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MODERN CHINESE  
PAINTING, 1860–1980

*Selections from the  
Robert H. Ellsworth Collection in  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art*

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MAXWELL K. HEARN

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

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## Director's Note

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The nineteenth and twentieth centuries in China witnessed the collapse of the two-thousand-year-old imperial system and the rise of a modern nation-state. It was a complex and turbulent period in the country's history, when clashing social visions and dramatic political upheavals led to increasing tensions between native and foreign ideals, as well as between tradition and innovation in the arts. In this issue of the *Bulletin* Maxwell K. Hearn, curator of Asian Art, presents a selection from the Robert H. Ellsworth Collection of paintings, dating from about 1860 to 1980, which represents the continuation of China's long pictorial heritage in an era of radical change and challenges for the artist.

Mr. Ellsworth was the first Western collector to systematically assemble comprehensive holdings by Chinese traditional masters from this era. Among his earliest acquisitions were an important group of paintings by Qi Baishi acquired by the dealer Alice Boney in the 1950s, some directly from the artist. Thus inspired, Robert Ellsworth seized upon the new spirit of openness that followed the Cultural Revolution in the 1970s and traveled to China, where he searched out pictures by nearly every well-known painter working in this vernacular during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In 1986 he donated his collection to the Metropolitan—nearly 500 paintings by some 190 artists—and

published them all in a three-volume catalogue, *Later Chinese Painting and Calligraphy: 1800–1950*.

While the Museum's holdings of early Chinese painting have grown significantly over the past three decades, thanks largely to the generosity of private collectors and individual supporters, most notably Douglas Dillon, John M. Crawford Jr., and Oscar L. Tang, it was only through the Ellsworth gift that we could begin to represent this new area of scholarship. Our commitment is underscored by the recent renovation and expansion of the galleries of Chinese painting and calligraphy to give nineteenth- and twentieth-century works a proper setting. This *Bulletin* appears in conjunction with an exhibition of works from the Ellsworth Collection that opens in January in the permanent galleries. The show will be accompanied in the spring by a catalogue, *Between Two Cultures: A Selection of Late-Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century Chinese Paintings from the Robert H. Ellsworth Collection in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, by Wen C. Fong, former Douglas Dillon Curator and Chairman of the Department of Asian Art. In May the Museum will also host a one-day symposium, "Chinese Art: Modern Expressions," on the subject.

Philippe de Montebello  
*Director*

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Front and back covers: Details of *Buddha's Manifestation of Joyfulness*, page 45. Inside front cover: *Scuttling Crab*, page 28. Inside back cover: *Shrimp*, page 29. Opposite: Detail of *Playing Weiqi at the Water Pavilion*, page 39





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## MODERN CHINESE PAINTING, 1860–1980

*Selections from the Robert H. Ellsworth  
Collection in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*

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In 1793 George, first earl Macartney, envoy to China from England's George III, was received by the eighty-two-year-old Qianlong emperor (r. 1736–95). Macartney had come seeking diplomatic exchange and commercial opportunity, including access to additional ports along the Chinese coast. The emperor, presiding over the Manchu Qing dynasty (1644–1911), the largest Asian state since the fourteenth-century Mongol empire, dismissed the British overture with the observation “our celestial empire possesses all things in prolific abundance.” Thus rebuffed, Macartney returned home to report: “The Empire of China is an old, crazy first-rate Man of War. . . . She may, perhaps, not sink outright; she may drift some time as a wreck, and will then be dashed to pieces on the shore; but she can never be rebuilt on the old bottom.”

China rejected Lord Macartney's overture just as the British East India Company and a host of private traders were seeking to expand the country's markets. By the 1830s the growing demand in the West for Chinese silk, tea, and porcelain was largely paid for by the company by the importation of raw cotton from India and, increasingly, by Indian-produced opium. China's efforts to block the importation of opium led to a military confrontation with Great Britain. The first so-called Opium War (1839–42) demonstrated the West's superior military technology and forced China to make humiliating concessions, including the ceding of Hong Kong to Britain and the opening of five treaty ports to foreign residence and trade. Pressure

from Western powers for even further concessions led to the second Opium War in 1856–60, which culminated in the brief occupation of Beijing by an Anglo-French expeditionary force. The steady erosion of Chinese sovereignty challenged the self-confident Sinocentric worldview and the social privileges of the country's ruling gentry class.

