Little et al., *New Songs on Ancient Tunes*, 409.

of brush techniques: subtle washes of ink and color, delicate lines, bold texture strokes, saturated or diluted ink, and wet and dry brushwork.

The date for the completion of the album, 1905, had a unique significance. It was the year when Jin Cheng returned from his study in London. After several years abroad and after close examination of all the famous European and American paintings, he marked his return by immediately picking up his brush and painting traditional scenes in a traditional medium.[116] The album showed that even after exposure to foreign influence, he still had strong belief in the value of tradition. Jin Cheng revealed in this album not only his reverence for earlier masters but also his skillful technique and thorough understanding of Chinese painting.

The famous Shanghai artist Wu Changshi contributed the calligraphy to the frontispiece and praised Jin Cheng's skill in the inscription:

> You return from the ocean. We meet at the canal pavilion. When I see your paintings, they flow with spirit and I know you are well practiced.
>
> The year *yisi* [乙巳, 1905], ten days after double-nine day [nineteenth day of the ninth month].
>
> A gentleman returning from London, from a long journey, showed me this album. I was truly impressed—such creations! I specially wrote the title.[117]

[116] Ibid., 410.
[117] Translation from *Between the Thunder and the Rain: Chinese Paintings from the Opium War through the Cultural Revolution, 1840–1979* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, 2000), 139.

Both Wu Changshi and the two colophon writers praised Jin Cheng for his excellent skills and, admiring his persistence on tradition, pointed out specifically that the album was completed right after his years spent abroad.

In the hanging scroll *Autumn Clearing at a Fishing Village* (渔庄秋霁图) of 1913, Jin Cheng continued to imitate earlier models (Fig. 30). The painting is a classical depiction of high, steep cliffs surrounded by a tranquil river. Its composition conveys a strong sense of monumental layout. The small figure and ferry in the foreground are so compressed by the surrounding massive cliffs that they are almost invisible. The small figure and ferry, together with the neutral yellowish-brown palette, indicate the title of the painting, "a tranquil autumn day at a fishing village."

Jin Cheng noted in his brief inscription on the scroll that the work was imitating the Tang dynasty artist Guan Tong (关仝, early 10th century), who was famous for his monumental landscapes. Yet the jagged cliffs, executed with dense black dots and dry strokes, and the balanced composition of void and substance, were all suggestive of Shi Tao's influence.

Jin Cheng regarded Shi Tao as someone who had rejected orthodoxy and blazed his own path. In his inscription on a landscape painted in 1909 (Fig. 31), Jin Cheng commented:

> Master Shi Tao's brushwork is unrestrained.
> His spirit resonance is profound,
> Beyond the Four Wangs, Wu, and Yun.

He boldly treads his own path.

At first he was not highly regarded in his time,

But his mist, travelers, mountains, terraces

Are all worthy of admiration.

To say that south of the great river

No one surpasses Master Shi is not an exaggeration.[118]

The painting was an imitation of Shi Tao's 1693 landscape (Fig. 32). The intense dots used to convey tree leaves and mountaintops and the impressionistic rendering of the rocky cliffs were both reminiscent of Shi Tao's style.

In 1918, Jin Cheng painted the hanging scroll *Verdant Cliffs and Red Woods* (苍岩红树图, Fig. 33). He wrote in the inscription that this painting was "an imitation of Zhang Sengyao (张僧繇)." Zhang was a famous Southern dynasty artist. Legend has it that he could paint landscapes using heavy colors such as red, blue, and green without ink outlining. This kind of landscape was named "boneless color landscape." Jin Cheng's imitation of Zhang Sengyao referred to this painting method. However, no originals of Zhang Sengyao ever survived. Thus Jin Cheng's imitation was mostly an act of imagination. His friend, the renowned artist and collector Yuan Lizhun (袁励准, 1876–1935), wrote in his inscription on the painting, "It is very similar to a small scroll of boneless landscape by Hua Yan (华嵒, 1682–1756) that I once saw in the collection of Chen Baochen (陈宝琛, 1848–1935)." Jin Cheng did not apply

[118] Wong, "New Life," 311.

strong colors in this painting. He used texture strokes of the Southern School painting to execute all the rocks and cliffs. The painting was not so much a boneless landscape as an attempt to use colors to replace ink. Ink and colors alternated throughout the surface, creating the lively effect of conversation between void and substance. The striking contrast of vermillion and cyanine in the foreground trees light up the whole painting.

The composition of Jin Cheng's 1922 hanging scroll *Hanshi Festival of Xi* (西城寒食图, Fig. 34) was devised from his 1908 facsimile (Fig. 35) of Luo Ping (罗聘, 1733–1799)'s *Drinking in the Bamboo Garden* (上元夜饮图, Fig. 36). The scenery was compressed from occupying two-thirds of the screen in the 1908 painting to one-third. The upper two-thirds of the painting was left blank. Rocks were done not by texture strokes but rubbing and color filling, using ink only, including dark ink, light ink, and clear ink. The "broken ink effect" of the rocks generated a vivid contrast to the malachite green and ocher-colored ground. Wet brushwork was used throughout the painting, creating a moist and elegant painterly effect.

In his study, Jin Cheng had no restrictions of which old masters he copied. An artist of the Northern School, one of the Southern School, an integrator of Northern and Southern Schools, or a court-style artist—any expert of any style could become his object of learning. He did not abandon eminent individualists either. Thus, to closely and comprehensively learn from paintings of various periods, regions, and schools so as to seek out a way of integration became a fundamental part of Jin

Cheng's painting practice. In Beijing art circles of the early Republic, Jin Cheng was a rare example of a synthesizer who covered a broad range of styles.

However, to imitate ancient masterpieces was not the ultimate goal of Jin Cheng's art practice. Copy and imitation was only a preparation for the final creation. The 1914 hand scroll *Student Yu Doing Rubbing* (于生拓印图) was an early creative painting by Jin Cheng (Fig. 37). The scroll opens with an elongated riverbank. A scholar with a walking stick marches toward the left, attended by his servant. The main focus of the painting is the architectural complex on the left of the screen, in which a group of people work busily, most likely on rubbings. During his residence in Beijing, Jin Cheng had a servant who accompanied him for many years. His name was Yu Haiting (于海亭). He made rubbings for all the seals carved by Jin Cheng and compiled them. The scroll was executed in fine lines. Jin Cheng adopted the Northern School style when depicting rocks, using both hemp-fiber and ax-cut texture strokes. The subject of the painting was drawn from Jin Cheng's real life, while the painting techniques demonstrated his ability to synthesize ancient methods.

Jin Cheng's flower painting *Ink Plum Blossoms* (墨梅图), painted in 1908, was one of his earliest flower creations, its style being a mix of *gongbi* and *xieyi* (Fig. 38). Compared to the refined *gongbi* style of plum paintings since the Song dynasty, this work displayed a more decorative flavor, with artificial modifications, such as the V-shaped curves, the dramatically elongated branches, and their thin and stiff appearance.

The *Bird and Flower Screen Painting* (花鸟屏) was painted by Jin Cheng in 1913 (Fig. 39). It implemented traditional bird and flower techniques yet adopted a new look. The screen painting was originally part of a set of eight. *Hushe yuekan* published four of them, with subjects of peacock, paradise flycatcher, goshawk, and parrot, each accompanied respectively by peony, pine tree, chrysanthemum, and narcissus. Only four-fifths of the peacock appears, its tail extending beyond the painting surface to the right of the screen. The second screen also shows only a portion of its two pine trees, giving the viewers a feeling that the screen could stretch without limit to heaven and earth. This kind of composition seemed to originate from photography and was not traditional.

Sheep on the Hillside (山坡羊),[119] painted in 1926, just a couple months before Jin Cheng's death, was one of his most famous creations (Fig. 40). Jin Cheng in this painting incorporated some Western techniques, such as perspective (nearby sheep look bigger while the distant ones look smaller) and light and shade (clear differentiation between the light receiving surface and backlight surface of the rocks). The subject and composition was rarely seen in traditional Chinese painting. Using pillars of gigantic rocks and a flock of sheep, Jin Cheng meant to create an imaginary scene that was completely different from tradition. When depicting the hillside, Jin Cheng used ocher as its background color, with malachite green added on top. Both

[119] The painting was titled *Sunset over the Meadow* (草原夕阳图) in Shi Yunwen, *Zhongguo jindai huihua: Minchu pian* [中国近代绘画民初篇] (Taibei: Hanguang wenhua shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1991), 6. However, according to Jin Cheng, it should be called *Sheep on the Hillside* (山坡羊). Jin Cheng, *Oulu shicao* [藕庐诗草], in *Jindai zhongguo shiliao congkan xubian* [近代中国史料丛刊续编], volume 205, ed. Shen Yunlong (Taibei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1976).

colors were typical Chinese colors. Yet with the contrast of the white of the sheep and the red and green of the flower trees, the painting exudes a refreshing and poetic atmosphere that was uncommon in traditional landscape.

What needs to be noticed is that the Northern style conveyed by the gigantic rocks in Jin Cheng's painting was probably an imitation of Ming dynasty artist Lu Baoshan (陆包山)'s landscape. In a landscape by another Beijing artist, Qi Jingxi (祁景西, 1894–1940), in 1929 (Fig. 41), the artist wrote in his inscription that the painting was an imitation of Lu Baoshan's landscape. Qi's landscape was very similar in composition and painting techniques to Jin Cheng's painting. Thus, as Jin Cheng's seal on the bottom left of *Sheep on the Hillside*—"to grasp ancient methods and breed novelties" (领略古法生新奇)"—indicated, this 1926 painting was a creative attempt by Jin Cheng, based on his full understanding of the Chinese painting tradition.

Jin Cheng collaborated on paintings from time to time with other artists. For example, *Rock and Flowers* (1925) was painted by Jin Cheng, Yao Hua, Xiao Sun, Ling Wenyuan (凌文渊, 1876–1944) and Chen Banding (Fig. 42). In the middle of the painting stands a coarse rock drawn by Xiao Sun and Ling Wenyuan in bold, textured strokes. A cluster of orchids stems out from the right, done by Yao Hua. On the right of the orchid, Chen Banding painted a branch of exuberant gardenia. On the left of the rock, Jin Cheng added clumps of elegant morning glory and pomegranate. Both Jin Cheng and Chen Banding adopted a boneless painting technique when drawing the flowers. Jin Cheng applied light washes of ink and colors in his depiction of flowers. The light blue of morning glory on the lower left of the scroll contrasts

nicely with the orchid's ocher and gardenia's orange on the middle and top right. The five artists' drawings merge harmoniously with one another while maintaining their individual styles.

In addition to being an ardent artist, Jin Cheng was also a well-known art connoisseur and collector. In a Yuan dynasty masterpiece *A Breath of Spring* (春消息) now housed at the Freer and Sackler Galleries in Washington, D.C. (Fig. 43), Jin Cheng authoritatively asserted the authenticity of the painting by leaving his collector seals. The painting is the only existing work by Yuan dynasty artist Zou Fulei (邹复雷, active mid-14th century). It was originally in the imperial collection. Then-Empress Dowager presented it to Madame Scholar Miao Jiahui (缪嘉惠, 1842–1918). Eventually the art connoisseur Guo Baochang (郭葆昌, 1879–1942) bought it at a high price from his friend.[120] Jin Cheng's seals are found in several places on the painting, including one on the frontispiece, "*Gongbo pingsheng zhenshang*" (巩伯平生真赏, "an authentic work appraised during Gongbo [Jin Cheng]'s lifetime," Fig. 44a), and one on the actual painting, "*Wuxing Jin Cheng jianding Song Yuan zhenji zhi yin*" (吴兴金城鉴定宋元真迹之印, "the seal of Wuxing Jin Cheng evaluating genuine Song Yuan artworks," Fig. 44b). Jin Cheng's seals were most likely added after Guo Baochang's purchase. Thus, thanks to his fame as an art connoisseur, Jin

[120] A detailed account of this story is recorded in Guo Baochang's colophon on the painting. Translation in Freer and Sackler Galleries of Art, "Song and Yuan Dynasty Painting and Calligraphy,"https://www.asia.si.edu/SongYuan/F1931.1/F1931-1.Documentation.pdf (accessed January 27, 2014). I thank the curator for Chinese painting and calligraphy, Stephen Allee, of the Freer and Sackler Galleries for drawing my attention to this information.

Cheng attained the opportunity to view and appraise ancient masterpieces in many private collections.

2.2 Zhou Zhaoxiang: Diligent Advocate of Antiquities

Zhao Zhaoxiang (*zi*, Songling 嵩灵; *hao*, Yang'an 养庵; *biehao*, Tuiweng 退翁) was one of the founders of the Chinese Painting Research Society. He was a native of Shaoxing in Zhejiang province (Fig. 3).[121] He passed the civil examination and became a *juren* (举人)[122] at the end of the Qing dynasty. After the founding of the Republic, he successively served in the government of Sichuan and Fengtian (present Shenyang) provinces. He later became a member of the provisional senate and then served as the governor of Hunan province. Zhou soon resided and went to Beijing, where he worked in the Qing Dynasty Archive and was later appointed as director of the Galleries of Antiquities.

Zhou was an avid voyager. He had a few travel companions, such as Ling Wenyuan and Fu Zengxiang (傅增湘, 1872–1949), with whom he would travel to different scenic spots across the country. They would write journals and poems for each trip. A compilation of all the journals and poems was later published as *Yilin yuekan: Youshan zhuanhao* (艺林月刊：游山专号, Yilin Monthly: Special Issue on Travels, Fig. 45). Unlike other travel notes or travel diaries, which were written by one person, Y*oushan zhuanhao* was a collaborative work.

[121] For detailed biographical information on Zhou Zhaoxiang, see the preface to *Yilin Xunkan*.
[122] *Juren* is a qualified graduate who passed the provincial exam in the imperial examinations during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Zhou was so fond of travel that he carved a seal that declared, “Travel to search for ancient relics is a great pleasure of life” (游山访古，人生一乐). Zhou’s travels provided him spiritual enjoyment while at the same time enriched him as an artist and a practitioner of cultural heritage and archaeology. Zhou once visited Yunju Temple in the suburb of Beijing, where he saw a strange tubelike copper incense burner in the main hall. After carefully examining it, he found out that this was an inscribed copper cannon of the Yuan dynasty. It was not until after the founding of the People’s Republic that experts identified it as the earliest datable Chinese cannon known.[123]

Zhou was well versed in poetry and literature. His style of calligraphy was that of the Jin and Tang dynasties; and his landscape and bird and flower painting followed the tradition of the Ming dynasty. In his late years, he served as the associate dean for the Sinology College of Tuancheng (团城国学书院),[124] where he taught epigraphic calligraphy and painting.

Zhou Zhaoxiang’s 1923 *Ink Landscape* (水墨山水) is one of his few existing paintings (Fig. 46). Its composition is intense yet clear, divided into upper and lower parts. Each part has several enormous mountain peaks, with trees in saturated dark ink added on top. Two strips of blank space appear in the middle and bottom of the painting, suggesting cloud or water. The whole painting thus exhibits a perfect rhythm of void and substance. Strings of tangled lines that outline the mountain

[123] Preface to *Yilin xunkan*.
[124] Tuancheng was near Beihai Park. Beihai Park, northwest of the Forbidden City in Beijing, was an imperial garden and is now a public park.

ridges and the bold texture strokes that form the solid substance of rocks are reminiscent of Shi Tao's style.

Landscape (山水, Fig. 47) executed around 1928 was similar in composition and style as the 1923 *Ink Landscape*. Instead of a vertical composition as in the 1923 painting, this landscape emphasizes horizontal direction, and is thus more visually intense. The viewer's eye is inevitably first drawn to the lonely white thatched hall set in the center of the scene, with all the surrounding trees and heavy mountains pressing toward it. Both the elaborately delineated rock cracks that wind across the cliffs and the saturated texture dots that punctuate the landscape suggest the obvious influence of Shi Tao's brush manner, as is indicated in Zhou's inscription.

Ink Plum (墨梅图), painted in 1923, is representative of Zhou's flower painting (Fig. 48). The plum branches were executed first in saturated and then in dry ink at the tips, while the flowers were done in diluted light ink. The painting thus displays an appealing balance between branches that are "cold and harsh as iron" (森冷如铁) and flowers that are "fine and warm like spring" (温暖如春). Zhou's inscription written in thin clerical script strongly complements the painting.

Zhou Zhaoxiang did not leave behind many artworks, nor did he write any theories on art. He was best known for his expertise in antiquity appraisal and research. Zhou was an ardent lover of antiquities. During his term of office at the Galleries of Antiquities, he took the opportunity to examine its wide collections of ancient artworks and antiques. He also formed a committee to appraise the collection of the Galleries. Among those employed were Luo Zhengyu (罗振玉, 1866–1940),

Yan Shiqing, Guo Baochang, Chen Handi, Rong Geng (容庚, 1894–1983), Ma Heng (马衡, 1881–1955), Xu Baolin (徐宝琳), Zhang Boying (张伯英, 1871–1949), and Liang Hongzhi (梁鸿志, 1882–1946). The committee was divided into four groups: painting and calligraphy, ceramics, bronzes and steles, and miscellanies. They investigated the collection's authenticity and graded the artifacts. A thirteen-volume *Directory of Painting and Calligraphy of the Galleries of Antiquities* (古物陈列所书画目录) was compiled during this time, followed by a six-volume *Catalogue of Painting and Calligraphy* (书画集). Ronggeng composed *Catalogue for Bronzes of Baoyun Building* (宝蕴楼彝器图录) and *Catalogue for Bronzes of Wuying Hall* (武英殿彝器图录). Zhou played a significant role in the completion of all these books. He also launched "*Guohua* Study Room," a space in the Galleries for artists to study and copy famous ancient Chinese paintings and to be trained.

As a passionate art collector, he did not build up his collection by purchasing costly artifacts. Instead, he favored "finding the hidden jewels" (捡漏). He was a frequent visitor of *Liulichang* (琉璃厂), an old culture street in Beijing that was famous for its antique industry, including shops that sold bronze and stone (金石), old ceramics, and calligraphy and painting. Merchandise there was of mixed value and thus required an advanced level of discernment among buyers. Zhou would go from stall to stall to catch those "lost treasures." He once carved a collector seal, writing "acquired by Zhou Zhaoxiang from a minor market" (周肇祥小市得). Zhou wrote a

book titled *Miscellanies of Liulichang* (琉璃厂杂记) based on his experience in *Liulichang*, including precious antiques he acquired or saw.

Although Zhou did not participate much in teaching, he played an important role in the CPRS. In addition to get initial funding for the society by using his connection with Beijing high government officials, he was very active in organizing the Sino-Japanese exhibitions (discussed in full in Chapter Three). Zhou became the president of the CPRS after the sudden death of Jin Cheng, in 1926. One of his most significant contributions during that period was his initiative in and supervision of the publication of *Yilin xunkan* and *Yilin yuekan*, journals of the CPRS (discussed in Chapter Four).

Zhou Zhaoxiang published an article titled "Journal of Eastern Travel" in *Yilin xunkan* and *Yilin yuekan*, providing travel notes of his trip to Japan in 1926 for the fourth Sino-Japanese exhibition.[125] He noted in the journal that Japan was highly in favor of collecting Chinese art. These collections covered paintings by masters from the Yuan dynasty to the Ming and Qing dynasties. He could not help but be concerned about the loss of great ancient Chinese paintings. The crisis of cultural loss started from the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. Chinese cultural relics flowed not only to Japan but to Europe and America as well, which resulted in "China-mania" in the West. Till the early years of the republic, the quantities and qualities of the looted relics kept increasing, including newly excavated archaeological finds as well as

[125] Zhou Zhaoxiang, "Dongyou riji" [东游日记], *Yilin xuankan* 1–72, and *Yilin yuekan* 1–25.

cultural relics that had been passed down through the generations.[126] Zhou's concern struck a sympathetic cord in many contemporary scholars and artists. Under his influence, *Yilin Xunkan* published extensively illustrated news and short narratives (Fig. 49) of archaeological findings and cultural relics.

2.3 Chen Shizeng: The Steady Defender of Literati Tradition

Another key member of the Chinese Painting Research Society, Chen Shizeng, shared Jin Cheng's sentiments (Fig. 2). He was a native of Yining in Jiangxi province, but ultimately moved to and resided in Beijing, becoming one of the leading figures in Beijing's art circle in the early Republic. As recent art historians have commented, "the Beijing art circle would look much dimmer without Chen Shizeng."[127] His work in traditional Chinese mediums reflected a deep admiration for Chinese painting heritage. Yet he chose traditional Chinese painting not because of his nostalgia for the past but rather because he wished to sustain and develop the national tradition as a response to changes in modern China.[128]

Chen was born in 1876 into a prestigious traditional scholarly family. His father, Chen Sanli (陈三立, 1853–1937), was a scholar-official of the late imperial era and a famous poet, also known as one of the "Four Gentlemen of the Hundred-Days' Reform" (维新四公子). His grandfather Chen Baozhen (陈宝箴, 1831–1900) was the governor of Hunan. Both of them were important figures in the reform

[126] Liu Ruikuan, *Zhongguo Meishu de Xiandaihua*, 67–68.
[127] Ruan Rongchun and Hu Guanghua, *Zhonghua minguo meishushi* [中华民国美术史] (Chengdu: Sichuan meishu chubanshe, 1992), 69.
[128] Little et al., *New Songs on Ancient Tunes*, 424.

movement of the late Qing dynasty and they actively advocated "Chinese learning for essence and Western learning for function" (中学为体，西学为用). One of Chen Shizeng's brothers, Chen Yinke (陈寅恪, 1890–1969), was one of the best known sinologists and historians of twentieth-century China.[129]

Raised in such a scholarly environment, Chen Shizeng received family education of the classics in his youth and showed his talents in poetry, painting, and calligraphy at an early age. At the age of ten, he began to formally learn painting with Yin Hebai (尹和白), a famous plum painter. Around the year 1891, he studied Northern Wei dynasty Stele calligraphy and Han dynasty clerical script with Fan Zhong (范钟), his soon-to-be uncle-in-law.[130] In 1898, Chen Shizeng enrolled at the South China Technical School in Nanjing. In 1901, he entered a French missionary school in Shanghai.[131]

Chen Shizeng went to Japan with his brother Chen Hengke in 1902, when he was twenty-seven years old. During his seven years' stay there, he studied natural history instead of painting at the Normal Higher School (Koto Shihan Gakko, 高等师

[129] For biographical information on Chen, see Li and Wan, *Zhongguo xiandai huihua shi*, 72–73; Yuan Lin, "Chen Shizeng he jindai zhongguohua de zhuaxing" [陈师曾和近代中国画的转型, Chen Shizeng and the transformation of modern Chinese painting], *Meishu shilun* 4 (1993): 20–25; Yuan Siliang, "Chen Shizeng muzhiming" [陈师曾墓志铭], *Meishu guancha* 10 (1996): 50. Liu Xiaolu, "Dacun Xiya he Chen Shizeng: Jindai wei wenrenhua fuxing de liang ge yiguo kudouzhe" [大村西崖和陈师曾：近代为文人画复兴的两个异国苦斗者, Ōmura Seigai and Chen Shizeng: Two advocates for the revival of literati painting in the modern age], *Yiyuan* 4 (1996): 10–15; and Kuosheng Lai, "Learning New Painting from Japan and Maintaining National Pride in Early Twentieth Century China, with Focus on Chen Shizeng (1876–1923)" (PhD diss., University of Maryland, College Park, 2006), 64–73.

[130] Hu Jian, "Hualuo chun rengzai: lun Chen Shizeng de wenhua baoshou zhuyi" [花落春仍在——论陈师曾的文化保守主义], *Meishu guancha* 12 (2004): 83.

[131] Kong Xinmiao, *Ershi shiji zhongguo huihua meixue* [二十世纪中国绘画美学] (Jinan: Shandong meishu chubanshe, 2000), 121.

范学校), where he befriended Lu Xun (鲁迅, 1881–1936)[132] and Li Shutong (李叔同, 1880–1942).[133] While in Japan, Chen Shizeng was able to experience Western art and witness firsthand the modernizing process that Japanese society, art, and culture were going through. He was also exposed to the works of the Qing individualists Zhu Da (朱耷, ca. 1626–1705) and Shi Tao, whose eccentricity and versatility greatly influenced his art and theories.

Shi Tao's impact on Chen Shizeng was clearly revealed in Chen's hanging scroll *Watching the Waterfall from a Thatched Pavilion* (茅亭观瀑图 , Fig. 50), in which Chen's preference for individual expressions and rejection of verisimilitude are evident. The foreground rocks and background cliffs are defined by strings of freely executed strokes and light washes of ink. No texture strokes are applied. This free play of linear rhythm that disembodied the forms makes the rocky substance appear airy and vibrating. Trees of different kinds cluster in the foreground. Their leaves blend together, generating a heavy shade that contrasts nicely with the airy rocks in the background. Chen in this painting made no attempt to create a believable scene but rather focused on calligraphic and vigorous brushwork. The brushstrokes in this painting resembled closely the style of Shi Tao (Fig. 51).

Immediately after his return from Japan in 1909, Chen Shizeng served in the Jiangxi Provincial Education Bureau, and then was invited by Zhang Jian to teach natural history at the Nantong Normal School. During his stay in Nantong, he was

[132] A leading figure of modern Chinese literature and of the left-wing woodcut movement.
[133] A Buddhist monk who was a famous artist and art teacher.

able to study with Wu Changshi, the leading figure of the Epigraphic Movement (*jinshi xue*, 金石学), and enhanced his skills in calligraphy, painting, and seal carving. Chen was deeply influenced by the *jinshi* master's approach to painting, which was evident in his painting *Lamp* (Fig. 52) and *Plantains and Chrysanthemums* (绿蕉黄菊图, Fig. 53). *Lamp* was painted using the powerful and expressive seal-script brushwork that he learned from Wu Changshi. As revealed by the artist's poetic inscription, the painting depicts a lonely scholar who works till late on New Year's Eve. The flame from his lamp illuminates a bamboo against the window. He sits there, staring at the blue-green light and enjoying the quietness and loneliness at night. The painting is far removed from realistic depiction and rather emphasizes the artist's bold and expressive brushstrokes. In *Plantains and Chrysanthemums*, the brushwork of the plantain stem and the rough texture of the leaves and flowers again resemble Wu Changshi's style (Fig. 54) and reflect the seal-script calligraphy that he was known for. Plantain leaves, chrysanthemums, and grasses fill the whole painting surface from top to bottom, leaving no gaps. This composition is typical of Wu Changshi's fusion of Shanghai School and *jinshi* styles.

Chen Shizeng moved to Beijing in 1913 and served in the Ministry of Education. In Beijing he took an active role in the art world and acquainted himself with many traditional artists such as Jin Cheng, Xu Shichang, and Xiao Sun. In the traditional cultural environment of Beijing, Chen was able to master the principles of orthodox landscape painting. He began to experiment with integrating into his landscapes the epigraphic brushwork he had learned from Wu Changshi, as well as

the expressive individualism he admired in Shi Tao.[134] *Album of Landscapes* (Fig. 55) exemplifies this experimentation. It contains six leaves, each one executed in the style of such ancient masters as Shen Zhou, Ni Zhan, and Huang Gongwang yet infused with his own touch. Chen in this album tested different compositions, ink, colors and brushworks to create traditional literati landscapes. The final two leaves (Leaf E and Leaf F) were more freely rendered and so display an inherently modern character.

In addition to attending different private artist gatherings, Chen Shizeng also taught Chinese painting in many schools, including Beijing National Normal College and Beijing Girls' Normal School. He was appointed to be a teacher of traditional Chinese painting when Cai Yuanpei established the Institute for Research on Chinese Painting Practice at Beijing University in 1918.

By now, owing to his family background, Chen Shizeng had become familiar with classical Chinese sources. He got to know, although indirectly, the artistic traditions of the West, and was deeply obsessed with Qing individualist expressions as a result of his seven years' stay in Japan. Thanks to Wu Changshi, he mastered the principles of epigraphic studies. And in Beijing, he was exposed to orthodox landscape painting. Chen thus set out in his most mature works to use these tools to renovate China's literati painting tradition.

One of his great achievements was his successful integration of expressive *xieyi* brushwork based on ancient epigraphic models into literati landscape

[134] Little et al., *New Songs on Ancient Tunes*, 424–25.

painting.[135] This achievement was largely revealed in his *Cliffy Mountains and Running Spring* (嶙峋青山半流泉, Fig. 56), a landscape painted in 1921. In this composition, our eyes are first drawn to the void at the center of the scene where clouds accumulated. The clouds divide this vertical composition into two. Above the mist, mountain ridges pile up, extending beyond the top of the painting surface. In the bottom half, trees and rocks are densely packed, among them a couple of cottages. A similar composition can also be seen in his *Autumn Landscape* (Fig. 57).

Chen demonstrated his knowledge of art historical precedents by making references to old masters. Accumulated mountain ridges and scraggly foreground trees are reminiscent of Huang Gongwang's style. The dense composition alludes to monumental landscapes of the Song dynasty. The gray and brown palette is consistent with the colors preferred by seventeenth-century orthodox school painters. The freely rendered strings of tangled lines that delineate bluffs and rocks are typical of Shi Tao. The *Jinshi* influence on the artist is unmistakable in his application of rough texture strokes for the cliffs and rocks.

As both a painter and teacher, Chen Shizeng was not only concerned with producing artworks but was also interested in formulating an ideology or theory for his own practice as well as for his art circle. Due to his early death, he did not leave behind many writings on art theory or art history. But what survives is telling. His earliest known work was issued in 1912, a translation of a Japanese article, "Recent Developments of the European Art World" (欧洲画界最近之状况), published in

[135] Ibid., 425.

Bulletin of the Nantong Normal School Alumni Association. He translated the material to help introduce China to developments in the European art world. He hoped that Chinese artists could gain some understanding of Western art. The article discussed nineteenth-century French painting, with a focus on impressionism and post-impressionism. It argued that impressionism was a breakaway from realism and the invention of photography contributed significantly to the transformation.[136]

In 1918, Chen Shizeng was hired to teach Chinese painting at National Beijing Art School. His lecture notes later formed the first history of Chinese painting in the modern era, *History of Chinese Painting*,[137] based on Nakamura Fusetsu (1868–1943) and Oga Seiun's *Shina Kaigashi* (支那绘画史). In this book, Chen again suggested that Chinese painters could benefit from learning Western art. He said, "Chinese painting has often been influenced by foreign art. Examples discussed above have illustrated this. Nowadays, as more opportunities exist to be in contact with foreign art, we should grasp its merits and absorb them in our own art. Thus we can bring our established skills into full play."[138] Jin Cheng's article "Beilou's Comments on Painting" shared the same thought with Chen's book in its division of Chinese painting history into "the Ancient, Medieval, and Modern Times."

Similarly, on the farewell party held at the Institute for Research on Chinese Painting Practice for Xu Beihong for his departure to France in 1919, Chen remarked,

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[136] Kume Keiichiro, "Ouzhou huajie zuijin zhi zhuangkuang" [欧洲画界最近之状况], trans. Chen Shizeng, *Bulletin of the Nantong Normal School Alumni Association* 2 (May 1912): 24–35.
[137] Chen Shizeng, "Zhongguo huihuashi" [中国绘画史], in *Chen Shizeng jiang huihuashi* [陈师曾讲绘画史], ed. Ge Jianxiong (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2010), 5–64.
[138] Ibid., 64.

"I wish Professor Beihong that, by going abroad, he can integrate the Chinese and the foreign and become a world-renowned artist."[139]

Chen Shizeng's figure paintings of this period also show the influence of Western painting. In 1915, he painted "Beijing Folkways" (北京风俗图), a 34-page album. It has Jin Cheng's inscription *Fengcai Xuannan* (风采宣南) on the title page (Fig. 58) and poems on some of the album leaves (Fig. 59). The subject matter of this album had descended from lofty and transcendent tone of literati elites to the portrayal of the daily lives of ordinary city dwellers, including a garbage collector, a beggar (Fig. 60), a toy peddler, and a rickshaw puller (Fig. 61). Some leaves depict people that Chen found exotic, such as a young lady in Manchu dress and a lama monk. Chen applied bold brushstrokes that he learned from Wu Changshi in these paintings. He also adopted Western techniques in his execution of this album. In addition to light and shade, Chen sketched a draft with pencil before using brush, a technique never seen in traditional Chinese painting.

Similar approaches are seen in Chen Shizeng's *A Picture of Viewing Paintings* (读画图, Fig. 62), painted in 1917 to record an exhibition held in the Central Park of Beijing by Jin Cheng, Ye Yufu (叶玉甫), and Chen Handi in collaboration with other Beijing art collectors. The exhibition lasted for seven days, with six hundred to seven hundred new pieces displayed every day. All the tickets to the exhibition were to be donated for relief supplies of a flood that struck Beijing. Yu Jianhua (俞剑华) wrote a detailed account of Chen's painting of this event:

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[139] "Xu Beihong fufa ji" [徐悲鸿赴法记], *Huixue zazhi* 1 (June 1920): *jishi* 9.

> The painting is a large hanging scroll. It depicts vividly the scene of the exhibition. More than ten figures gather around the long table to view the hand scrolls and album leaves. Another seven to eight figures are examining the hanging scrolls on the wall. Most audiences are elderly men in traditional long robes. There are also two foreigners—one a lady and the other a gentleman, wearing dress and suit. All the figures are depicted differently, looking up or bowing down. Some are portrayed frontally, some appear in profiles, and the others are seen from their back. Old or young, plump or slim—each figure is a lively description. [Chen Shizeng] synthesizes Chinese and Western techniques in his painting method, filling the forms with colors after delineating the outlines. Various shades of colors mark out different levels of the painting, giving it a sense of three-dimensionality. It almost looks like a watercolor painting.[140]

In this painting, pencil again was used to draw a draft. Also, as Yu Jianhua indicated, Western methods such as foreshortening and perspective were applied to give a sense of three-dimensionality. Chen also omitted lines and employed ink washes instead to create figure forms. Although Western techniques were adopted in Chen's figure paintings, they still preserve the look of traditional literati painting.

[140] From Li Shunlin, "Cong Jincheng tan minchu zhongguohua de fugu gexin" [从金城谈民初中国画的复古革新] (M.A. thesis, Guoli zhongyang daxue yishuxue yanjiusuo, 1997): 37. Professor Clunas further pointed out in his lecture series "Chinese Painting and Its Audiences" delivered at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. in 2012, that the painting was fully occupied with a mixed crowd, and that the foreign lady was the only figure in the painting without a direct view of any of the paintings.

Chen's words and artworks throughout the 1910s demonstrate that he was very open toward learning from the west. However, this attitude encountered a sudden change in 1921, when he published his notable article "The Value of Literati Painting" (文人画的价值) as a retort to the criticism of traditional painting from the reformists. In 1922, he rewrote the essay in literary Chinese and published it with his translation of Ōmura Seiga (1868–1927)'s "The Revival of Literati Painting."

In this article, Chen Hengke clearly stated his artistic opinions. By exploring the issue of value in Chinese traditional painting, he hoped to justify Chinese painting's continued existence. He wanted to communicate to people that amid chaotic changes, traditional painting had its own significance and viability. In the opening paragraph, he wrote: "What is literati painting? It is painting that bears literati characteristics and embodies literati taste. Such paintings preclude excessive concern with artistic mastery within the work; instead, an abundant literati sensibility must be perceived beyond the painting… Literati painting is *xingling* [性灵, innovative], *sixiang* [思想, thoughtful], *huodong* [活动, active]; it is nonmechanistic (非器械, *fei qixie*) and unsimplistic (非单纯, *fei danchun*)."[141]

He considered photography, the "mechanistic," as an inadequate form of representation:

[141] Chen Shizeng, "Wenrenhua zhi jiazhi" [文人画之价值], in *Chen Shizeng jiang huihuashi* [陈师曾讲绘画史], ed. Ge Jianxiong (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2010), 65. Translation from Lv, *History of Art*, 144.

> [If literati painting] were "mechanistic" and "simplistic," it would be exactly like photography, undifferentiated and repetitive, and what could be precious about it then? How can it be important as art? How can it be valuable as art? What is precious about art lies in its ability to nurture the spirit, express individualism, and reflect feelings.[142]

Chen's idea on photography was probably inspired by Ōmura Seigai. He was introduced to Ōmura by Jin Cheng during Ōmura's visit to Beijing in 1921. Ōmura argued in "The Revival of Literati Painting" that painting and photography have different functions: "If painting from life and the matching of nature are the ultimate goals of art…. then the invention of photography must mean the immediate extinction of painting…. This, however, is not the actual situation; it has its own power and domain."[143] In Ōmura's opinion, not being as realistic as Western painting seemed to be the most critical weakness of literati painting. He defended literati painting, however, by noting that nature was infinite and was constantly changing. It was thus impossible to capture every detail of nature. Western painting, no matter how lifelike it was, could capture only a glimpse of nature.[144]

Whereas Ōmura used a large portion of his essay to critique realism, Chen Shizeng spent more time discussing the superiority of literati painting. He went on to define the literati and praised the expressiveness of their art:

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[142] Chen, "Wenrenhua zhi jiazhi," 65. Translation in Wong, *Parting the Mists*, 64.
[143] Ōmura Seigai, "Wenrenhua zhi fuxing"[文人画之复兴], in Chen Shizeng, *Zhongguo wenrenhua zhi yanjiu*, 10. Translation in Wong, *Parting the Mists*, 64.
[144] Lai, "Learning New Painting," 120.

> Literati are those who possess elegant personality and noble thoughts. Their self-cultivation is high above that of ordinary people. Thus, what they express and depict in their art can invite people into its wonder, inspire thoughts of peace and grace, and elevate people from their mundane ideas. Those who appreciate literati painting and who understand the feeling of literati artists are more or less themselves literati scholars, despite their different levels of understanding literati painting.[145]

Chen believed that literati cultivation and qualities of characters were above those of ordinary people. He claimed that the general public criticized literati painting because they could not understand its elegance. He argued that literati painting not being appreciated by the masses only proves the sublimity of its nature.

Chen went on to review the development of literati painting and to argue against the notion that the goal of literati painting was to freely express one's emotions and feelings, and to convey one's personality and thoughts.[146] He was strongly against verisimilitude. He rejected the idea of learning from Western realism and promoted instead individualist expressions. He argued:

> Western painting can be described as extremely faithful to form. Since the nineteenth century, in accordance with the principles of science, [Western painting] has meticulously rendered objects with light and colors. Lately, however, postimpressionism has run counter to that course; it deemphasizes the objective, and

[145] Chen, "Wenrenhua zhi jiazhi," 65.
[146] Kuiyi Shen, "Entering a New Era," 109.

> focuses on the subjective, and is joined in its revolutionary performances by cubism and futurism. Such intellectual transformations are sufficient demonstrations that verisimilitude does not exhaust the good in art and that alternative criteria must be sought.[147]

Chen denigrated verisimilitude as it was falling out of favor even in the West. He saw a parallel between post-impressionism, cubism, futurism, and Chinese literati painting in their subjective and expressive intention. Chen summed up his thoughts by listing four criteria for literati painting:

> Painting is defined by its spiritual quality, its idealism, and its life and movement. It is not mechanical and it is never simplistic…. As for the essential ingredients of Chinese scholarly painting, first, it is moral character [人品, *renpin*], second is learning [学问, *xuewen*], third is capabilities and feeling [才情, *caiqing*], and fourth is thoughts [*sixiang*], Only he who possesses all these four qualities shall attain perfection. This is because what defines art is the artist's ability to affect his viewer, and to elicit a sympathetic response with his own spirit. Only when an artist experiences a response himself can he move his viewer to respond to what he feels.[148]

Chen Shizeng's conversion in his attitude toward Western art was probably a result of heated attacks on literati painting during the May Fourth Movement. The

[147] Chen, "Wenrenhua zhi jiazhi," 68. Translation in Wong, *Parting the Mists*, 65.
[148] Chen, "Wenrenhua zhi jiazhi," 69.

Institute for Research on Chinese Painting Practice, where Chen taught traditional Chinese painting, was located at Beijing University, the center of the May Fourth Movement. He was thus surrounded by critics and he regularly encountered attacks from reformists of Chinese tradition. Chen's article served as a counterargument to the wholesale Westernization that dominated the discourse of the May Fourth period.