At the same time that the Western powers were taking advantage of the tottering Qing government, China was racked by a series of domestic rebellions. The most serious of them was led by a millennial sect, founded on quasi-Christian principles, that proclaimed its own Taiping (Great Peace) “heavenly kingdom” in 1851. Recruiting followers among the impoverished peasantry, rebel armies under the Taiping banner raged through southern and central China for the next thirteen years. When the Taiping were finally defeated in 1864, much of the country's ancient cultural heartland in the lower Yangzi River region was devastated and a generation of scholar-gentry was traumatized.



Opposite: Detail of *Playing the Qin and Watching Geese in Flight*, pp. 42–43  
Above: Detail of *Peony and Cherry Blossoms*, pp. 10–11

In the period of economic reconstruction that followed the defeat of the Taiping, China was forced to open itself up to foreign ideas and technology, often grafting these new ideas onto indigenous values. But the influx of Western industries, religious and educational institutions, and political and military representatives spawned a backlash among government conservatives, culminating in the Boxer uprising of 1900 with its goal of expelling foreigners and restoring the dynasty. The failure of this ill-conceived venture left the imperial court fatally weakened. While the Qing dynasty survived eleven more years, presiding over a fragmented state from Beijing, in the treaty ports, with their heady mix of Chinese and Western ideas, a new Chinese ethos began to emerge.

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**Traditional Chinese Painting:  
The Cultural Context for Change**

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Chinese culture underwent profound changes in response to the social, political, and economic upheavals that accompanied the collapse of the Qing dynasty and the rise of the modern Chinese nation-state. The Ellsworth Collection traces one strand of this history: the art of painting in ink and mineral- or water-soluble pigments on paper or silk in such traditional

formats as the hanging scroll, handscroll, folding fan, and album. Through most of the nineteenth century this strand of pictorial art constituted the only painting recognized in China as high art. But the growing impact of foreign cultures led to the rise of a new term, “national painting” (*guohua*), to distinguish this form of picture making from “Western-style painting” (*yanghua*). The Ellsworth Collection does not include works made using Western media—drawings in charcoal or pencil, wood-block or lithographic prints, or oil on canvas. Nevertheless, the images featured here vividly reflect both the clash and the confluence of foreign ideas with indigenous traditions during this tumultuous era.

At the outset of this period, when stylistic influences from Japan and the West were comparatively unimportant, Chinese artists were far more concerned with defining themselves in relationship to an artistic tradition with roots that reached back over a thousand years to the Song dynasty (960–1279), which many historians regard as the starting point of China’s modern age. During the Song period a fundamental bifurcation in painting developed between the meticulously descriptive, highly colored style of the Imperial Painting Academy and the more expressive calligraphic mode favored by independent scholar-amateurs. The Song courtly style established both the broad categories of subject matter and the aesthetic standards

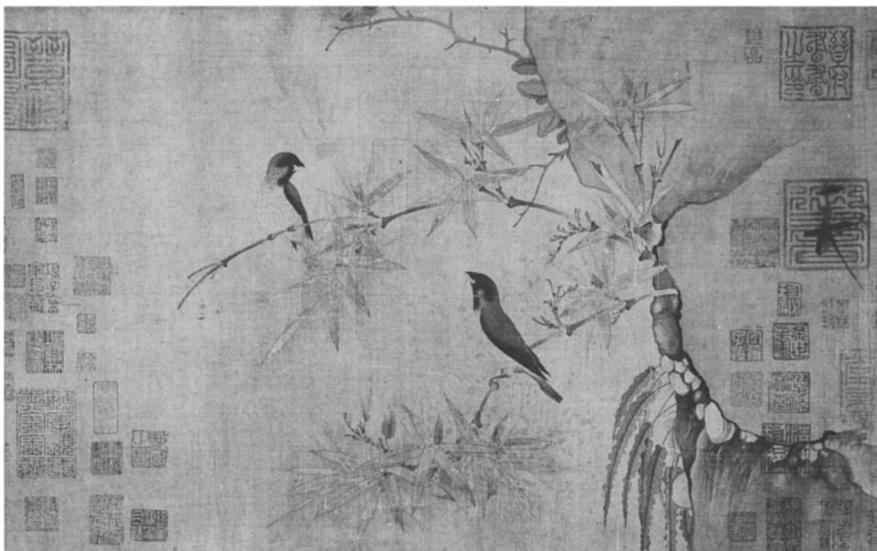


Fig. 1. Emperor Huizong (1082–1135; r. 1101–25). *Finches and Bamboo*. Handscroll; ink and color on silk, 11 x 18 in. (27.9 x 45.7 cm). John M. Crawford Jr. Collection, Purchase, Douglas Dillon Gift, 1981 (1981.278)