To conclude, the honor paid to "ancientness" by these key figures of the CPRS stemmed from their in-depth cultivation as old-style literati. They shared roughly the same artistic views and positions, promoting learning and preserving tradition, especially that of drawing from nature and of imitating the painting styles of the Song and Yuan dynasties. They emphasized copy and imitation, and refused to integrate with Western art. Whether advocates of *gongbi* or *xieyi*, these artists focused on cultivation of one's skills and thoughts on the basis of learning from the ancient instead of assimilating Western techniques.

Jin Cheng, Chen Shizeng, Zhou Zhaoxiang, and other leading characters of the society may themselves not be great painting masters. But their significance to the Beijing art scene and to the whole modern Chinese painting history lies far beyond personal achievement. They not only formed their thoughts on art and demonstrated them but also passed on these ideas to a younger generation of artists. Their political, social, and artistic prominence gave them great influence over other traditional painters and thus united and nurtured a group of artists to collectively inhere and develop a national essence. When "modernization" and "westernization" became a

fervent trend in the early republic, the society and its members looked back to Chinese painting tradition for inspiration. They not only answered the challenge of the reformists through artworks but also attempted to evoke support from the general public by adopting modern publicizing strategies, such as exhibitions and periodical publications.

Chapter Three: Institutional Outreach:

Art Exhibitions of the Chinese Painting Research Society

Chen Shizeng's *A Picture of Viewing Paintings* in 1917 (Fig. 62) recorded the transitional moment of Chinese painting from private viewing to public exhibition. He inscribed on the painting, "On October 1, 1917, Ye Yufu, Jin Cheng, and Chen Handi assembled painting collections loaned by various Beijing collectors to exhibit in Central Park for seven days. Exhibits were rotated on a daily basis and altogether 600–700 paintings were displayed. Admission fee was charged from visitors to raise money for the victims of a flood near Beijing. This painting was done to document the scene at the exhibitions."

As was revealed in Chen's painting, art appreciation was no longer a private "pastime," but rather a public display. Paintings, now displayed in a public space, were no longer exclusive to the privileged class, but were instead available to various classes.

The CPRS held two kinds of exhibitions. One was the annual achievement exhibition of members' artworks, and the other was the Sino-Japanese joint exhibition. Both types of exhibition adopted this form of public display to promote members' reputations, and to propagate the CPRS's mission statement. This chapter examines these two types of exhibits and discusses the group's efforts in relation to the other government-sponsored national and international shows of the time. I argue that the

CPRS's exhibition activities successfully increased its popularity in society, and promoted traditional Chinese painting on the international stage. They also inspired the nationalist government in the 1930s to hold a series of government-sponsored exhibitions of traditional Chinese art abroad to enhance China's global reputation as a great civilized country.

3.1 Achievement Exhibitions

The CPRS held annual achievement exhibitions to showcase its members' learning experience and improvement. "Not only can it promote [members'] status as painters, but also will catch the attention of the masses,"[149] so that "more young artists will be attracted to join the CPRS."[150] Some paintings on display were available for sale.

No written records can be found for the first five achievement exhibitions of the CPRS. The first one ever explicitly documented was held from November 3 to 9, 1928. Before then the group concentrated on joint exhibitions with Japan (discussed later in this chapter). Wang Yichang recorded in his *1947 China Art Yearbook* that till 1947 the CPRS had held twenty-five achievement exhibitions, roughly one every year.[151]

The CPRS held most of its achievement exhibits in Central Park (Fig. 63). Based on the Altar of Earth and Grain, Central Park was one of the first few imperial

[149] Wu Jingting, "Zhongguo huaxue yanjiuhui diliuci chengji zhanlanhui jishi" [中国画学研究会第六次成绩展览会纪事], *Yilin Xunkan* 33 (1928): 2.
[150] *Yilin Yuekan* 60 (1934): 16.
[151] Wang, *Zhonghua minguo sanshiliu nian meishu nianjian,* 16.

gardens to be transferred to the public. The idea of opening the altar for public visits was raised by Zhu Qiqian,[152] who also approved the proposal to open the Galleries of Antiquities. Central Park was located right in the center of Beijing, making it easily accessible for city residents. Upon its opening to the public on October 10, 1914, Central Park became the first modern park in Beijing (Fig. 64).[153] A survey conducted in 1918 and 1919 showed that four thousand to five thousand people a day visited the park during the summer, and up to two hundred visited in the winter. During festivals or special occasions, when admission to the park was usually free, ten thousand people daily would fill the park.[154] The high access rate of the park thus made an ideal place for the dissemination of ideas, a place where city residents could gather together, relax, enjoy the scenery, communicate, and be educated. It was thus reasonable for the CPRS to choose Central Park as their main exhibition site. Waterside Pavilion (Fig. 65), Dining Hall, Main Hall, and Administration Offices (Fig. 66) of the Central Park were four of the CPRS's favorite display locations.

Table. Annual achievement exhibits of the Chinese Painting Research Society

No.	Date	Central Park Location	Details
–[a]	May 16–	Main Hall[155]	

[152] Shi Mingzheng, "From Imperial Gardens to Public Parks: The Transformation of Urban Space in Early Twentieth-Century Beijing," *Modern China* 3, no. 24 (1998): 234.
[153] Ibid., 236.
[154] Sidney D. Gamble, *Peking: A Social Survey* (New York: George H. Doran, 1921), 237.
[155] Wu Tingxie, ed., *Beijing Shizhigao: wenjiao zhi* [北京市志稿：文教志], vol. 25 (Beijing: Yanshan chubanshe, 1998), 519.

	25, 1925		
5	June 12–19, 1927	Main Hall[156]	In attendance was Liu Lingcang (刘凌沧), a famous *gongbi* style painter (Fig. 67), his style name Lingcang having been given to him by president Xu Shichang. He joined the CPRS in 1926 and was editor of *Yilin xunkan* and *Yilin yuekan*.[157]
6	Nov. 3–9, 1928	Offices	"[The exhibition] was intended to happen in summer, but was postponed to late fall because of the current political situation. More than 110 members participated in the show with around 400 paintings…." "Exhibitions nowadays are normally aimed at selling paintings. This show was to alter the bad convention—none of the paintings was for sale—so that we could elevate the status of the artists…." "Thousands of people signed their names at the exhibition and even more people attended without signing."[158]
7	May 4–10, 1930	Offices	More than 300 scrolls were exhibited in the show, displayed in two rooms (Fig. 68). The show was well received by the public. The CPRS's stated mission, "careful research on ancient methods and broad acquisition of new knowledge," was stressed once again.

[156] Wu, *Shizhigao: wenjiao zhi*, 519.
[157] Bao Limin, "Huagong, huajia, jiaoshou: ji zhuming renwuhuajia Liu Lingcang" [画工、画家、教授——记著名人物画家刘凌沧], *Duoyun* 3 (1982), 96.
[158] Wu, "Zhongguo huaxue yanjiuhui diliuci chengji zhanlanhui jishi."

			On May 8 a group of participating members were photographed in front of the exhibition rooms (Fig. 69).[159]
8	July 5–11, 1931	Offices	Paintings on exhibit included both hanging scrolls and hand scrolls. Photographs were taken of the attendees (Fig. 70) and the exhibition hall (Fig. 71).[160]
9	Aug. 21–28, 1932	Dining Hall	"More than five hundred paintings were on display. [The exhibition] was well received by the public, and thousands of visitors signed their names and left messages. It's worth noting that most of the visitors were young students. They came to study and copy the paintings with the purpose of mastering ancient methods."[161] A group photo was taken in front of the Dining Hall (Fig. 72).
10	Oct. 3–7, 1933	Waterside Pavilion	A group photo was taken at the exhibition (Fig. 73).[162] Both Zhang Daqian (张大千, 1899–1983) and his brother Zhang Shanzi participated in the show.[163]
11	Oct. 7–14, 1934	Waterside Pavilion	"The Waterside Pavilion was divided into four display rooms, all filled with paintings. Glass showcases were placed along the aisle." "[The catalogue] included 408 paintings from 125 members. Another 35 people with 95

[159] *Yilin Yuekan* 7 (1930): 1, 6, 9.
[160] *Yilin Yuekan* 21 & 22 (1931): 15 & 10.
[161] *Yilin Yuekan* 34 (1932): 16.
[162] *Yilin Yuekan* 47 (1933): 16.
[163] "Zhongguo huahui jiazuo duo" [中国画会佳作多], *Chenbao* (Oct. 4–5, 1933).

			paintings arrived afterward and were thus not listed in the catalogue." "A portion of the paintings were displayed each day due to limited space…. The first showroom displayed mainly works by founding members, advisors, and teaching assistants. The other three rooms also displayed paintings by advisors and teaching assistants." "Paintings by student members had their own appeals." The exhibition was well received by local newspapers. Beijing *Chenbao Pictorial* had a long article covering the show. Thousands of people came to the exhibition every day. More than 10,000 visited on the weekend, during the holiday, and on the last day of the display. Many young painters asked to join the society after they saw the exhibition (Fig. 74).[164]
12	Sep. 8–15, 1935	Dining Hall	The exhibition catalogue listed 430 paintings by 141 artists. Another 40 paintings by 20 people arrived on the day when exhibition started. Three walls of every room were filled with hanging scrolls; the fourth wall was only half-covered because of the windows. Three long tables were placed in the middle of each showroom, displaying hand scrolls, albums, and fans. Members such as Zhou Zhaoxiang, Xu Shichang (Fig. 75), Chen Handi, Chen

[164] Xiaojizhe, "Huazhan zhisheng" [画展誌盛], *Yilin Yuekan* 60 (1934): 15–16.

			Banding, Qi Kun (祁昆, 1901–1944), and Zhang Daqian all exhibited their works, including subjects from landscape (Fig. 76) and bird and flower (Fig. 77) to figure and animal. In the exhibition report by Yiming, the society's emphasis on merging ancient methods with new knowledge was indicated and praised again (Fig. 78).[165] *Da Gongbao* (大公报) broadcasted the show, dividing exhibited works into different schools, including the Song Yuan School, represented by Xiao Qianzhong; the Bada School, embodied by Zhou Zhaoxiang and Zhang Daqian; the Four Wang School, followed by Qin Zhongwen; and the Qiu Tang School, exemplified by Guan Ping.[166]
13	Aug. 30-Sep. 6, 1936	Dining Hall	The catalogue published works from 163 members, 53 of whom were female. More paintings arrived after the catalogue was done. There were altogether more than 500 paintings in the show. Those photographed were either published in the society's journal *Yilin yuekan* or made into plates by photographers for sale. Works on display were divided into five categories: 1. figure painting in the style of Tang and Song dynasties, or the Yuan and Ming

[165] Yiming, "Zhongguo huaxue yanjiuhui dishierci chengji zhanlan canguanji" [中国画学研究会第十二次成绩展览参观记], *Yilin Yuekan* 70 (1935): 16.
[166] "Gudu yitan da huoyue: Zhongguo huaxue yanjiuhui di shierci zhanlan qianzou qu" [故都艺坛大活跃！中国画学研究会第十二次展览前奏曲], *Da Gongbao*, September 6, 1935, supplement.

			dynasties, "with no Qianjia influence of the Qing dynasty at all" (Fig. 79); 2. bird and flower painting in *gongbi* style (Fig. 80); 3. literati-style ink painting (Fig. 81); 4. animal painting; and 5. *jiehua*. More and more members of the society were professionals, and they took their spare time to study and engage in art. The number of female members increased as well (Fig. 82).[167]
14	June 20–27, 1937	Offices	More than 200 people participated in the exhibition, with more than 500 paintings on display, including landscape (Fig. 83), figure (Fig. 84), bird and flower painting (Fig. 85), and *jiehua*, in both *gongbi* and *xieyi* styles. The exhibition was praised for two things. One was that there were no careless, rough paintings on display. The other was that teaching assistants who had not painted any new work in the past eight or nine years produced new paintings for this exhibition (Fig. 86). A number of newly joined famous artists also exhibited their works.[168]
15	April 1938	Offices	The day after the opening of the exhibition, Zhou Zhaoxiang took a photo of the young members outside the exhibition hall (Fig. 87).[169] *Yilin Yuekan* published some of the members' paintings on exhibit, including

[167] Yishujizhe, "Zhongguo huaxue yanjiuhui dishisanci chengji zhanlanhui canguanji" [中国画学研究会第十三次成绩展览会参观记], *Yilin Yuekan* 82 (1936): 16.
[168] Wenhuajizhe, "Zhongguo huaxue yanjiuhui dishisici chengji zhanlan canguanji" [中国画学研究会第十四次成绩展览参观记], *Yilin Yuekan* 92 (1937): 16.
[169] *Yilin Yuekan* 102 (1938): 9.

			landscape (Fig. 88), and bird and flower (Fig. 89) styles. Zhou Zhaoxiang, Qi Gong (启功, 1912–2005), Wu Guangyu (吴光宇, 1908–1970), and He Haixia (何海霞, 1908–1998) all participated in the exhibition.
16	June 4–11, 1939	Offices	Both Xu Shichang and Zhou Zhaoxiang contributed paintings to the exhibition. Xu's large-scale painting *Rocks* was highly praised (Fig. 90). Zhou was especially admired for his landscapes and ink flowers (Fig. 91). He was praised by a Japanese art critic: "[Zhou] has viewed the entire imperial collection and is proficient in appreciating ancient artworks. His works thus absorb the essence of ancient masterpieces and represent the true meaning of literati painting. Zhou is with no doubt one of the most important figures of the northern art world."[170] Huang Binhong presented a painting titled *Travel in the Shu Mountain* (蜀山纪游图) at the request of Zhou Zhaoxiang. Zhou Huaimin (周怀民, 1907–1996), an advisor of the CPRS, wrote an article for the exhibition recalling the past twenty years of the CPRS. As he noted, the society had had more than 400 members by 1939, many of whom were important figures in art circles or were professors at different art schools and colleges.

[170] Jian Bai, "Zhongguo huaxuehui zhi erdajia" [中国画学会之二大家], *Liyan huakan* 36 (1939): 24.

			Zhou Huaimin claimed that the society's insistence on "careful research on ancient methods and broad acquisition of new knowledge" and its struggle toward it set a good example for colleagues of the art world.[171]
17	July 21–28, 1940	Dining Hall	"Paintings of the members are never meant to be sold, but are allowed to be 'transferred' at a certain price. Part of the profits will be used as funding for the society."[172] "The CPRS makes two most notable contributions. One is that it recruits and cultivates a large quantity of young artists every year. And the other is that a majority of the most famous artists in northern China, especially Beijing, are members/advisors of the society. Many members are art teachers in art schools and colleges."[173] About 500 paintings from more than 200 artists were on display (Fig. 92).[174]
18	June 22–29, 1941	Dining Hall	Altogether 800 paintings were on display. Most of the famous Beijing traditional artists contributed to the show. Many of the paintings on display were ordered or purchased by the audience. On just the first day of the exhibition, up to 3,000 yuan worth of art was sold.

[171] Zhou Huaimin, "Zhongguo huaxue yanjiuhui ershinian zhi huiyi" [中国画学研究会二十年之回忆], *Liyan huakan* 36 (1939): 29.
[172] "Zhongguo huaxue yanjiuhui zhanlan kaimu" [中国画学研究会展览开幕], *Liyan huakan* 95 (1940): 21.
[173] "Zhongguo huaxuehui di shiqici chengjizhan" [中国画学会第十七次成绩展], *Liyan huakan* 95 (1940): 20.
[174] "Zhongguo huaxuehui zhanlan canguanji" [中国画学会展览参观记], *Liyan huakan* 96 (1940): 21.

			Visitors were mostly collectors, painters or cultural celebrities of Beijing, who left many helpful critics and comments of the exhibits to the CPRS. Zhou Zhaoxiang, Xiao Sun, Chen Banding, Wang Xuetao, and Xu Zonghao collaboratively executed nine paintings, which were highly received in the exhibition. Zhou, Chen, Huang Binhong, and Zhang Daqian all contributed high-quality works. Landscapes covered a big portion of the exhibits. On display were also fine examples of figure, bird and flower, and animal painting.[175] There were dozens of female members, most of whom studied bird and flower and figure painting. They presented good works in the exhibition.[176]
19	Aug.16–23, 1942	Dining Hall and Offices	Liu Lingcang stated in his introduction to the exhibition that it differed from the society's former achievement exhibitions in six ways: 1. It was planned one year ahead of its opening, thus presented paintings with good quality. 2. Many advisors contributed their latest works, or even paintings specially made for the exhibition. 3. Zhou Zhaoxiang (Fig. 93) and many other advisors of the society provided great literati paintings. 4. A good

[175] "Zhongguo huaxuehui zhanlan shengkuang" [中国画学会展览盛况], *Xin Beijingbao*, June 23, 1941.
[176] "Zhongguo huaxue yanjiuhui zhanlan yuwen" [中国画学研究会展览预闻], *Sanliujiu huabao* 16, no. 9 (1941): 26.

			number of great figure paintings were exhibited, from not only advisors or teaching assistants but also new members. 5. More large-scale paintings were on display, including one from him. 6. The exhibition area was large enough to show all the paintings.[177]
20	July 3–10, 1943	Offices	Liu Lingcang was requested by Zhou Zhaoxiang to write an article commemorating the twentieth achievement exhibition. Liu took the opportunity to review and summarize the CPRS's history and achievements. He proudly asserted that the CPRS was well recognized in society, citing as evidence: 1. Every CPRS achievement exhibition drew a high volume of visitors. 2. The CPRS had recruited more than 500 members so far. Once a large-scale exhibition of Chinese art was organized in foreign countries, the CPRS was surely invited to present works; the same applied to domestic exhibitions, such as the two National Exhibitions of Fine Arts and other key internal exhibitions. Liu concluded with four major achievements of the CPRS: 1. It started in the late 1920s to distribute the art journal *Yilin xunkan* (later changed to *Yilin yuekan*), which published well-researched *jinshi* antiquities and tens of thousands of paintings from the

[177] Liu Lingcang, "Zhongguo huaxue yanjiuhui shijiuci zhanlan jiece" [中国画学研究会十九次展览介词], *Liyan huakan* 203 (1942): 28.

			Tang, Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties. The art journal had become rare and valuable art resource in the 1940s. 2. The society remained committed to its motto of "careful research on ancient methods and broad acquisition of new knowledge" and made great achievements in studying ancient methods, which was revealed in paintings displayed at achievement exhibitions. 3. The CPRS successfully cultivated a large number of talented personnel that served as advisors or as professors at different art institutions and schools. 4. Figure painting was one major focus of the society. Its two advisors, Wu Guangyu and Liu Lingcang, were said to monopolize Beijing's figure painting realm—figure paintings based on their models were seen in almost all art exhibitions in Beijing.[178]
25	Oct. 26–Nov. 2, 1947	Offices	Huang Binhong again participated in the exhibition. Zhang Daqian's *Red Leaves of Qingcheng* (青城红叶) was marked at an astounding price of 12,000,000 yuan.[179]

a. No information is found as to which exhibition this was.

Several important features of the CPRS's achievement exhibitions are evident from the table.

[178] Ibid., 19.
[179] Huang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu* [黄宾虹年谱] (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2005), 485.

First, almost all exhibitions happened in summer, when Central Park received the most visitors. The audience could appreciate the artworks while enjoying the beautiful scenery of the park. The shows typically lasted around a week.

Second, all members of the society contributed to the exhibitions. The number of participants was usually around two hundred, about half of its average membership. Female participants reached several dozen. Paintings by advisors and students were sometimes exhibited separately: one room for advisors and teaching assistants and the other for student members. A group photo of participating members was often taken to commemorate the event.

Third, there was no constraint on form, subject matter, or style. Landscapes, bird and flowers, figure paintings, animal paintings, and *jiehua* were all welcome. Both *gongbi* and *xieyi* styles were accepted. Participants could submit more than one painting. The total number of exhibited works varied from around four hundred to eight hundred. Members could continue to submit paintings even up to the last minute before the exhibition opened.

Fourth, hanging scrolls were usually displayed on the walls while hand scrolls, album leaves, and fans were put on the show tables in the middle of the exhibition room. Artworks were sometimes so numerous that they had to be shown in rotation.

Fifth, the CPRS's journal *Yilin Xunkan* and *Yilin Yuekan* usually selected a couple of paintings to publish after the exhibition, giving priority to works by founding members and advisors. Paintings by student members could be chosen as well.

Sixth, all exhibitions were free to the public. Catalogues were at times printed and distributed to visitors. Parts of the exhibits were photographed and made into prints, which were then sold. Mass media was invited occasionally to publicize the shows. Young students and artists were welcome to study and copy the artworks on display.

Seventh, members of the Hu Society often participated in the exhibitions, suggesting that the two groups maintained a close relationship.

Eighth, the artworks on display were not meant for sale, but rather to demonstrate members' achievement in painting. Due to lack of funding, the last couple of shows started to sell exhibited paintings, all at reasonable prices. A portion of the profits was used to fund the CPRS.

Ninth, the exhibits were well received by local media. News reports/articles often accompanied the shows, written either by the CPRS members or journalists. In these reports, the CPRS was said to be the largest and most important *guohua* group in Beijing. Its stated mission, "careful research on ancient methods and broad acquisition of new knowledge," was stressed and highly praised. Its contribution to preserving and developing Chinese art tradition was well recognized.

Achievement exhibitions held by the CPRS attracted paintings not only by its members but also by artists from the larger Beijing area. Artists working on all subject matters and formats of *guohua* could submit paintings to the exhibitions. The institution also employed various strategies to appeal to a general audience, such as

publishing exhibition catalogues, selling prints of exhibited artworks, and inviting mass media to promote the exhibitions. The CPRS successfully expanded its recognition among the Beijing art circles through these exhibitions and attracted famous *guohua* masters such as Huang Binhong and Zhang Daqian to join the group and contribute to the shows. It was through the broad influence of the exhibitions and the frequent exchange and communication facilitated by the CPRS that the art world in Beijing stayed united and thriving.

3.2 Sino-Japanese Joint Exhibitions

Holding Sino-Japanese joint exhibitions was the major focus of the CPRS in its beginning years. The idea of holding such a joint exhibition started from the encounter of a Japanese artist, Watanabe Shimpō, with a group of Beijing artists.[180] In the summer of 1918, Watanabe, a famous *nihonga* painter, had the opportunity to view several elite art collections during his tour in northern China, including the imperial treasures in the Forbidden City and the Hanmutang Collection (寒木堂) of Yan Shiqing. Watanabe managed to get in contact with Yan Shiqing, then the head of foreign affairs in Hebei, through Bansai Rihachirō. Yan then introduced Watanabe to Jin Cheng.[181] In December that year, Yan and Jin gathered a group of Beijing artists to hold a reception for Watanabe, during which the idea of a joint exhibition by Chinese and Japanese artists was finalized.

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[180] Chizuko Yoshida, "Dacun xiya he zhongguo—yi ta wannian de wuci fanghua wei zhongxin" [大村西崖和中国——以他晚年的五次访华为中心], trans. Liu Xiaolu, *Yiyuan* 1 (1997): 25.
[181] Wong, *Parting the Mists*, 103.

However, artists in Beijing, as one contemporary observed, were "loose and disorganized." No artist associations in Beijing at the time had the experience to organize exhibitions, which motivated Jin Cheng and Zhou Zhaoxiang to assemble their colleagues and establish the Chinese Painting Research Society.[182]

A short biography of Jin Cheng published in *Hushe Yuekan* proposes a different opinion. The author states that more and more contemporary artists eagerly advocated the Western style of painting. Concerned about the gradual elimination of ancient masters' spirit and ancient methods of painting, Jin Cheng founded the CPRS with several *guohua* enthusiasts.[183]

These two opinions do not necessarily conflict with each other. While the underlying rationale behind the founding of the CPRS was to unite *guohua* artists to counteract Western art influence, Watanabe's proposal for a joint Sino-Japanese exhibition catalyzed the final decision.

In the spring of 1919, Watanabe, after returning to Japan, drafted, together with his colleague Araki Jippō (1872–1944), a concrete plan for a joint exhibition to be held in Beijing. The idea was also applauded by Japanese art celebrities such as Masaki Naohiko (1862–1940), Kawai Gyokudō (1873–1957), Kobori Tomoto (1864–1931), and Komuro Suiun (1873–1957). The artists who had initiated the exhibition extensively called for artworks in Japan and collected about two hundred by September that year.[184] The September 20th issue of *Bijutsu geppō* in 1919

[182] Ran, "Dongfang huihua xiehui yuanshi keshu."
[183] "Jing Gongbei shilue" [金拱北事略], *Hueshe Yuekan* 1: 2–3.
[184] Yoshida, "Dacun xiya he zhongguo," 25.

announced that the exhibition would open within a month.[185] It did not happen, however, until two years later, because of the intense anti-Japanese sentiments in Beijing after the May Fourth Incident, in 1919.

The first Sino-Japanese joint exhibition finally opened on November 23, 1921, at the Euro-America Returned Students Association (欧美同学会) in the Shidazimiao district of Beijing, and lasted for eight days. About seventy paintings were brought from Tokyo for the event and 580 yuan of the amount sold were donated to Chinese charities.[186] Watanabe recalled in his article commemorating Jin Cheng, "The exhibition was a big success. President Xu Shichang and Li Yuanhong (黎元洪, 1864–1928),[187] and Prime Minister Jin Yunpeng (靳云鹏, 1877–1951) attended the exhibition and bought several Japanese paintings."[188] Famous artists from both southern and northern China participated in the exhibition, which later continued at the Business Club of the Hebei Park in Tianjin.[189]

On May 2 to 15, 1922, the second joint exhibition took place in Tokyo. The Sino-Japanese Business Association (Nikka Jitsugyo Kyokai 日华实业协会) funded the exhibition. It ran for two weeks at a commercial association called the Tokyo Prefectural Institute of Awards for Commercial and Manufacturing Achievements

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[185] Mayumi Kamata, "Chinese Art Exhibitions in Japan, ca. 1900 to 1931" (M.A. thesis, The Ohio State University, 2001), 25.
[186] Wong, *Parting the Mists*, 104. For the original source, see Matsushita Shigeru, "Nikka shinzen no keisei to natta Nikka rengo kaiga tenrankai," *Shina bijutsu* 1, no. 1 (August 1922): 9–10.
[187] Li Yuanhong was President of the Republic of China, 1916–1917 and 1922–1923.
[188] Watanabe Shimpō, "Hushe banyuekan chuban ganyan jianyi daowei zhuchang zhongri yishu tixiezhe wangyou Jin Gongbei xiansheng" [湖社半月刊出版感言兼以悼慰主唱中日艺术提携者亡友金拱北先生], *Hushe Yuekan* 1: 9.
[189] Lv, *Hushe yanjiu*, 45.

(Tokyofuchonai Shoko Shoreikan 东京府厅内商工奖励馆).[190] Chinese representatives were three members of the CPRS—Jin Cheng, Chen Shizeng, and Jin's student Wu Jingting (吴镜汀, 1904–1972, Fig. 94). They brought around four hundred paintings by some sixty artists from the Beijing and Shanghai regions to Japan. Organizers of the Japanese side held receptions for the Chinese participants (Fig. 95), and disseminated flyers and published a memorial catalogue for the exhibition named *Nikka rengo kaiga tenrankai zuroku*. It published thirty-three paintings by Chinese artists (including Jin Cheng and Chen Shizeng and their pupils at the CPRS) and sixty-six by the Japanese. Participating Chinese artists were invited by their Japanese colleagues to the Japanese version of elegant gatherings and they collaborated on paintings. Chen Shizeng brought back a small album after the exhibition that contained paintings by Komuro Suiun, Kawai Gyokudō, Ōmura Seigai, Watanabe Shimpō, and so forth.[191]

The exhibited works were available for sale. Japanese buyers such as members of the Imperial Household Department and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs purchased paintings that were worth approximately 10,000 yuan in total.[192] An earthquake happened in Japan during the exhibition. Jin Cheng initiated a donation of relief funds and raised thousands of yuan.[193]

Japanese artist Sakai Saisui wrote review articles of the exhibition and commented on both Chinese and Japanese paintings on display. He described the

[190] *Nikka rengo kaiga tenrankai zuroku* (Tokyo: Nikka rengo kaiga tenrankai, 1922), preface.
[191] Zhong Feng, "Nanping bashi zishu" [南萍八十自述], *Duyun* 8 (June 1985), 71.
[192] Wong, *Parting the Mists*, 107–8.
[193] Watanabe, "Hushe banyuekan chuban ganyan," 9.

brushstrokes in Jin Cheng and Chen Shizeng's landscapes as "sensitive," and praised the painting of Wang Mengbai (王梦白, 1888–1934), saying that it revealed a perfect balance of vitality and tranquility. The bird and flower painting by Tao Rong was executed with soft brushstrokes and vibrant colors. Sakai concluded that the style of Wu Changshi was prominent among the exhibited Chinese works.[194] Japanese exhibits, on the other hand, had a clear emphasis on color instead of lines, which demonstrated Western influence.[195]

One of the many achievements of the 1922 exhibition was that it introduced Qi Baishi to the Japanese and eventually earned him fame back in China. Qi had been ignored by the Beijing art world before this exhibition. In 1917, at age 55, he moved to Beijing from the small village of Xiangtan in Hunan province. At first, he could barely make a living: "I was asking for two silver yuan for a fan, which was half of what other artists charged in general. Even so, few came to inquire; it was a very depressing life."[196] The turning point of his art came about through his friendship with Chen Shizeng, who suggested that Qi invent his own expressive vehicle. At the age of fifty-seven, Qi Baishi wrote in his diary, "My work after the age of fifty is in the deceptively simple style of Xuege (八大山人, ca. 1626–1705). To escape the chaos of my native village I came to Beijing, but very few people seem to understand my paintings. A friend [Chen Shizeng] has advised me to change my style and I have

[194] Mayumi, "Chinese Art Exhibitions in Japan," 28. For original source, see Sakai Saisui, "Nikkaten kara mita Shina gendai no ga," *Bijutsu Geppō* 9, no. 3 (1922): 12.
[195] Mayumi, "Chinese Art Exhibitions in Japan," 28. For original source, see Sakai Saisui, "Furansu gendai bijutsu to Nikka Rengo Bijutsu no tenkan," *Bijutsu Geppō* 9, no. 3 (1922): 1.
[196] Liu Xilin, "Qin Baishi lun" [齐白石论], *Duoyun* 38 (1993): 123. Translation in Wong, *Parting the Mists*, 108.

taken his advice."[197] Qi called the action of changing his style in the late years after his settlement in Beijing *shuai nian bian fa* (衰年变法, late transformation). He created his own "red flower and inky leaf" (红花墨叶) style, which resembled Wu Changshi's vibrant colors and dynamic brushworks.

Chen brought to the 1922 Sino-Japanese exhibition Qi's new paintings, including landscapes and flower paintings, and promoted them. To everyone's amazement, Qi's works received unprecedented praise. They were sold out at the price of 150 yuan each; landscapes were even as high as 250 yuan. Some of Qi's and Chen's paintings were selected by the French for the Paris art exhibition. The Japanese organizers made the two artists' artworks and lives into a movie to play in the Tokyo Art Academy.[198] Qi recalled this joyful moment in a poem:

> With dabs of rouge I paint apricot blossoms.
> Bearing a hundred gold pieces, all compete to celebrate a foot of paper.
> All my life I have avoided self-promotion;
> The old painter is known throughout the sea-country [Japan].[199]

After his successful entry into the Japanese art world in 1922, Qi Baishi, once struggled for a living, was now one of Beijing's most sought-after artists. Qi

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[197] Ye Qianyu, "Qi Baishi's Late Transformation," trans. Xiong Zhenru, *Chinese Literature* (Spring 1985): 91.
[198] Zhang Cixi, *Baishi laoren zishu* [白石老人自述] (Taibei: Zhuanji wenxue chubanshe, 1967), 98–100.
[199] Qi Liangci, "Baishi laoren yu Chen Shizeng" [白石老人与陈师曾] in *Yilin shuju,* ed. Xiao Qian (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1992), 67–68. Translation in Wong, *Parting the Mists*, 108.

mentioned, "This is all because of Shizeng's help and support—I will never forget him."[200]

The third exhibition was originally scheduled for the autumn of 1923. However, a disastrous earthquake, about 8 on the Richter scale, struck the Kanto region in Tokyo and Yokohama on September 1, 1923. Later that same month the CPRS lost one of its crucial figures, Chen Shizeng, who died prematurely at age 47. Liang Qichao equated his passing to "an earthquake in Chinese art."[201] These events postponed the third exhibition until the next year.

In 1924, the third exhibition opened at Beijing's Central Park, the favored exhibition site of the CPRS, on April 24. The tragedies did not dampen the enthusiasm of either side. On the contrary, they stimulated passion in artists from both countries. Supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japanese artists were more active in this exhibition than they were in the previous two. Around two hundred and fifty paintings by some fifty artists, including works by top names like Takeuchi Seiho, Komuro Suiun, and Hirafuku Hyakusui (1877–1933), were sent from Tokyo and Kyoto to Beijing. Twelve Japanese artists, including Watanabe Shimpō, Komuro Suiun, and Araki Jipo, came to China to attend the exhibition. On the Chinese side, one hundred *guohua* artists, including Jin Cheng, Zhou Zhaoxiang, Xu Shichang, Wu Changshi, and Liu Haisu, submitted about two hundred fifty paintings.[202] Compared to its predecessors, the exhibition was more impressive in

[200] Zhang, *Baishi laoren zishu*, 99.
[201] Wong, *Parting the Mists*, 109.
[202] *Shen bao* [申报], May 15, 1924; *Shishi xinbao* [时事新报], May 17, 1924.

scope and quality and much better organized.[203] Held in Central Park for a week, the third Sino-Japanese joint exhibition attracted thousands of artists, politicians, and Beijing locals. Landscapes by Hirafuku Hyakusui and Araki Jippō were together sold for as much as 800 yuan.[204] On May 17 to 19, the exhibition moved on to Shanghai.

The fourth joint exhibition came again at a time of turmoil and anti-Japanese fervor. On May 30, 1925, Shanghai Municipal police, under the orders of British officers, fired on a group of Chinese who were protesting the prior killing and wounding of workers by Japanese factory managers in Shanghai. Demonstrations and strikes fired up throughout urban China, which far exceeded the May Fourth movement demonstrations in both scale and involvement.[205] These confrontations set off another wave of anti-Japanese sentiment in China.

In spring 1926, the Japanese ambassador to China, Yoshizawa Kenkichi (1874–1965), sent Counselor Shigemitsu Mamoru (1887–1957) to present to the CPRS an invitation letter to the fourth joint exhibition from Japanese artists. In April, Watanabe came to China to confirm the CPRS members' attendance to the exhibition in Japan. However, recent hostilities toward Japan visibly discouraged members' support. Chen Banding, one of the artists who had promised to bring the works to Japan in person, canceled at the last minute. Another artist, Xiao Qianzhong, declined to step in despite being offered 500 yuan for travel expenses. Pang Laichen (庞莱臣 1864–1949) and Wu Hufan (吴湖帆, 1894–1968) from Shanghai were also reluctant

[203] John C. Ferguson, "Editorial Comments," *China Journal of Science and Arts* 2 (July 1924): 327.
[204] Wong, *Parting the Mists*, 110.
[205] For detailed account of the May Thirtieth Movement, see Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing*, 182–93.

to participate. Zhou Zhaoxiang, who could not bear to let Jin Cheng endure the commitment alone, thus decided to accompany him.[206] Jin Cheng went to Shanghai at the end of May to collect paintings from the Southern artists and left for Japan directly from there. Zhou Zhaoxiang and Jin's son Jin Kaifan departed from Beijing on June 3.

The exhibition was held between June 18 and June 30 in 1926 at the Tokyo Municipal Art Museum and moved to Osaka Central Public Hall in July. Japanese artists, including Watanabe Shimpō, Komuro Suiun, and Araki Jippō, attended the exhibition. While only 90 Japanese paintings appeared on display, the Chinese artists brought with them 376 paintings to publicize Chinese art to the Japanese audience.[207] Some of the paintings on display were made into postcards. The Imperial Household Department bought Zhou Zhaoxiang's painting *Bamboo Grove and Waterfall* (竹林高瀑). Zhou recorded in his "Journal of Eastern Travel" that on June 22, after viewing exhibited Japanese paintings, he visited another show that was then on display at the Tokyo Municipal Art Museum, "the Fourth Innovative Japanese Art Exhibition." After comparison, he claimed, "works [in the Innovative Exhibition] largely assimilated Western methods, but I still prefer innovation through ancient methods."[208]

A catalogue was produced for the joint exhibition. Over one hundred exhibited paintings were selected and reproduced in black-and-white images. It

[206] Zhou Zhaoxiang, "Dongyou riji," *Yilin Xunkan* 1: 3.
[207] Mayumi, "Chinese Art Exhibitions in Japan," 34.
[208] Zhou's account of the trip in *Yilin Xunkan* 1–72 tells in great detail of the exhibition.

covered an array of traditionalist painting subjects, including landscapes, bird and flowers, figures, and animal paintings. A number of calligraphy works were also included in the catalogue. Works by both male and female artists were represented.[209] Participating artists ranged from organizers, government officials, and Qing aristocrats to established artists and lesser known or younger artists.[210]

The catalogue was published by the Oriental Painting Association (*Dongfang huihua xiehui* 东方绘画协会). The establishment of this association was one of the major events of the fourth joint exhibition. Its aim was summarized in *The Year Book of Japanese Art*:

> This Association was organized in 1926, and its object is to bring the artists of Japan and China together with a view to the study and development of Oriental art. In addition to sponsoring art exhibitions, which are held in China and Japan on alternative years, it undertakes to promote intercourse and exchange of ideas between the artists of the two countries.[211]

After three rounds of negotiations, Jin Cheng, Zhou Zhaoxiang, and Masaki Naohiko signed the organization's mandate in July 1926. For the Chinese side, this was a purely spontaneous act by an unofficial society. The Japanese side, however,

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[209] Toho Kaiga Kyokai, *Dai yonkai Nikka kaiga rengo tenrankai zuroku* (Tokyo: Toho Kaiga Kyokai, 1926).
[210] Aida Yuen Wong categorized paintings in the catalogue according to four groups of painters: 1. organizers; 2. established artists; 3. artists in the circle of leftover Qing aristocrats; and 4. lesser-known or younger artists. See Aida Yuan Wong, "Inventing Eastern Art in Japan and China, ca. 1890s to ca. 1930s" (Ph.D diss., Columbia University, 1999), 103.
[211] *The Year Book of Japanese Art* (Tokyo: National Committee of Japan on Intellectual Co-operation, 1928), 117. Translation in Mayumi, "Chinese Art Exhibitions in Japan," 38.

had the Japanese government's support, even though the arrangement seemed to be a purely civilian affair. The mandate outlined plans for staffing and institutional structure. Headquarters would be set up in both China and Japan. Each had its own president, deputy president, and officers.[212] Twelve Japanese artists from the Imperial Art Academy (Teikoku Bijutsu-in) agreed to serve on the executive committee for the Japanese side.[213] Xu Shichang was elected president of the Chinese headquarters, and the rest of the staff were yet to be determined. The mandate ordered that three activities be held regularly: 1. annual exhibitions; 2. artistic communication between Chinese and Japanese artists; and 3. other events related to the research and development of oriental art. The mandate also determined to use part of the Japanese remission of the Boxer Indemnity as activity funds, although this arrangement was not included in the final written document.[214]

The Oriental Painting Association did not last long, however, due to conflicts that erupted nearly from the beginning. Zhou Zhaoxiang and Jin Kaifan, or rather, the CPRS and the Hu Society, disagreed on personnel and posts. Growing tensions between China and Japan exacerbated the cleavage. In the beginning of 1931, the association was officially dissolved.[215]

These four joint exhibitions, which facilitated exchanges on traditional art between China and Japan, were epochal. They were organized by non-governmental institutions with government sponsorship. Each show recruited a large body of

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[212] Ranxi, "Dongfang huihua xiehui yuanshi keshu," *Yilin Xunkan* 63: 2–3.
[213] Wong, *Parting the Mists*, 114.
[214] Ranxi, "Dongfang huihua xiehui yuanshi keshu," *Yilin Xunkan* 64: 2.
[215] "Huajie suowen" [画界琐闻], *Hushe yuekan* 41 (April 1931): 16.

artworks and attracted large audiences. The exhibitions accelerated free and energetic artistic exchanges between China and Japan and promoted the East Asian artistic tradition.