Fig. 2. Li Gonglin (ca. 1041–1106). *The Classic of Filial Piety* (detail from chapter 12). Ca. 1085. Handscroll; ink on silk, 8 5/8 x 187 1/4 in. (21.9 x 475.5 cm). Ex coll.: C. C. Wang Family, from the P. Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of the Oscar L. Tang Family, 1996 (1996.479)



Detail of Fig. 3, p. 8

followed by all subsequent professional artists. Landscapes, flower-and-bird compositions, and figure paintings in the courtly manner show a high degree of technical finish, keenly observed descriptive detail, a preference for rich mineral colors, and imagery selected to promote the values of society and state (fig. 1). By the eleventh century this style was increasingly challenged by a new class of scholar-bureaucrats, which arose as civil-service examinations enabled men of learning to occupy positions of political power previously held by a hereditary aristocracy. These literati, having mastered the arts of poetry and calligraphy, sought to apply the same expressive standards to painting. Working largely in monochrome ink on paper, scholar-artists chose subjects such as old trees, bamboo, or strangely eroded rocks as emblems of their integrity and individuality (fig. 2). Literati art enjoyed a renaissance following the Mongol conquest of China in 1279. Disenfranchised

scholars, unable or unwilling to serve under the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1279–1368), turned to painting as a vehicle for self-expression. Merging painting with calligraphy and poetry, they rejected the representational goals of Song pictorial art and emphasized instead abstract, calligraphic qualities, making each brushstroke a “heart print” of the artist’s creative being (fig. 3). This mode of scholar painting continued to flourish under the ensuing Ming dynasty (1368–1644), when court patronage fostered a revival of Song styles (fig. 8, p. 16), while the growing population of educated men outside of government service adopted Yuan scholar-artists as their models.

By the nineteenth century few artists were able to make use of this rich heritage firsthand, as most surviving masterpieces of early painting were concentrated in the imperial household or in the hands of a few private collectors. Instead, artists perpetuated styles derived largely from

Fig. 3. Wang Mian (1287–1359). *Fragrant Snow at Broken Bridge*. Hanging scroll; ink on silk, 44 7/8 x 19 5/8 in. (113.2 x 49.8 cm). Ex coll.: C. C. Wang Family, Purchase, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, by exchange, 1973 (1973.121.9)



Fig. 4. Dong Qichang (1555–1636). *Shaded Dwellings among Streams and Mountains after Dong Yuan* (active 930s–960s). Ca. 1622–25. Hanging scroll; ink on paper, 62 7/16 x 28 5/8 in. (158.6 x 72.7 cm). Gift of Douglas Dillon, 1979 (1979.75.2)



Fig. 5. Jin Nong (1687–1764). *Blossoming Prunus*. Dated 1759. Hanging scroll; ink on paper, 48 7/8 x 16 7/8 in. (124.1 x 42.9 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford Jr., 1988 (1989.363.160)



Fig. 6. *Stone drum inscription* (detail). Zhou dynasty, ca. 422 B.C. Rubbing mounted as a section of a handscroll; ink on paper, 16<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 22<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (42.5 x 58.2 cm). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wan-go H. C. Weng, 1992 (1992.166.1)



one of two broad trends that had dominated painting during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The more conservative approach, often referred to as the orthodox school, was led by the disciples of Dong Qichang (1555–1636), an artist-theorist who advocated the systematic study and creative transformation of earlier scholarly idioms (fig. 4). But during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries this school became increasingly dry and conventionalized as early works of art were removed from circulation.

A second, more individualistic group of artists flourished following the conquest of the Ming dynasty by the Manchus. Painters such as Shitao (Zhu Ruoji, 1642–1707; fig. 10, p. 23) and Bada Shanren (Zhu Da, 1626–1705; fig. 11, p. 33), both descendants of the Ming royal house, did not have access to antique models; instead, they sought a spiritual communion with the ancients while expressing a strong sense of dislocation and alienation in their art. Working in relative isolation from the traditional centers of culture, these artists, known as the individualist masters, painted in a free, emotion-filled calligraphic manner. During the eighteenth century this style continued to thrive in Yangzhou, a major entrepôt on the Grand Canal, which emerged as a leading center of both trade and art patronage as the burgeoning fortunes of salt merchants and other entrepreneurs created opportunities for artistic experimentation. Within Yangzhou's highly commercialized art market, a group

known as the Eight Eccentrics created a bold idiosyncratic style that extended beyond painting to attitudes and behavior (fig. 5).