The CPRS's passion for such exchanges sprang out of their eagerness to foster traditional Chinese art and to expand the influence of Chinese art in the entire region of Asia.[216] The joint exhibitions were the first few nationwide exhibitions held in Republican China, followed by the state-sponsored First National Art Exhibition, held in Shanghai in 1929. They were also among the first exhibitions in which Chinese artists participated overseas. They predated a series of significant government-sponsored exhibitions of twentieth-century Chinese painting held in Europe during the 1930s (discussed below). The exhibitions thus fit into the larger picture of creating an international audience for Chinese art.

3.3 The First National Exhibition of Fine Arts, 1929

Right after the Northern Expedition and the "reunification" of China led by the Nationalist Party, the First National Exhibition of Fine Arts was held in Shanghai from April 10 to 30 in 1929 under the support of the Ministry of Education. It was the first officially organized national art exhibition. First proposed in 1925,[217] the exhibition was held at the Xinpuyu Hall, a complex of two three-floor buildings in the Huangpu District of Shanghai. The first floor contained various art printing companies, calligraphy and painting stores, and eateries. In the east building, the

[216] Yun, "Minguo shiqi de liangge jingpai meishu shetuan."
[217] Liu, *Zhongguo Meishu de Xiandaihua*, 67–68.

second floor was devoted to sections of Western painting, applied arts, and photography; and the third floor, reference works. Chinese painting and calligraphy occupied the second and third floor of the west building, with a small section for sculptures.

Artworks on display were divided into seven sections: (1) Chinese painting and calligraphy exhibited in nine showrooms, including 1,231 works from about 450 artists; (2) bronzes and stones, 75 pieces; (3) Western style painting in four rooms, 354 pieces; (4) sculptures, 57 pieces; (5) architectural design, 34 pieces; (6) applied arts, 280 pieces; (7) artistic photography, 227 pieces. There were also paintings by contemporary Japanese artists, works by foreigners living in China, masterpieces by recently deceased artists, and ancient Chinese paintings that served as so-called "reference works." Altogether three thousand works were on display (excluding ancient paintings, with which the total number would reach up to ten thousand).

These works were contributed by artists all over the country. About 1,080 artists provided 4,060 works for the show, with 1,200 pieces by 549 people being selected. A committee of leading officials and established painters selected the works. Japanese artists brought more than 100 paintings to the exhibition, all oil paintings depicting human figures in different styles. Eighty-two of them were selected for the show.[218]

The exhibition had several distinguishing features. First, an exhibition area was devoted specially to works by recently deceased artists, including Jin Cheng (Fig.

[218] Li Yuyi, "Jiaoyubu quanguo meishu zhanlanhui canguanji" [教育部全国美术展览会参观记], *Funv zazhi* 7, no. 15 (July 1929): 5.

96) and Chen Shizeng. Second, a special exhibition hall was set aside for old masterpieces, including paintings of the Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties from private collections. Third, a venue for Japanese paintings was installed. Ancient Chinese paintings were the focus of the exhibition. There were so many pieces that they had to take turns to be exhibited. Famous collectors from the entire country, including Chen Xiaodie, Pang Yuanji, Ye Gongchuo (叶恭绰, 1881–1968), Huang Binhong, and Zhang Daqian, presented the finest pieces of their collections. *Shenbao* continually published reports, with news on ancient masterpieces taking up half its coverage. Classical paintings rather than contemporary artworks were apparently much more attractive to the general public. This effect was due largely to the intention of exhibition organizers. On one hand, they intended through this opportunity to gather items from private collectors. On the other hand, they hoped to alert the public to the loss of national treasures overseas. This emphasis on ancient artworks in the exhibition continued into the second national exhibition, held in 1937.[219]

Scholars and artists reviewed and commented on artworks on display. Li Yuyi divided contemporary Chinese painting into three categories: (1) those that continued the tradition of the Qing dynasty; (2) the eclectic school, which was highly influenced by Japanese painting styles and was exemplified by the works of brothers Gao Jianfu and Gao Qifeng (高奇峰, 1889–1933); and (3) the new *guohua,* which expressed

[219] Yan Juanying, "Guanfang meishu wenhua kongjian de bijiao: 1927nian Taiwan meishu zhanlanhui yu 1919nian Shanghai quanguo meishu zhanlanhui" [官方美术文化空间的比较：1927 年台湾美术展览会与 1929 年上海全国美术展览会], *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 73 (December 2002): 650.

Chinese artistic conception and spirit through Western methods and Chinese materials. Interestingly, Li classified Jin Cheng with the eclectic school.[220] He must have misunderstood Jin's *gongbi*/*xieshi* technique, which came from the influence of Song dynasty paintings, not from Japanese or Western methods.

Chen Xiaodie carefully compared various styles of exhibited works and divided more than 1,300 *guohua* into six schools: (1) the retro school, which followed the Four Wangs; (2) the new school, which turned to the styles of Bada Shanren and Shi Tao; (3) the eclectic school, represented by the Gao brothers; (4) the art academy school, which was dominated by teachers and students from the Shanghai Art Academy, including Liu Haisu and Lv Fengzi (吕凤子, 1886–1959); (5) the Southern school, represented by Jin Cheng and members of the CPRS and the Hu Society, which followed Song and Yuan dynasty painting styles; and (6) the literati school, embodied by Wu Hufan and Wu Zhongxiong (吴仲熊, 1899–?).[221]

The exhibited works by *guohua* and Western painting artists well represented the status quo of the contemporary Chinese art scene. Ancient masterpieces on display demonstrated the strength of private collectors. Scholars and artists all gave positive feedback toward this national exhibition. They believed that it not only would cure depressed people but also would earn China the status it deserved as one of the world's ancient civilizations.[222] They alleged that it would benefit the country and the

[220] Li, "Jiaoyubu quanguo meishu zhanlanhui canguanji," 6
[221] Chen, "Cong meizhan zuopin ganjue dao xiandai guohua huapai," 1–2.
[222] Meng Shouchun, "Meishu yu rensheng" [美术与人生], *Meizhan* 1 (1929): 2.

people like a spring of life.[223] They also hoped that it would elevate the masses' aesthetic taste and capability of art appreciation.[224] The exhibition was the first modern national art exhibition in Chinese history. As a government-sponsored project, it brought different art schools, societies, styles, and ideas onto one stage, and to some extent domesticated the chaotic early republican art scene through governmental power and administration.

Although there were no written records of which members contributed what works, the CPRS was with no doubt an active participant in the exhibition.[225] The artworks of its members, including Jin Cheng and Chen Shizeng, were acknowledged. The joint exhibitions it coheld with Japanese artists might have inspired the 1929 national show to incorporate Japanese paintings and those by foreigners living in China for the aim of promoting artistic exchange.

3.4 State-sponsored Exhibitions in Europe

In the years surrounding the First National Art Exhibition the institutionalization of art bloomed. Many exhibitions were held, new groups were formed, and art education developed. In the meantime, tradition resurged after being

[223] Yu Jifan, "Shengming zhiquan" [生命之泉], *Meizhan* 1 (1929): 4.
[224] Feng Zikai, "Duiyu quanguo meizhan de xiwang" [对于全国美展的希望], *Meizhan* 1 (1929): 5.
[225] Numerous sources attest to the CPRS being an active participant in the national art exhibitions. See Liu, "Zhongguo huaxue yanjiuhui ershici zhanlan ganyan," 19; "Zhongguo huaxueyanjiuhui shilue" [中国画学研究会事略], *Sanliujiu huabao* 15, no. 9 (1941): 26; Shiguang, "Jieshao zhongguo huaxue yanjiuhui" [介绍中国画学研究会], *Liyan huakan* 141 (1941): 33.

fiercely attacked during the May Fourth Movement. The growth of nationalism and the official policy of the nationalist government contributed to this phenomenon.[226]

Although nationalism propelled many intellectuals in the late 1910s and early 1920s to advocate complete westernization in order to save China from foreign threat, it also subsequently, during the late 1920s and 1930s, made many people look at traditional culture from a new perspective.[227] The famous educator and influential traditional scholar Hu Xiansu (胡先骕, 1894–1968) once claimed, "It pains me to think that our ancient civilization would be in one day destroyed by the evils of Western culture."[228] Largely through the efforts of the "reorganization of the heritage" (整理国故) by Hu Shi (胡适, 1891–1962), Liang Qichao (梁启超, 1873–1929), and other scholars, tradition and national heritage were re-recognized.[229] Similarly, traditional art and theory, formerly condemned ferociously for its conservativeness, was given a more rational assessment.[230] Intellectuals and artists started to look for the "native essence" in Chinese traditional art.[231]

The conservative stance of the reigning nationalist party in the 1930s also encouraged the revival of traditional art. After Chiang Kai-shek (蒋介石, 1887–1975), the leader of the nationalist party, united the fragmented country in 1928 and established the capital in Nanjing, the nationalist government started to suppress

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[226] Kao, "China's Response," 142–43.
[227] Ibid., 144–45.
[228] Hu Xiansu, "Shuo jinri jiaoyu zhi weiji" [说今日教育之危机], *Xueheng* 4 (1922): 9.
[229] Chow, *May Fourth Movement* 314–37.
[230] Kao, "China's Response," 144–45.
[231] Vivian Yan Li, "Art Negotiations: Chinese International Art Exhibitions in the 1930s" (M.A. thesis, The Ohio State University, 2006), 15.

liberals and leftists, especially Communists: "The accession to power of the Kuomindang [the nationalist party] in 1927–1928 marked the end of an era in which revolutionary strains had been dominant in the party's program and the beginning of one of the most interesting and instructive of the many efforts in history to make a revolution the heir of ancient tradition."[232] It sought to restore internal order by resuscitating traditional culture, Confucianism in particular. As Joseph Levenson observed, "Twentieth-century Confucianism was not traditional; it was traditionalistic. It was not a serene philosophy but a state of troubled mind. One looked to the past not really for universal wisdom, the touchstone of civilization in general, but for the basis of Chinese civilization, the 'national essence.' This search for the old was something new, a search for the particular Chinese treasure, imperiled now, it seemed, by Chinese revolutionaries of foreign inspiration."[233]

The government's pursuit of a cultural nationalism through the process of a Confucian revival gave the traditional arts a new prestige.[234] Chiang praised the arts of the past and lamented, "It is a pity that most of us have neglected our own arts, for, as a result, we are somewhat behind the Western nations in these fields of artistic achievement."[235] He implied that the reverence for Chinese antiquity and traditional arts would ultimately propel the country's progress toward modernity.

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[232] Mary C. Wright, "From Revolution to Restoration: The Transformation of Kuomindang Ideology," in Levenson, *Modern China*, 99.
[233] Ibid.
[234] Kao, "China's Response," 155.
[235] Chiang Kai-shek, "Generalissimo's Monograph on the New Life Movement," in *Chiang Kai-shek: Soldier and Statesman: Authorized Biography*, ed. Hollington Kong Tong (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1938): 639.

In addition to legitimizing and securing the rule and power of the nationalist party, traditional art was also utilized by the nationalist government to influence the West's reimagination of China and to promote China on the international stage as a competitive modern civilization. During this time, international Chinese art exhibitions became important elements of foreign cultural policy. Between 1933 and 1935, at least seventeen exhibitions of twentieth-century Chinese painting were held in Europe, taking place in fourteen cities in eight different countries. The exhibitions were organized by the artists Liu Haisu and Xu Beihong, and constituted the first major European showings of contemporary Chinese art.[236]

Liu Haisu was one of the most active organizers of exhibitions of Chinese art in Europe during the 1930s. Liu first went to Europe in 1929 with Cai Yuanpei's help, traveling constantly in France, Italy, Germany, and Belgium.[237] He designed for his mission in Europe a two-step plan: to collect modern Chinese paintings to be exhibited in Europe and to secure long-term exhibition exchange agreements with European countries. His proposal for modern Chinese art exhibitions were well received and supported by the European art community.[238]

From March 19 to April 8, 1931, the Exhibition of Contemporary Chinese Painters was opened, under the organization of Liu Haisu, at the Kunstverein Frankfurt, Germany. It contained one hundred works. In the lecture delivered at the opening of the exhibition, Liu stressed his dedication to the display of Chinese

[236] Shelagh Vainker, "Exhibitions of Modern Chinese Painting in Europe, 1933–1935," in Cao and Fan, *Chinese Painting in the Twentieth Century*, 554.
[237] Sullivan, *Art and Artists*, 73.
[238] Liu Haisu, "Promoting Chinese Art," in *Shanghai Modern, 1919–1945*, ed. Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, Zheng Shengtian (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2004), 378.

modern works. Ding Wenyuan wrote a short text in the exhibition catalogue (Fig. 97), observing that most of the works on display belonged to literati-style ink painting.[239] Liu proudly alleged that "the plain, natural and unembellished Chinese style" represented by the works on display well surpassed "the insincere efforts of the Japanese" revealed in the Japanese art exhibition in Berlin in the early spring of the same year.[240] Thus, by purposefully exhibiting modern Chinese ink paintings, Liu hoped to express that Chinese painting maintained its own character and distinct vitality despite the overwhelming Western influence in tumultuous modern times.

The exhibition received unexpected praises in Germany. Encouraged by enthusiastic articles in German newspapers, the Chinese embassy in Germany planned a modern Chinese painting exhibition in Berlin, which was scheduled for 1934 at the Prussian Academy of the Arts.[241]

The 1934 Berlin exhibition, Chinese Contemporary Painting, was the largest and most successful of the exhibitions Liu supervised in Europe. Held at the Academy from January 20 to March 4, 1934, the exhibition was realized under the auspices of the Government of the Chinese Republic, the Society for East Asian Art, and the Prussian Academy of the Arts. Among the members of the Chinese Organizing Committee were famous artists and intellectuals such as Cai Yuanpei, Xu Beihong, Liu Haisu, and Gao Qifeng. The Honorary Committee included the German ambassador to China, Dr. Oskar P. Trautmann, who was also an enthusiastic collector

[239] Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, "Shanghai Modern," in Danzker, Lum, and Zheng, *Shanghai Modern*, 27.
[240] Liu, "Promoting Chinese Art," 378.
[241] Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, "Shanghai Modern," in Danzker, Lum, and Zheng, *Shanghai Modern,* 33.

of Chinese contemporary art, and representatives of major German companies active in China.[242] The German and Chinese governments' passionate participation in the exhibition demonstrated both sides' great desire for cultural and artistic exchanges.

Altogether 296 works by 163 artists were on display. All were traditional *guohua* done by contemporary painters. Cai said in the show's catalogue (Fig. 98) that the German side explicitly desired "pure Chinese works and indeed especially those which express that which is characteristic of Chinese painting."[243] The paintings were mostly recent works, completed in 1932 or 1933 by artists such as Qi Baishi, Zhang Daqian, Pu Ru, Pan Tianshou (潘天寿, 1897–1971), Gao Qifeng, and Liu Haisu.

Interestingly, forty-four works listed in the catalogue were in a section titled "deceased painters," including Jin Cheng, Ren Bonian (任伯年, 1840–1895), and Wu Changshi.[244] This special section most likely borrowed from the idea of exhibiting masterpieces by recently deceased artists in the 1929 First National Exhibition of Fine Arts. Jin Cheng was represented in both shows, indicating the acknowledgement of his artistic achievements by the Chinese art world.

The show was a big success, being well reviewed and widely attended. Of the 229 paintings for sale, 53 were purchased. The exhibition attracted a total of thirteen thousand visitors, including five hundred at the formal opening.[245] It was "hailed by

[242] William Cohn, "Contemporary Chinese Painting," in Danzker, Lum, and Zheng, *Shanghai Modern*, 112.
[243] Li, "Art Negotiations," 52.
[244] Vainker, "Exhibitions of Modern Chinese Painting in Europe," 557.
[245] Ibid., 556.

the entire German press with almost unanimous approval."[246] In a slightly altered form the exhibition later traveled to other places in Europe, including Hamburg (Kunstverein), Dusseldorf, Amsterdam, and London (Fig. 99), before Liu finally returned to Shanghai, in 1935 (Fig. 100).[247]

The Chinese organizers of the show, for nationalistic reasons, chose traditional Chinese ink painting to be the only style of art. Liu Chongjie (刘崇杰, 1880–?), the Chinese envoy to Germany, wrote in his foreword to the catalogue that foreign influences can neither take root nor be comprehended by the people in China; they will leave no significant trace in the light of thousands of years of Chinese history.[248] Liu Haisu in his 1935 article "Promoting Chinese Art" wrote that he hoped to counter Japan's claim to be "the only nation to have attained a high cultural standing in the Orient" and to rectify the European general public's view of China as belonging to the past. He criticized Japanese modern art for catering to western taste and sensibility without expressing its own character. Liu called upon his fellow Chinese artists to "not allow the Japanese to overstep their position by claiming to hold the leading role in the art of the Orient. That is what I have prayed for night and day."[249] Liu's proposition was echoed by many other Chinese scholars. For example, an article discussing the meaning of the Berlin exhibition also stressed that Japan's

[246] Cohn, "Contemporary Chinese Painting," 112.
[247] Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, "Shanghai Modern," in Danzker, Lum, and Zheng, *Shanghai Modern,* 37.
[248] Ibid., 34.
[249] Liu, "Promoting Chinese Art," 378.

advertising itself as the single representative of Oriental art should mobilize Chinese people to publicize Chinese art on the international stage.[250]

Xu Beihong was another figure active in the organization of modern Chinese art exhibitions in Europe. Early in 1933, again under the patronage of Cai Yuanpei, Xu Beihong assembled 191 modern works and 85 ancient works from his own and other private collections for display in Paris. The show, named the Exhibition of Chinese Painting, took place at the Musee du Jeu de Paume from May to June in 1933 (Fig. 101). Leading contemporary artists such as Liu Haisu, Lin Fengmian, Huang Binhong, and Pan Tianshou contributed their works. As indicated in the preface to the catalogue, the show was intended to transform European attitudes to Chinese culture. Xu Beihong in a brief article in the catalogue considered the exhibition to indicate the renaissance of a Chinese national art.[251]

The majority of works were, again, Chinese ink paintings, primarily in the literati style. The French government bought twelve of them, including paintings by Xu Beihong, Zhang Daqian, and Qi Baishi. The exhibition lasted forty-five days and attracted more than twenty thousand visitors.[252] It received positive reviews by French art critics and afterward traveled in different versions to other places in Europe such as Milan (Fig. 102) and Moscow (Fig. 103).

The most notable of the large-scale government-sponsored exhibitions of Chinese art in the West was the International Exhibition of Chinese art held in

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[250] Li Baoquan, "Bolin zhongguo meishu zhanlanhui de yiyi" [柏林中国美术展览会的意义], *Yishu xunkan* 3, no. 1 (1932): 19–20.
[251] Danzker, "Shanghai Modern," 32.
[252] *Liangyou Companion* 82 (1933), 25.

London from November 28, 1935 to March 7, 1936, which established traditional Chinese art on the same plane as the art of Western countries.[253]

The exhibition was proposed not by Chinese artists and intellectuals but rather by a group of British connoisseurs. The organizing committee was led by Sir Percival David, director of the exhibition and collector of Chinese porcelains. The displayed pieces were collected from dealers, private collectors, institutions, and governments all over the world.[254] The most significant part of the exhibition was the contributions of imperial collections that the committee was able to acquire from the Palace Museum. The proposal for a loan of Chinese art objects was submitted to the Chinese government in 1934 and was finally approved by the Ministry of Education, which also supported the former modern Chinese art exhibitions in Europe. In the same year, a Chinese Selection committee was formed to decide which masterpieces were to be sent off to London. The committee refused to let the British delegation have a voice in the selection of the works. The Chinese government was thereby asserting its ultimate ownership over its arts and culture.[255]

Local newspapers greeted the imperial treasures as a remarkable gesture of friendship from the Chinese government.[256] F. T. Cheng, the official Commissioner of the Exhibition appointed by the Chinese government announced that he came to

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[253] John C. Ferguson, "Chinese Art," in *The China Yearbook 1938*, ed. H. G. W. Woodhead (Shanghai: North-China Daily News and Herald, 1938), 406.
[254] Jeannette Shambaugh and David Shambaugh Elliot, *The Odyssey of China's Imperial Art Treasures* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 81.
[255] Li, "Art Negotiations," 66–68.
[256] John C. Ferguson, "Reflections on the London Exhibition of Chinese Art," *T'ien Hsia Monthly* (May 1936): 434.

Britain not only with treasures but also with the goodwill of the Chinese people,[257] indicating the Chinese government's attempt to communicate with the rest of the world through art.

The exhibition opened in Burlington House on Nov. 27, 1935. It included nearly four thousand works of paintings, calligraphy, bronzes, jades, sculpture, pottery, porcelain, textiles, and other miscellaneous objects contributed by fourteen nations. The exhibition objects represented Chinese production up to 1800, thus spanning thirty-five centuries of Chinese culture.[258] According to the exhibition catalogue, the show was founded under the auspices of the king and queen of England, as well as the president of the Chinese Republic.[259] It was the first time that imperial collections of China ever had gone abroad, and the treasures lent by the Chinese government "represent a portion of a highly prized national heritage."[260] Besides 875 pieces of works presented by China (Fig. 104), 179 pieces were from France, from the United States 115, from Sweden 113, from Germany 85, from Holland 49, from Japan 45, from Belgium 28, and from the C. T. Loo Company 38. The list reveals that a great amount of Chinese artworks were lost overseas.[261]

This international quality of the show angered some Chinese patriots. For example, a member of the Committee for the Preservation of Art Treasures in the

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[257] F. T. Cheng, *East & West: Episodes in a Sixty Years' Journey* (New York: Hutchinson, 1951), 156.
[258] Sir Percival David, "The Exhibition of Chinese Art: A Preliminary Survey by Sir Percival David," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 67, no. 393 (December 1935): 239.
[259] *Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Chinese Art, 1935–6: Patrons, Their Majesties the King and Queen, the President of the Chinese Republic* (Royal Academy of Arts: London, 1935), i.
[260] Sir Percival David, "Lectures on Chinese Art," *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 84 (December 1935): 112.
[261] Huan Tongli, "Woguo yishupin liuluo oumei zhi qingkuang" [我国艺术品流落欧美之情况], in *Minguo congshu*, volume 65 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1989): 154–55.

Nanjing government stated that the exhibition was a humiliation to China. He claimed that most of the collections contributing to the show comprised, largely, pieces stolen from China, or pieces illegally acquired from immoral merchants and dealers. Arthur de Carle Sowerby, the honorary director of the Museum of the Royal Asiatic Society, however, denied such accusations and blamed the Chinese government for not able to guard its cultural heritage properly.[262]

Also, Chinese scholars had different opinions regarding how representative the Chinese works exhibited at the London show were. Art objects on display, excluding contemporary items, were mainly antiquities. Also, only pre-nineteenth century artworks were accepted by the British side. Xu Beihong rejected this arrangement from the very beginning. He argued that on the one hand, ancient Chinese art had already been generally acknowledged, thus had no need to be publicized again; on the other hand, the neglect of later artworks meant that the British organizers assumed that no art or culture existed in China after 1800, let alone in contemporary times.[263] Ye Gongchuo believed that the London exhibition helped the world to re-recognize and reevaluate Chinese art. However, he felt that the selection of works could have been improved. First of all, it was questionable whether the selected items could represent a complete picture of Chinese art, given that they were chosen by government representatives. Also, it was impossible for various

[262] Arthur de Carle Sowerby, "Chinese Art in Foreign Lands," *The China Journal* 24 (March 1936): 153.
[263] Xu Beihong, "Zhongguo lanwu: duiyu zhongying yizhan choubei ganyan" [中国澜污——对于中英艺展筹备感言], in *Xu Beihong yishu wenji*, ed. Wang Zhen (Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, 1994), 269–70.

reasons to give a structured and meaningful list of artworks; thus even though enjoyable, the exhibition was inadequate for serious research.[264]

Despite controversies over the exhibited Chinese treasures, the exhibition was overwhelmingly attended. More than 422,000 people visited the show. Large numbers of visitors from Europe and the U.S. assembled at London to see the exhibition.[265] Various newspapers published positive reviews, and many countries requested that the show travel to their realms. The Chinese organizers thus succeeded in appealing to the West with Chinese traditional arts and culture.

The series of state-sponsored international Chinese art exhibitions demonstrated the intense nationalism and conservatism that pervaded China in the 1930s. On the one hand, they stimulated cultural pride in the Chinese masses. On the other hand, they served to earn Chinese art a place in the international art world, and promoted China as a great civilization that remained competitive in the modern era.

Through the internal achievement exhibitions and external Sino-Japanese joint exhibitions, the CPRS successfully promoted its artistic prestige both domestically and internationally. More and more established or young artists were attracted to join the society. Its members' achievements in art were widely acknowledged, evidenced by numerous invitations from art exhibitions at home and abroad. The CPRS's effort in holding these exhibitions preceded and anticipated the fervent nationalism of the

[264] Ye Gongchuo, "Guohua luyan" [国画鲁言], *Hushe yuekan* 90 (1935): 5–6.
[265] Charles Fabens Kelley, *The New Orient: The Chinese Exhibition in London* (La Salle: New Orient Society of America, 1936), 1.

late 1920s and 1930s and coincided with the trend of government-sponsored national and international shows at the time. Just as state-sponsored exhibitions served to earn Chinese art a place in the international world of art, exhibitions by the CPRS offered the government a successful precedent and model, aiding the process of statewide reorganization of the artistic heritage. The CPRS's contributions to various exhibitions thus fit into the larger effort in Chinese culture and politics to create a national and international audience for traditional Chinese art.

Chapter Four: Echoing the Past and Conforming to the Present: Periodicals of the Chinese Painting Research Society in the Nationalist Ferment

To maximally expand its influence and evoke support from the general public, the Chinese Painting Research Society adopted two major modern publicizing strategies. One involved organizing internal achievement exhibitions and international Sino-Japanese exhibitions (discussed in chapter three). The other was the publication of its own art periodicals, *Yilin xunkan* and *Yilin yuekan*. This chapter focuses on these two art journals to examine how the CPRS took advantage of them to publicize and fulfill its stated mission and how the journals echoed the archaeological fever and nationalist agitation of the time.

4.1 Art Publication in China

Art journals emerged in late nineteenth-century China along with "New Learning" (i.e. Western learning). In the wake of the Hundred Days' Reform, various political and scholarly newspapers and periodicals—including art journals—surfaced as new print technology was introduced to China. Two of the earliest published pictorial magazines in this period, *Huanying Huabao* (寰瀛画报, launched in 1876) and *Dianshizhai Huabao* (点石斋画报, 1884 to 1898), marked the beginning of the era of modern art journals. A total of roughly three hundred individual art journals came out between 1912 and 1949, with a detectable surge in the middle of this

period.[266] *Fine Art*, published by the Shanghai Fine Art Academy (上海图画美术学校) in October 1918, was the first modern Chinese journal to specialize in fine arts.

Publishing journals and periodicals became common among private art groups and societies across the country in the 1920s and 1930s. For example, *Huixue Magazine* (绘学杂志) was released on June 1, 1920 by the Institute for Research on Chinese Painting Practice in Beijing University; *Modeling Art* (造型美术) was issued in June 1924 by the Institute for Research on Modeling Art in Beijing University; the China Society for the Study and Appraisal of Stone and Bronze Inscriptions, Calligraphy and Painting issued the magazine *Art View* (艺观) in February 1926; the Hu Society published *Hushe yuekan* (湖社月刊) in November 1927; and the Chinese Painting Society, founded in 1931, published the journal *Guohua Monthly* (国画月刊) in 1934.

These publishing ventures were means to ends, not ends in themselves. As Kai-Wing Chow has stated, "The impact, or nonimpact, of a technology does not depend exclusively on what it can do alone. The specific impact of printing—a technology of multiplying texts—cannot be understood if we consider only the technological advantage of printing in communication. It is not printing itself that determines how it will be used, but rather the specific attitudes of the group who come to use that technology as well as the ecological, economic, social, and political conditions under which a specific technology is developed, introduced, marketed,

[266] Chen Chiyu, *Zhongguo xiandai meishu xueshi* [中国现代美术学史] (Ha'erbin: Heilongjiang meishu chubanshe, 2000), 48.

used, and resisted. These various factors also shaped the symbolic production of the technology itself."[267] The art world was deeply involved in this new field of mass media, partly because of the advancement of the new print technology; but more importantly, because a journal became a mark of prestige for emerging art schools and art groups. Any group that had one was regarded as part of a cultural elite; those without were seen as peripheral.

Lang Shaojun commented on this phenomenon, "[Fine art publishing] provided more opportunities for artists to more conveniently approach and communicate with the ancients, the foreigners, and the contemporaries, shortening the course of learning painting and relevant knowledge…. It encouraged artists' contacts with audience and colleagues, facilitated the circulation and collection of artworks, and assisted mutual echoing between various publications and art schools and groups, thus generating an art atmosphere in society."[268] Modern art journals ushered in a new era for the study and practice of fine art in China. First of all, they guided and promoted the development of art in general. Each journal had a fundamental point of view, either pro-traditional or pro-westernizing, which galvanized members to work toward a common goal. Each art journal also targeted a certain audience, and allowed for in-depth art debates. Furthermore, specialized art periodicals covered both research into art and its active creation. The art news, artworks, and art theories

[267] Kai-wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power in Early Modern China* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 252–53.
[268] Lang Shaojun, "Leixing yu xuepai: 20shiji zhongguohua lue shuo" [类型与学派——20 世纪中国画略说], in Cao and Fan, *Chinese Painting in the Twentieth Century*, 13–14.

published in these journals promoted active exchanges and communication among artists.

The first issue of the CPRS's art periodical *Yilin xunkan* (hereafter referred to as *Xunkan*) was part of this boom in art journals. It began publication on January 1, 1928, one year after the CPRS's splinter group, the Hu Society, issued their journal *Hushe yuekan*. Two years later, the CPRS renamed their journal *Yilin Yuekan* (hereafter *Yuekan*, Fig. 105), and with the new name introduced a different format and publication schedule. The CPRS released altogether 72 issues of *Xunkan* and 118 of *Yuekan* until they stopped their journal publication in June 1942.

4.2 *Xunkan* and *Yuekan*: Publication Strategy and Objective

Xunkan and *Yuekan* were issued under the plan and preparation of the CPRS's president, Zhou Zhaoxiang. Zhou personally served as the editor-in-chief, and nominated two editors; his secretary and assistant Liu Lingcang was one of them. Liu was in charge of editing, proofreading, and printing the two journals. To better accomplish his job, he even lived in the office of the CPRS.[269]

Xunkan was published three times a month. Each issue was four pages, printed in octavo. After 72 issues and two years, it became in 1930 *Yuekan*, issued monthly on standard newsprint paper certified by the post office. The page count for each issue was increased to sixteen and the page size was cut in half.[270] Shortly after

[269] Bao, "Huagong, huajia, jiaoshou," 96.
[270] As was announced in the last issue of *Xunkan*, this change in print was to make it easier for readers to collect the periodical.

Yuekan began, the entire run of *Xunkan* was collected and reprinted in three volumes. The first volume (nos. 1–30) was so popular that it was reprinted three times and was sold four yuan per volume, while the second (nos. 31–60) and third (nos. 61–72) were priced at 2.3 and 1 yuan, respectively. *Xunkan* and *Yuekan* were available for purchase in a large number of bookstores and antique shops. Beijing was the original and major sale center with more than five offices. The sales offices expanded to many other cities across the country including Tianjin, Shanghai, Nanjing, Liaoning, Dalian, Kaifeng, Ha'erbing, Chengdu, Hangzhou, Hankou, Ji'nan, Qingdao, and Guangzhou, covering major cities from the north to the south, from the east to the west.

Xunkan and *Yuekan* adopted three different ways of selling: wholesale, retail, and subscription. Those who ordered annual subscriptions received a ten percent discount; a two-year subscription earned a twenty percent discount. The initial price for an issue was 1.6 *jiao,* a price that endured for nine years, after which it increased only to 2 *jiao* (about the price for two movie tickets), relatively affordable for the general public. It was obvious that the editors of *Xunkan* and *Yuekan* had intentionally adopted modern marketing approaches.

The editors' awareness of modern marketing strategies was also represented by the adoption of advertisement in the two journals. *Yuekan* had called for advertisements ever since the first issue, and furnished a detailed price list. It charged according to how much space the ad occupied and how many issues it lasted. There were five kinds of advertisements (all text-only): 1. Ads for photo studios, such as Zhenzhen Photo Studio and Yuanji Photo Studio. Many of the studios specialized in

fine art photography. These ads were usually very short, one to two sentences. 2. Ads for book and journal publications. These described in detail the products' price, publisher, sales office location, and content. 3. Ads for consumer goods, including cigarettes and cameras. 4. Artists' price lists, including those of Zhou Zhaoxiang, Xiao Qianzhong, Wang Mengshu (汪孟舒), Shi Ruiguang (释瑞光), Qin Zhongwen (秦仲文), and Ma Jin (马晋, 1900–1970). 5. Ads for savings and loans. These ads were usually quite lengthy, trying to persuade readers to trust their money with the savings and loans advertised.

When *Xunkan* began, many well-known public figures inscribed the masthead for the journal or wrote inscriptions for it, including Japanese painter Masaki Naohiko (Fig. 106), socialite Xu Shichang, Liang Qichao, Luo Zhenyu (Fig. 107), Ye Gongchuo, Zhang Daqian, and Ma Heng. Many groups and institutions sent in their greetings, such as the Galleries of Antiquities, the Guang Society,[271] and the Hu Society.[272] The first few issues also published photos of important figures in the CPRS, including Zhou Zhaoxiang, Xu Shichang, Chen Shizeng, and Xiao Qianzhong (Fig. 108).

The preface to *Xunkan* on its first issue stated clearly the journal's objective:

[271] The Guang Society was established in 1923 and was the first organization dedicated to the art of photography in China. The CPRS kept a close relationship with the Guang Society. *Xunkan* and *yuekan* often published photos by members of the latter, demonstrating that the CPRS was striving to practice "broad acquisition of new knowledge."
[272] Lv, *Hushe yanjiu*, 37.

> *Yilin xunkan* is issued by the Chinese Painting Research Society. We name it *Yilin xunkan* (literally Ten-Day Periodical of Art) instead of *Huaxue yanjiuhui xunkan* (literally Ten-Day Periodical of the Painting Research Society) to show our determination not to take private ownership over it. In the meantime, the reason we don't call it a "painting" periodical but rather an "art" periodical is to gather a broader scope of knowledge and to attract talented people from various fields…. We colleagues founded the CPRS not for ourselves but for the future of Chinese art. Self-evident proof would be our recent achievement exhibitions, where different styles of painting—Southern School, Northern School, *gongbi,* and *xieyi*—were exhibited side by side. This journal is to extend this mission and use painting at the outset to unite artists from every field to carry forward [Chinese art]….[273]

An advertisement posted on *Yuekan* in 1932 further noted that "[the only intent of the journal] is to advocate art. All the materials employed are based on their artistic values."[274]

The editors of *Xunkan* and *Yuekan* adopted every possible strategy to increase their popularity and enhance their reputation among the public so as to better propagate the artistic stance of the CPRS. The objective of the two journals ensured that they would cover a broad scope of topics other than Chinese painting.

[273] *Yilin xunkan* 1 (1928): 1.
[274] *Yilin yuekan* 26 (1932): 16.

4.3 *Xunkan* and *Yuekan*: Content Analysis

As stated in the journals, the CPRS's only intent was to advocate art. All the materials selected and published were based on their artistic value. Thus, to attract intellectuals and artists from various fields to jointly fight for the future of Chinese art, *Xunkan* and *Yuekan* broadly and extensively covered diverse art materials, both image and text.

Images

A total of 5,000 images were published in the 190 issues of *Xunkan* and *Yuekan*. They covered artworks by a variety of artists, including CPRS members, and ranged over different media and fields of art, such as ancient calligraphy and painting, seals, bronze mirrors, murals, pictorial bricks, sculptures, coins, ceramics, historic places, architectures, sceneries, and photographs. These images can be divided into five categories:

1. Paintings

As an art society that aimed at studying and promoting Chinese painting, the CPRS naturally steered *Xunkan* and *Yuekan* to focus on ancient and modern paintings. Ancient masterpieces were well represented in the journals, covering periods from the Tang dynasty up to the Qing dynasty and subject matters from landscapes, bird and flowers, *jiehua*, and animals, to figure paintings. Their styles varied from professional painting to literati painting, from *gongbi* to *xieyi*. Some valuable paintings or those that were unfamiliar to the public were accompanied by short descriptions and

comments. For example, a Ming dynasty landscape (Fig. 109) by monk Kuncan (髡残, 1612–1692) was highly praised for its iconic composition and excellent brushworks in the accompanying note, and was considered the best painting of Kuncan.[275]

Famous Tang and Song artworks included *Travelers Among Mountains and Streams* (关山行旅图, Fig. 110) of the Tang dynasty, formerly in the collection of the Qing court's Shenyang Palace, executed in fine and delicate brushworks;[276] Tang dynasty artist Li Jian (李渐)'s *Horse* (Fig. 111); Song dynasty Emperor Huizong's painting *Falcons and Hounds* (鹰犬图)[277] and his copy (Fig. 112) of *Ladies Preparing Newly Woven Silk* (捣练图) by Tang dynasty artist Zhang Xuan (張萱).[278]

Yuan dynasty works were represented by Zhang Wo (张渥)'s *Lohan Crossing-the-Sea* (罗汉渡海图, Fig. 113) in fine-line monochrome ink and a rare collaborative work, *Tree, Rock, Orchid, and Bamboo* (木石兰竹图, Fig. 114), by Zhao Mengfu, his wife Guan Daosheng (管道昇, 1262–1319), and his son Zhao Yong (赵雍, 1289–ca. 1360).[279] Paintings by Shen Zhou, Tang Yin (唐寅, 1470–1524), Wen Zhengming (文徵明, 1470–1559), Xu Wei (徐渭, 1521–1593), Dong Qichang (董其昌, 1555–1636), and Chen Hongshou (陈洪绶, 1599–1652) of the Ming dynasty were published, including Wen's *Landscape*, Xu's *Grapes and*

[275] *Yilin xunkan* 32 (1928): 1.
[276] *Yilin xunkan* 16 (1928): 1.
[277] *Yilin yuekan* 50 (1933): 1.
[278] *Yilin yuekan* 26 (1932): 16.
[279] *Yilin xunkan* 6 (1928): 2.

Bamboo, and Chen's *Figures* (Fig. 115). A large body of Qing dynasty paintings were selected, including landscapes by Shi Tao (Fig. 116), Gong Xian (龚贤, 1618–1689), Bada, and the Four Wangs; bird and flowers by Hua Yan (Fig. 117); *jiehua* by Xia Luanxiang (夏鸾翔, ?–1864, Fig. 118) of the artist's residence in Beijing using both Chinese and Western techniques;[280] and Giuseppe Castiglione's animal painting in his unique style, which synthesized Chinese and Western methods (Fig. 119).[281] Such an extensive publication of ancient calligraphy and painting was owed partly to the CPRS's connection with private collections as well as its close relationship with the Galleries of Antiquities.

The journals presented a great amount of modern Chinese paintings. Many works by well-known artists were selected, including Wu Changshi's *Chinese Cabbage* (白菜图, Fig. 120), Qi Baishi's *Ink Shrimps and Crabs* (墨笔虾蟹, Fig. 121), Zhang Daqian's *Herding Cattle* (牧牛图, Fig. 122), and He Tianjian's *Landscape* (山水, Fig. 123). Paintings of the CPRS advisors were printed in the journals regularly, including those of Jin Cheng (Fig. 124), Zhou Zhaoxiang, Chen Shizeng (Fig. 125), Xiao Qianzhong (Fig. 126), Chen Banding (Fig. 127), Pu Ru (Fig. 128), and Hu Peiheng (胡佩衡, 1892–1965, Fig. 129). CPRS members' works also appeared in the same issues, including paintings by participants in the achievement exhibitions (see chapter three). These paintings included the early works of some who later became masters, such as Wu Guangyu (Fig. 130), Liu Lingcang (Fig. 131), Qi

[280] *Yilin xunkan* 19 (1928): 4.
[281] *Yilin xunkan* 65 (1929): 1.

Gong (Fig. 132), Zhou Huaimin (Fig. 133), He Haixia (Fig. 134), Chen Shaomei (陈少梅, 1909–1954, Fig. 135), and Ma Jin (Fig. 136). The journals thus provide precious source materials for the early careers of significant figures. Artworks by members of the Hu Society were published in the journals from time to time, demonstrating the close relationship between the two groups.

Paintings by ancient masters and society members published in *Xunkan* and *Yuekan* demonstrated how the CPRS's art practice was guided by its leading figures' art and theories (the theme of chapter two). Based on published members' artworks, the CPRS's art approach can be divided into six groups. The first approach set its foundation on Song and Yuan paintings while broadly assimilating other styles. Jin Cheng represents this approach. He copied numerous ancient masterpieces and traveled to different places to draw from nature. The second group followed Wu Changshi and borrowed from *xieyi* bird and flower paintings of the Ming and Qing dynasties, such as those by Xu Wei and Hua Yan. Bird and flowers by Chen Shizeng, Chen Banding, and Wang Mengbai (Fig. 137) belong to this group. Landscapes by Xiao Qianzhong and Chen Banding fall into the third category. They adopted the styles of the Qing individualists Shi Tao and Bada. The fourth group followed Song painting styles and added their own variations. For example, Pu Ru and Chen Shaomei's landscapes borrowed from Ma Yuan (马远, 1160–1225) and Xia Gui (夏圭, ca. 1180–1230) of the Song dynasty Northern School, while integrating the painting styles of the Yuan painters. Ma Jin is representative of the fifth approach. He followed the style of the Qing expatriate painter Giuseppe Castiglione yet with a

more Chinese look. The last group promoted painting from life using ancient methods. Hu Peiheng was its passionate advocate.

It is worth noting that the journals also published Western-style oil paintings. For example, the French artist Lafuqi (拉福祺) painted two oils. Lafuqi was a female painter from Paris who traveled all over the world, including India, Thailand, and Tibet, and other southern provinces of China. The female figure in *Indian Beauty* (Fig. 138) portrays the daughter of an Indian chief. Another oil of hers, *Landscape of Lhasa*, depicts the gorgeous view near Lhasa, Tibet. Wang Changbao (王长宝) published her painting *Still Life* (Fig. 139). Wang was the daughter of the Chinese ambassador to Belgium. She studied classics and landscape in her childhood and learned Western techniques while studying at the University of Belgium. *Still Life* depicts Chinese utensils using Western painting methods.

2. Calligraphy and Engraving

Xunkan and *Yuekan* also published a large quantity of calligraphy, seals, and engravings. For example, a rubbing of the Zhouhuan Plate (seal script, 周寰盘拓本, Fig. 140), a rubbing of the epitaph of Yuanzhao in the Northern Wei dynasty (Wei stele, Fig. 141), a rubbing of the epitaph of Wei Funiang in the Sui dynasty (regular script, Fig. 142), and some fragmented Jin dynasty bamboo slips were included. Publication also included calligraphy by famous artists, such as a Tang dynasty calligraphy in the style of Wang Xizhi (王羲之, 303–361) and calligraphy pieces by the Song dynasty artist Mi Fu, Song Ke (宋克, 1327–1387) of the Ming dynasty, and

Fu Shan (傅山, 1607–1684) of the Qing dynasty (cursive script, Fig. 143). Modern calligraphy works by Wu Changshi and Sha Menghai (沙孟海, 1900–1992) were also selected. The seals section contained both ancient seals such as a famous Han seal (东阳淮泽王□钵, Fig. 144) and modern seals such as those of Huang Shaomu (黄少牧, 1879–1953, Fig. 145).

Interestingly, *Yuekan* published a rubbing of Egyptian seal script (Fig. 146) in the collection of Xia Zengyou (夏曾佑, 1863–1924). Xia, together with four other officials, had been sent by the Qing government in 1906 to Europe and America to study their political systems. During the trip another official, Duan Fang (端方, 1861–1911), collected many Egyptian statues. Xia made a rubbing of the inscriptions on two of the statues and that rubbing eventually made its way into *Yuekan*. In the description accompanying the rubbing, the editor of the journal noted that the seal scripts in the rubbing were all pictographic, much like those found on the bronzes of the Shang and Zhou dynasties. It was thus detectable that Chinese and Western writings had the same kind of origin.[282]

3. Cultural Relics and Archaeology

Because the CPRS had a central concern for the preservation of cultural relics, *Xunkan* and *Yuekan* published extensively on antiquities, reproducing images of ancient artifacts (jades, bronzes, ceramics, etc.) and coins, ancient ruins and burials, and Buddhist statues.

[282] *Yilin yuekan* 70 (1935): 2.

Besides handed-down cultural relics, the journals kept a close eye on recent archaeological excavations. For example, *Xunkan* and *Yuekan* followed promptly the excavations in the northwestern provinces of China (西北科学考察团, discussed below) and published pictures of the finds, including a Tang dynasty painting excavated from an ancient tomb in Turfan (Fig. 147) and a sutra fragment found in the ancient city of Gaochang (Fig. 148). The writings on the sutra were said to be "careless yet thin and forceful, bearing the calligraphic style of the Northern dynasty."[283] *Yuekan* also published a set of four stamps issued by the Chinese government in 1932 to commemorate the achievements of the expedition (Fig. 149). This was the first-ever set of government-issued stamps commemorating academia. The design on the stamps was based on a Yuan dynasty painting of desert travel collected in the Palace Museum.

Xunkan and *Yuekan* also frequently introduced images of important looted cultural relics and antiquities. For example, *Xunkan* published a picture of the Stele on the Merits of Juqu Anzhou's Construction of Monasteries in the Northern Liang dynasty (Fig. 150). The original stele was excavated from Turfan in Xinjiang in the early years of Emperor Guangxu's reign (1875–1908). It was then carried to Germany and stored in its museum collections. Duan Fang discovered this stele in his visit to Berlin in 1906 and received permission to make a rubbing of it. The rubbing was not very good, however, and many characters were unidentifiable. Zhou Zhaoxiang was able to acquire a clear picture of the stele from Qu Muer (曲穆尔), the chief of the

[283] *Yilin yuekan* 23 (1931): 3.

Berlin Museum's Department of East Asian Art in 1929 and published it in *Xunkan*. He documented the whole story in his colophon to the picture.[284] The stele was destroyed during World War II. The rubbing and picture thus became the only two surviving copies.

Qu Muer sent along with the Juqu Anzhou image another picture of a Northern Liang dynasty stele, the Stele on the Merits of Yin Shangsu's Construction of Buddhist Rites, which was published in *Yuekan*. It was excavated from the same place as the Juqu Anzhou stele and was also sent to Germany. Zhou Zhaoxiang again wrote a colophon for it and called for experts to identify its text.[285] All these pictures were, and in some cases still are, invaluable source documents.

Editors of the journals often expressed their regrets over the loss of cultural relics overseas. Accompanying a picture of a Buddhist statue from the Tianlong Mountain, the editor noted, "[it] has gone abroad already."[286] In the caption alongside the image of a stone statue to ward off evils (Fig. 151a), the editor lamented, "[it was] cut into three pieces and smuggled abroad. What a pity!"[287] Regarding the bronze chariot excavated from an ancient burial in Shandong (Fig. 151b), the editor again commented, "regrettably [it] is now in a foreign collection."[288]

4. Ancient Sculptures, Architecture, and Historical Sites

Numerous photos and designs of ancient buildings were printed in *Xunkan* and *Yuekan*, including a photograph of Yellow Crane Tower (黄鹤楼), a picture of

[284] *Yilin xunkan* 39 (1929): 1.
[285] *Yilin yuekan* 14 (1931): 5.
[286] *Yilin yuekan* 51 (1934): 1.
[287] *Yilin yuekan* 93 (1937): 8.
[288] *Yilin yuekan* 31 (1932): 15.

the front of the National Fine Art Gallery in Nanjing (Fig. 152), a model of the Qing dynasty Imperial Ancestral Temple (Fig. 153), an overview of Prince Yi's palace of the Qing dynasty, and the ruins of the Romanesque style of architectures in the Old Summer Palace (Fig. 154). *Yuekan* also published successively a series of eighteen pagoda designs (Fig. 155) from various provinces in China. Each design was accompanied by both Chinese and English captions that explained in detail the name, size, and location of the pagoda.[289] This information is highly valuable for future research.

Published sculptures covered periods from the Han dynasty to the early twentieth century, from ritual objects to Buddhist statues to ornamental art, including Han dynasty stone reliefs, Northern Wei and Tang dynasties Buddhist statues, and modern potted landscapes. *Yuekan* even published photos of an Egyptian statue, displaying front, rear, and profile views (Fig. 156).

5. Photographic Works

A special group of images published in the journals were photographs. They were mostly works by photographers or photographic societies. Members of the CPRS, such as Xu Shichang, Chen Banding, Wu Jingting, and Zhou Zhaoxiang, also contributed their photography. A great number of the photos depicted exhibitions and activities of the CPRS, such as the group photos taken at almost every achievement exhibition, or images of members visiting a garden, hiking, or painting in their studios. Quite a few photos were devoted specifically to female members. There were also

[289] *Yilin yuekan* 14–32 (1931–32).

portraits of famous contemporary artists, scenery photos, and artistic photos. Photos of foreign scenery and Western gallery displays were also included, for example, an Egyptian landscape and a snapshot of a gallery in a Greek museum (Fig. 157). These photos introduced new imagery to the readers and broadened their horizons.

Texts

As *Xunkan* and *Yuekan* being the major way the CPRS promoted itself, the editors carefully chose the texts and articles to publish, and used them to propagate the society's mission. These texts, together with the large quantity of images printed on the journals, were undoubted signifiers of the CPRS's aesthetic preferences and theoretical foundations. Four subjects of texts and articles exist in the journals:

1. Ancient Painting Theories

Transcriptions of ancient painting theories made up the majority of the written content of the journals. These famous accounts on painting included *Nanzong juemi* (南宗抉秘, Secrets of the Southern School of Painting) by Hualin (华琳), *Huaxue xinfa wenda* (画学心法问答, Questions and Answers on the Study of Painting) by Buyantu (布颜图), *Dongxin suibi* (冬心随笔, Essays of Dongxin) by Jinnong (金农, 1687–1764), *Banqiao tihua* (板桥题画, Banqiao's Theories on Painting) by Zheng Xie (郑燮, 1693–1766), and *Qijia yinba* (七家印跋, Seals and Colophons of Seven Masters) by Qin Zuyong (秦祖永, 1825–1884). Most of the texts were composed in the Qing dynasty. They were typically serialized in dozens of issues of the journals.

These accounts reflected the society's keen interest in "careful research on ancient methods."

2. Contemporary Painting Theories

Xunkan and *Yuekan*'s contemporary treatises on art focused on *tihua shi* (题画诗). *Tihua shi* usually refers to poems that are written specifically for paintings. It is used by the author to express his artistic feelings and thoughts toward the inscribed painting. Poems and paintings are so tightly bound to each other that poetry is regarded as "invisible painting" and painting "silent poetry." *Tihua shi* became popular along with the rise of literati painting in the Song dynasty.

The treatises published in the journals included Yao Hua's *Tihua yide* (题画一得, On Painting Inscriptions), Xu Shichang's *Guiyunlou tihuashi* (归云楼题画诗, *Ti Hua Shi* in Guiyun Studio), and Zhou Zhaoxiang's *Xueshi juyao* (学诗举要, Essentials of Learning Poems). Yao Hua's *Tihua yide* was one of the most important accounts. It was serialized in more than one hundred successive issues of the journals, starting from the twentieth issue of *Xunkan*. It was written in the form of notes and discussed the most important theory in Chinese painting—the unification of poem, calligraphy, and painting.

Yao Hua asserted in the beginning of his article, "Painting needs to be inscribed." He stated that the practice of *tihua* began during the transition between the Five dynasties and the Song dynasty, and reached its peak in the Yuan and Ming

dynasties.[290] He declared that inscriptions are very important for paintings as the two can complement each other.

Based on the idea that "painting can be read," *Tihua yide* attempted to prove that "painting needs to be inscribed" so as to clarify the artistic concept of "poetry in painting, painting in poem." In Yao's idea, poetry not only illustrates the meaning of painting but also expands the sentiment expressed in it.[291] Yao Hua even suggested that Western painting should pay attention to inscriptions as well.[292]

Xunkan and *Yuekan* did not publish many contemporary theories. Besides articles on *tihua shi*, only a few texts were devoted to painting techniques, such as *Renwu huafan* (人物画范, Figure painting manual) by Xu Cao (徐操, 1898–1961).

3. Commentaries and News Report

Commentaries and news reports demonstrated the CPRS's concern for the art scene in general, beyond the small circle of the society. In addition to articles and commentaries on the activities of the CPRS, such as summaries of achievement exhibitions and accounts on the founding and development of the society, a great number of reports were devoted to contemporary artists and news on recent and upcoming art exhibitions. For example, Zhou Zhaoxiang's diary on his travel to Japan, *Dongyou riji*, was serialized in tens of successive issues, recording details of his trip to Japan in 1926 for the fourth Sino-Japanese art exhibition. *Yuekan* reported an exhibition of German paintings held by the Sino-German Academy in Beijing in 1936.

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[290] Yao Hua, "Tihua yide," *Yilin xunkan* 30 (1928): 1.
[291] Yao Hua, "Tihua yide," *Yilin yuekan* 14 (1931): 1.
[292] Yao Hua, "Tihua yide," *Yilin xunkan* 38 (1929): 1.

Follow-up reports from the 1935 International Exhibition of Chinese Art in London were published frequently. Art exhibitions of famous contemporary artists and art schools were reported from time to time. Thus, *Xunkan* and *Yuekan* kept their audience up with contemporary art trends by introducing to them various art events happening throughout China, not just in Beijing.

4. Archaeological News and Related Laws and Regulations

One special aspect of *Xunkan* and *Yuekan* was that they closely followed new trends in archaeology. As mentioned before, the journals paid keen attention to the investigations and excavations done by the scientific expedition to the Northwestern provinces of China. This international and interdisciplinary expedition was organized under the leadership of Chinese professor Xu Bingchang (徐炳昶) and Swedish explorer Sven Hedin. This Sino-Swedish collaboration was achieved in 1927 through multiple negotiations with Hedin made by Chinese representatives Zhou Zhaoxiang (then director of the Galleries and Antiquities), Li Siguang (李四光, then professor of the Department of Geology at Beijing University), Yuan Fuli (袁复礼, then member of the Archaeological Society at Beijing University), and Li Ji (李济, then professor of the Tsinghua Academy of Chinese Learning).

Between 1927 and 1935, the group carried out scientific investigations of the northwest regions, studying their geography, geology, archaeology, and ethnology. *Xunkan* and *Yuekan* reported the expedition's discoveries of dinosaur fossils and ancient artworks, and their measurements of the climate. *Yuekan* also reported that in 1935 the council of the expedition hosted a banquet at the Euro-America Returned

Students Association to celebrate Sven Hedin's seventieth birthday. Liu Lingcang was requested to do a painting of Hedin's northwest travel as a gift for him. The chairman of the council Zhou Zhaoxiang and sixteen other members autographed it.

News on other archaeological findings were reported as well, including excavations carried at Yinxu, finds of a Southern dynasty tomb in Zhejiang, and the discovery of a Northern Song dynasty tomb in Sichuan.

Xunkan and *Yuekan* also published laws and regulations on the preservation of cultural relics. For example, *Xunkan* published a regulation that had been passed in France in December 1913 on the preservation of historic steles and monuments (法国保存历史碑版法令).[293] Legislation on the restrictions of artwork export released in France on August 31, 1920 (法国一九二零年三月一日限制美术品出口法令实施细则) was also published.[294] The journals reprinted these regulations, attesting to other countries' efforts to preserve their cultural relics, to arouse Chinese people to do the same.

The images and texts published in *Xunkan* and *Yuekan* evidently demonstrated the CPRS's persistent mission. Artworks and theories, both ancient and modern, both Chinese and Western, were represented in the journals. It was also clear from the publications that the CPRS had a strong concern for the preservation of heritage.

[293] *Yilin xunkan* 41–53 (1929).
[294] *Yilin xunkan* 54–67 (1929).

4.4 Redefinition of Antiquities, Archaeological Fever, and Nationalist Agitation

Xunkan and *Yuekan*'s concentration on archaeology and cultural relics was the result of several different factors: the CPRS members' keen interest in antiquities, heavy looting of Chinese cultural relics, the formation of *guqiwu* in the early Republic, and the emergence of modern archaeology in China in the 1920s.

As discussed in chapter two, Zhou Zhaoxiang was a passionate art collector and a diligent advocate of antiquities. He would visit antique shops regularly to search for hidden treasures. Chen Shizeng was also a frequent visitor to antique markets. Being a renowned specialist in ancient calligraphy, he used to accompany Lu Xun (鲁迅, 1881–1936) on nearly daily visits to *Liulichang,* one of the most active antique markets in Republican Beijing, to buy rubbings and rare books.[295]

The *Liulichang* district was first known for its bookstores, and then gradually became the gathering place for antique shops, which sold bronzes and stones, old ceramics, and famous calligraphy and paintings (Fig. 158). Interestingly, paintings by early Qing artists such as the Four Wangs were much more expensive than Song and Yuan paintings. Most of the Four Wangs' works were marked around one thousand yuan. In the heated market of calligraphy and painting, fakes and forgeries were abundant. *Xunkan* and *Yuekan*'s emphasis on cultural relics and antiquities reflected the blooming art market of the Republic.

[295] Shana J. Brown, "Luo Zhenyu and the Predicament of Republican Period Antiques Collecting," in *Lost Generation: Luo Zhenyu, Qing Loyalists and the Formation of Modern Chinese Culture*, ed. Yang Chia-ling and Roderick Whitfield (London: Saffron, 2012), 64.

Western and Japanese buyers' intervention complicated the Republican antique market. Zhou Zhaoxiang in *Journal of Eastern Travel* described Japanese fervor in collecting Chinese artworks and expressed his deep concern for China's irreparable loss of its great art treasures. Japanese scholar Tomita pointed out that the loss of Chinese cultural relics abroad started during the chaos of the late Qing period. The quantity and quality of the looted treasures were enhanced significantly in the early Republic, involving both handed-down antiquities and newly discovered archaeological finds. It was in this continuous outflow of Chinese cultural relics that a whole picture of the major components of Chinese art, including bronzes of the Shang and Zhou dynasties, funerary objects of the Han and Tang dynasties, imperial porcelain through the ages, art in the Western Regions, ink landscapes of the Northern Song dynasty, Buddhist art of the Northern dynasty to Tang dynasty, and ancient jades and seals, was displayed before the world for the first time.[296]

Western and Japanese buyers' active participation in the Chinese antique market are well exemplified by the correspondence between Sir James Haldane Lockhart, an active British collector of Chinese art,[297] and Tse Ts'an Tai, his main agent for collecting Chinese painting.[298] This correspondence occurred while some of

[296] Noboru Tomita, *Jindai riben de zhongguo yishupin liuzhuan yu jianshang* [近代日本的中国艺术品流转与鉴赏], trans. Zhao Xiumin (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2005), 4.
[297] Sir James Stewart Lockhart typified the successful colonial civil servant of the late 19th and early 20th century, and rose to become Colonial Secretary of Hong Kong. He was able to acquire a rich collection of coins, rubbings, porcelains, and calligraphy and painting during his stay in China.
[298] Tse was described by Morrison, *The Times* reporter in Peking, as a Sidney-born boy that had been an energetic supporter of Sun Yat-sen since 1887, the year he arrived in Hong Kong. He helped Sir James with his Chinese art collection and supplied him large numbers of Chinese paintings.

the great collections of Chinese art were being formed in museums outside of China, particularly those in Japan and America.

Tse Ts'an Tai wrote to Sir James in April 1910:

> Do you collect Chinese works of art (paintings, etc.)? They are the rage now in England and on the Continent, and fetch very high prices. Some are really worth thousands of pounds each. Their true value will only be appreciated when China possesses her National Art Gallery.
>
> Many valuable works of art are now being bought up in China dirt cheap!
>
> ….
>
> I am really sorry for China and the Chinese, as they do not realise the immense value of the paintings and […] which they are losing from year to year.
>
> I have already advocated the formation of a Society for the protection of China's Historical relics (monuments, paintings, […], etc.), but the Chinese appear to be asleep.
>
> Such callousness is most painful and disheartening.[299]

Ironically, Tse tried hard to persuade Sir James to buy Chinese paintings, but at the same time lamented the loss of Chinese cultural relics overseas and was

[299] Hong Kong, April 11, 1910. Cited from Sonia Lightfoot, *The Chinese Painting Collection and Correspondence of Sir James Stewart Lockhart* (1858–1937) (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2008), 117.

working to have the new Republican government take measures to prohibit the sale and export of Chinese treasures to foreigners. He mentioned in his letter of December 15, 1910 to Sir James:

> I am now trying to foresee a Society for the preservation of Chinese Art treasures, with Branch Societies in all the Provinces of the Empire.
>
> ….
>
> Something must be done to prevent priceless "masterpieces" from leaving the country, and to raise Chinese Art from the low level to which it has fallen.
>
> You may rest assured that I will continue to help you, privately, to add to your collection, because I know that you will treasure each picture and make the beauties and historical worth of Chinese paintings known to the civilized world.[300]

Tse Ts'an Tai's concern and effort to save Chinese cultural heritage was featured in an article in *South China Morning Post*:

> Chinese paintings have been given prominence of late and have been commanding high prices in Europe. This has been due to recent exhibitions of Chinese and Japanese pictures in London and Berlin, and to the fact that Japanese art has sprung from the faithful copying of Chinese masterpieces of the Tang, Sung and Yuan periods.

[300] Hong Kong, December 15, 1910. Cited from Lightfoot, *Chinese Painting Collection*, 131.

Although the art of painting originated in China, and flourished hundreds of years before the birth of Michael Angelo, Raphael, Murillo, and Velasquez and their predecessors, the Chinese do not yet appear to be aware of the true value of the"works" of their great masters, owing to the entire absence of art societies and public art galleries. It was only a few months ago that a painting by Velasquez sold for $800,000 in London, and the time will soon come when the Chinese will attach similar value to their "masterpieces."

It will be interesting to the art world to know that Mr. Tse Ts'an Tai is influencing his friends in Hongkong, Canton, Shanghai, Tientsin and Peking to start a Society to be called "The China Art Society" for the protection and preservation of China's art treasures. Mr. Tse Ts'an Tai also advocates in his "Appeal" the establishment of a National art gallery for China. The society will have branches in the different provinces of the Chinese empire, and it is the intention of the society to hold an art exhibition in this Colony [Hong Kong] once a year, and to devote the proceeds to the support of local charities.

…

In advocating the establishment of an art society and a National Art Gallery for China, Mr. Tse Ts'an Tai is endeavoring to lift Chinese art from the low level to which it has fallen, and we wish him and his friends every success.[301]

[301] *South China Morning Post*, May 22, 1913. Cited from Lightfoot, *Chinese Painting Collection*, 178–79.

Sir James was just one of the many foreign collectors that took large quantities of Chinese artworks out of the country. Chinese, Japanese, and American exporters shipped thousands of Chinese art objects overseas.[302] Yamanaka Sadajirō (1866–1936) founded Yamanaka & Company, which had offices in Beijing, New York, London, Paris, and Osaka. The company sold Chinese objects directly to collectors and museums outside China. It also assisted the London International Exhibition of Chinese Art in 1935–1936. C. T. Loo (卢芹斋, 1880–1957) was another major dealer of this period. Based in Paris, he managed to introduce early Chinese art, including bronzes, jades, and paintings, to Europe and North America. He was able to supply eminent collectors such as J. P. Morgan (1837–1913), John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (1874–1960), and Charles Lang Freer (1854–1919) with Chinese art pieces that would later become the basis of major American museum collections.[303] John Calvin Ferguson (1866–1945) developed his expertise in Chinese art during his stay in China and had been the purchasing agent for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Freer Gallery of Art, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The large part of his personal collection, including bronzes, paintings, and jades, was donated to Nanjing University in 1935.[304]

Foreign buying thrived so much that many art exhibitions held in Beijing and Shanghai would tacitly acknowledge, prior to sale, that the artworks on display might

[302] Noboru, *Jindai riben de zhongguo yishupin liuzhuan yu jianshang*, 68–77.
[303] Yiyou Wang, "The Louvre from China: A Critical Study of C. T. Loo and the Framing of Chinese Art in the United States, 1915–1950," (Ph.D. diss., Ohio University, 2007).
[304] "Fukaisen boshi cangpin zenghua jinian teji" [福开森博士藏品赠华纪念特辑], *Ta Kung Pao Art Weekly*, July 6, 1935.

be hardly available for the public to view once they were taken abroad.[305] It was under such circumstances that, as we mentioned in chapter three, a member of the Committee for the Preservation of Art Treasures in the Nanjing government would claim the 1935 London International Exhibition a humiliation to China since he believed that most of the collections contributing to the show were composed largely of pieces looted or illegally acquired from China. The public's fear of loosing forever the art treasures lent by the Palace Museum to the London exhibition was so intense that the Chinese selection committee for the exhibition decided to do a preliminary exhibition in Shanghai displaying all the art pieces from China that would subsequently travel to London. And the collection was exhibited again in Nanjing after its return from London in April 1937.

Tse's anxiety about the loss of Chinese art treasures was thus not alone. Numerous scholars expressed similar concerns. For example, an article on Da Gongbao discussed specifically ancient stone carvings and paintings that were lost overseas.[306] Many collectors of the time, such as Luo Zhenyu, begged for the same kind of preservation laws that safeguarded antiquities in Europe and Japan.[307] To encourage similar regulations in China, the CPRS published successively in almost thirty issues of *Xunkan* two lengthy discussions of French preservation laws that set official rules for the export of art and antiquities.

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[305] Noboru, *Jindai riben de zhongguo yishupin liuzhuan yu jianshang*, 194–95.
[306] Wu Shichang, "Woguo gushike ji guhua zhi liuchu haiwai" [我国古石刻及古画之流出海外], *Ta Kung Pao History and Geography Weekly* (June 7, 1935).
[307] Brown, "Luo Zhenyu and the Predicament," 67.

In addition to the CPRS's concern for heritage preservation, *Xunkan* and *Yuekan*'s extensive publication on antiquities and cultural relics was also a response to the redefinition and the recategorization of Chinese antiquities in the early Republic.

Chinese scholars had been obsessed with antiquities ever since the medieval period. Starting in the Song dynasty, Chinese literati began to develop a passionate curiosity for antiquarianism, which was expressed in many ways: the early endeavors of scholarly archaeology (mostly literary), the study and collecting of archaic bronzes, and the systematic compilations of ancient epigraphs.[308] Their achievements were preserved in four catalogues: *Jigulu* (集古录, Records on collecting antiquities) edited by Ouyang Xiu (欧阳修, 1007–1072) in 1069, enclosing a collection of four hundred rubbings of inscriptions on bronze and stone objects; *Kaogutu* (考古图, Researches on archaeology illustrated) edited by Lv Dalin (吕大临, ca. 1042–1092) in 1092, containing two hundred and eleven vessels from both the imperial collections and some thirty private collections; the imperial catalogue, *Xuanhe bogutu lu* (宣和博古图录, Drawings and lists of all the antiquities stored in Xuanhe Palace), completed in 1123 under the order of Emperor Huizong, including images and inscriptions of more than eight hundred bronzes; and *Jinshilu* (金石录, Collection of texts on metal and stone) by the eminent scholar Zhao Mingcheng (赵明诚, 1081–1129) and his wife Li Qingzhao (李清照, 1084–1155), containing some two thousand

[308] Ryckman, "Chinese Attitude," 4.

rubbings of inscriptions.[309] These studies on antiquities belonged to what was later called *jinshixue*, which remained the prestigious and predominant form of scholarship throughout the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Jinshixue from the Song till early Republican periods consisted mainly of the epigraphic study of inscriptions on bronzes and stones, generally in the form of rubbings on paper.[310] In other words, the value of the *jinshi* antiquities was directly dependent on whether they carried epigraphs. The taste for antiques in the Song dynasty and successive centuries had remained closely related to the prestige of the written word, or calligraphy.[311] Collectible and researchable antiquities were limited to calligraphy and painting, bronzes, jades, and rubbings of bronzes and steles.

The traditional culture of antiquity collecting was transformed in the late Qing and early Republic. Formerly ignored or taboo items gradually became collectibles. This transformation was most likely due to Luo Zhenyu's effort in collection and publications. It was also through Luo's research and promotion that the category of *guqiwu* (古器物, three-dimensional antiquities) was incorporated into modern Chinese practices of historical artifacts. Collectors' and scholars' sheer interest in two-dimensional antiquity (epigraphy) began to give way to three-dimensional objects.[312]

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[309] Shana J. Brown, "Pastimes: Scholars, Art Dealers, and the Making of Modern Chinese Historiography, 1870–1928," (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2003), 104–8; Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 95–96.
[310] Wang Cheng-hua, "Luo Zhenyu and the Formation of *Qiwu* and *Qiwuxue* in the First Decade of the Republican Era," in Yang and Whitfield, *Lost Generation*, 36.
[311] Ryckman, "Chinese Attitude," 5.
[312] Wang, "Luo Zhenyu and the Formation of *Qiwu* and *Qiwuxue*," 38.

Luo Zhenyu was transferred to Beijing to serve in the Qing court in the last years of the Qing dynasty. The art market in Beijing at that time experienced unprecedented blooming because of secret sales of parts of the imperial collection and the emergence of newly excavated objects.[313] While broadening the scope of his collection, Luo found the traditional term *jinshi* unsatisfactory to describe the antiquities he saw on the antique market in Beijing. He thus formulated the term *guqiwu* to include newly excavated objects from Shaanxi and Henan, particularly ancient chariots.[314]

Luo further clarified this understanding of *guqiwu* in his published writings of the 1910s, when he was in self-imposed exile in Kyoto as a Qing loyalist. He devoted himself wholeheartedly to heritage preservation and to the study of antiquities during this period. He managed to produce more than forty books, most of them printed in collotype technology. Due to the high cost of collotype, he had to collaborate with a Shanghai society sponsored by the famous Jewish merchant Silas Aaron Hardoon (1851–1931) to fulfill his publishing projects. *Yishu congbian* (艺术丛编, Series on art), a series of books based on the photographs and prints of Luo's antiquity collection, was one of these projects. Although Luo was not able to choose the title for the series, he, together with Wang Guowei, his student friend, conceived the categories of antiquities that could be incorporated in the series, including *jinshi*

[313] Tomita, *Jindai riben de zhongguo yishupin liuzhuan yu jianshang*, 28–60.
[314] Wang, "Luo Zhenyu and the Formation of *Qiwu* and *Qiwuxue*," 44.

(bronzes and the rubbings of bronzes and steles), *shuhua* (calligraphy and painting), and *guqi* (an abbreviation of *guqiwu*).[315]

The emergence of *guqi* as one of the three categories of antiquities marked the categorical transformation of antiquities in collecting and scholarship. It made a great variety of objects newly attractive to collectors and specialists. For example, formerly inauspicious and taboo objects like tomb figurines and other mortuary items became collectibles, as did oracle bones, ancient pottery, steles (not rubbings), and molds for making utensils. These objects were now recognized for their archaeological and historical significance in addition to their aesthetic beauty and decorative value. *Xunkan* and *Yuekan*'s extensive publication on three-dimensional excavated artifacts was a timely response to this newly emerged category of antiquities.

As has been mentioned several times, the modern discipline of archaeology provided the new materials that necessitated the recategorization of antiquities. Many prehistoric sites were successfully excavated, which explicated China's cultural origins and pushed back the boundaries of Chinese ancient history many thousands of years. For example, oracle bones discovered in 1899 from Yinxu (殷墟), the archaeological site of the late Shang dynasty capital, opened a new world for a previously unknown ancient Chinese history. It strengthened China's awareness of its self-identity and greatly promoted the general status of Chinese civilization in the world.[316] All these archaeological findings, besides feeding the antique markets with new items, renewed the Chinese people's pride in their national heritage, which had

[315] Ibid., 39.
[316] Ibid., 45.

suffered because of the influx of Western culture. *Xunkan* and *Yuekan* closely followed recent archaeological excavations and finds, especially those of the scientific expedition to the northwestern provinces of China.

Under such circumstances, the Second National Art Exhibition held by the Ministry of Education in 1937 in Nanjing made a first trial of displaying archaeological discoveries in an art exhibition. It brought together over three thousand items in nine categories: books (rare editions), seal-engravings, decorative arts, architectural designs and models, sculptures, western style paintings, photography, ancient calligraphy and painting, and modern calligraphy and painting. It also brought into public view the discoveries of archaeological excavations conducted by the Academia Sinica from 1934 to 1936 at Anyang.

The appearance of archaeological objects in the exhibition signified the nationalist government's awareness of the importance of archaeology and cultural heritage. Philip Kohl has stated that archaeology is associated with two kinds of nationalism: first, modern states that are composed principally of immigrants to the country, such as the United States; second, states that have freed themselves from colonial rule or emerged during the twentieth century, such as India.[317] The case of Chinese archaeology and its relationship to nationalism deserves special attention. China's long, continuous civilization suffered at the hands of Western powers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The development of modern archaeology in China cannot be understood apart from the early Western-initiated excavations and

[317] Philip L. Kohl, "Nationalism and Archaeology: On the Construction of Nations and the Reconstructions of the Remote Past," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 27 (1998): 233.

the anti-imperialist sentiments they fueled.[318] Also, the newly founded and unstable nationalist government needed to promote ancient treasures to renew people's pride in national heritage and, further, in the Republican nation. The government thus took the opportunity of the second national exhibition to demonstrate to the Chinese people the glorious past of Chinese civilization. This phenomenon was similar to the initial flourishing of antiquities in the Song dynasty, when Chinese territory was lost and threatened by nomadic raiders and neighboring alien leaders. Chinese intellectuals at that time retreated into their glorious antiquity and immersed themselves in the splendors of the past.

Through images and texts published in the journals, the CPRS further clarified its objective and demonstrated its concern for Chinese art in general, be it ancient or modern, painting or antiquities. Apart from acting as a propagator of *guohua*, the society showed itself to be much more than a conservative upholder of tradition. It was also a keen observer of contemporary art trends. As *Yuekan* declared, the establishment of the CPRS and the publication of the journals was "for the future of Chinese painting in general, without any partiality and prejudice," and that "people born into such a social circumstance…[should] be concerned with the good of the nation, the society, and the public instead of worrying about one's own being."[319] This being said, *Xunkan* and *Yuekan* functioned as comprehensive art publications that closely followed contemporary social, cultural, and artistic events. Their choice

[318] Ibid., 237.
[319] Forward to *Yilin xunkan* 1 (Jan. 1928): 1.

of contents attests to the opening of the imperial collections to the public, the emergence of archaeological excavations, and the rising of nationalist sentiments. By conforming to contemporary cultural trends, the two journals of the CPRS subtly propagated to the public the beauty of China's artistic tradition and the importance of preserving it and sustaining it.

Conclusion

The Chinese Painting Research Society was established at a time when "Chinese painting [was] declining, and national essence [was] falling."[320] In response to the radical May Fourth Movement, which called for a complete transformation of traditional Chinese art and culture, the society advocated "careful research on ancient methods, and broad acquisition of new knowledge" to cultivate tradition and preserve national essence. As the largest and longest-running art society in Republican Beijing, the CPRS played a critical and irreplaceable role in modern Beijing's art history. It possessed distinctive characteristics that made it an indispensable part of China's progressive transition from premodern/traditional to modern art.

As the capital of the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, Beijing was China's cultural center for more than six hundred years, and so had developed a strong atmosphere of traditional culture. But it was also the cradle of the May Fourth New Culture Movement. The conflict between old and new, tradition and innovation was so intense that various art theories and schools emerged and contended with each other. Adding to the clash between new and old, the imperial collections were opened to the public for the first time. Art exhibitions were held frequently at Central Park. *Liulichang,* formerly known for its bookstores, soon hummed with a surge of antique shops selling old ceramics, bronze and stone inscriptions, and ancient calligraphy and

[320] *Yilin yuekan* 7 (1930): 1.

painting—a business driven by the rise of interest in Chinese antiquities. All these factors attracted more and more traditional artists to Beijing in the early twentieth century and catalyzed the founding of the CPRS.

Artists of the CPRS were united under a common goal—to sustain and develop Chinese artistic tradition. They were not against innovation in Chinese art, but they insisted that it happen from within. Many leading figures of the society had received a Western education and were quite aware of Western art. Their proposition of innovation within tradition was thus formed on the basis of a comprehensive comparison between Chinese and Western art. Guided by their theories, artists of the CPRS carefully studied and developed ancient Chinese painting techniques by copying and imitating old masters, an approach made possible by new access to large quantities of ancient masterpieces. They were versatile in all kinds of traditional painting styles (Southern and Northern Schools of painting, *gongbi* and *xieyi*) and subjects (landscape, figure, animal, bird and flower, *jiehua*). Thus, in the fervent tide of questioning and reforming Chinese art, the CPRS chose to retain traditional aesthetic taste and carry on Chinese artistic tradition smoothly and gently enough to be acceptable to the general public.

The CPRS advocated traditional aesthetic attitudes and painting techniques, but adopted modern pedagogy. Departing from more common models, such as that of an art school or a professional artist teaching in a private studio, the CPRS developed its own pattern of *guohua* education. On the one hand, it preserved literati painting settings (elegant gatherings and master with disciple) that enhanced efficiency in

teaching technical skills. On the other hand, it adopted the modern "student-teaching assistant-advisor" evaluation system to ensure academic quality. The CPRS successfully cultivated a large group of art professionals who became the backbone of art institutions and schools throughout China.

The CPRS stressed the importance of maintaining a close scholarly relationship with the government, socialites, and famous artists, and focused on holding exhibitions and publishing its journals. Besides internal achievement exhibitions, the society organized and participated in various international exhibitions in Japan and Europe, which demonstrated its desire to promote traditional art on the global stage. These activities not only expanded the CPRS's influence in society but also introduced Chinese art to the world.

The publication of *Yilin xunkan* and *Yilin yuekan* opened an important page of Beijing's modern art history. They became invaluable materials in the study of modern Chinese art historiography. Apart from publicizing the society and promoting traditional art, the two journals closely followed current events in art, society, and culture. This expansive interest made the CPRS unique and prominent among contemporary art groups and embodied its nature as a modern art institution.

Although the CPRS claimed to be the defender of tradition, this claim did not imply that the society was made up solely of artists who were conservatives that refused anything new. They respected and had confidence in traditional art and culture and strived to find a way for Chinese art to move forward from within the tradition. Their practice and strategies were apparently effective. The group became

the largest and most influential society in Republican Beijing and had more than five hundred members at its peak. It was well known both in and outside China. The society and its activities were a formational influence for *guohua* masters such as Qi Baishi and Huang Binhong.

This study attempts to open the CPRS to future research. Its journals are a window into the vibrant culture of early twentieth-century Beijing, and that window has hardly been looked through. In addition, the Sino-Japanese art exhibitions it held acquire a new meaning when situated in the broader picture of government-sponsored international Chinese art exhibitions. The CPRS's seemingly "conservative" stance was just a way to guard its ambition and to seek self-development. Its achievements prove that the modernization of Chinese painting lie not only in Chinese-Western synthesis. Innovation within tradition is equally cogent and effective. Like the rice-congee bowl of tea in the Buddhist monastery, one needs only to pry beneath the surface of the CPRS to find humble riches.

FIGURES

Pages 183-325 (Figures 1-158) of this Dissertation have been removed due to copyright restrictions. An unabridged version of this document resides in the library of the University of Maryland, College Park.

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