The main impetus for innovation in late-nineteenth-century painting came not from pictorial models but from calligraphy. During the eighteenth century the study of early brush manuscripts was increasingly augmented by a growing appreciation for the carved-stone stele inscriptions of the Northern Wei period (386–534) as rubbings of old monuments were circulated and as new stones were unearthed. This so-called stele school spurred a renewed interest in the study of antique script types, which were adopted in brush writing and in the related art of seal carving. During the nineteenth century the study of ancient calligraphy focused upon the legends on ritual bronzes of the Shang and Zhou dynasties (ca. 1600–256 B.C.), as well as on carved-stone monuments of the Qin (221–206 B.C.), Han (206 B.C.–A.D. 220), and Six Dynasties (220–589) periods (fig. 6). The epigraphic approach to calligraphy, known as the “metal-and-stone school,” inspired a major shift in aesthetic values from an emphasis on elegant forms and refined brush techniques to boldness, simplicity, and studied awkwardness. This new taste had a profound impact on painting.

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## ART IN LATE-NINETEENTH-CENTURY SHANGHAI

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In the late nineteenth century, as China entered a period of political and economic decline, numerous artists were attracted to the relative safety of Shanghai, a treaty port where traditional Chinese painting styles were increasingly influenced by new imported media, including photography, lithography, color posters, and mass-circulation newspapers. It was in this cosmopolitan environment that a distinctive style of painting was born.

Following the first Opium War, Shanghai, located close to the sea at the heart of the prosperous lower Yangzi River delta, burgeoned into China's leading commercial and transportation center. In the 1850s, as Taiping rebel armies occupied large portions of southeastern China, many wealthy landowners and merchants took refuge in the foreign-controlled "concessions," which became havens of economic prosperity. Benefiting from an influx of refugees as well as from expanding trade with the West, Shanghai rapidly shed its regional character and became an international melting pot.

By the 1860s Shanghai's mercantile elite had begun to challenge the prerogatives of the traditional scholar-gentry class, introducing a fresh source of patronage in the arts. Rejecting orthodox interpretations of the literati style that had dominated painting during the preceding three hundred years, the new class of patrons favored portraiture, popular narrative subjects, and colorful flower-and-bird compositions. Responding to the demands of the market, Shanghai artists eschewed the convention-bound idioms of seventeenth-century orthodox masters perpetuated by the Qing court and instead drew inspiration

from the highly expressive and dramatically charged imagery and brushwork of seventeenth-century individualists and the "eccentric" painters of eighteenth-century Yangzhou. While basing their art on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century prototypes, however, Shanghai artists preferred an even greater degree of exaggeration in forms and a brighter palette—stressing visual impact over symbolism or narrative content. Ironically, the growing presence of Japanese and Western printed books, photographs, and advertising led to a renewed interest in traditional painting, which remained the prevailing trend through the end of the century.

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### Zhao Zhiqian

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The dominant artists of late-nineteenth-century Shanghai came from nonliterati backgrounds but managed to master features of the style. Zhao Zhiqian (1829–1884), the leading scholar-artist of his day, grew up in a merchant family but undertook a classical education in order to pursue a career in government. After passing the provincial civil-service examination in 1859, Zhao spent ten years in Beijing, selling his art while trying unsuccessfully to complete the capital examination. In 1872 he was awarded the post of district magistrate in Jiangxi Province, where he lived for the last twelve years of his life, continuing to devote his free time to the arts.

Zhao was equally renowned as a calligrapher, a seal carver, and a painter. In his calligraphy Zhao adopted a distinctive "square-brush" style





Zhao Zhiqian (1829–1884). *Peony and Cherry Blossoms*. Folding fan mounted as an album leaf; ink and color on gold-flecked paper, 7½ x 21½ in. (19.1 x 54.6 cm). Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne Hatfield Ellsworth, 1986 (1986.267.28)

derived from the engraved-stone writings of the Northern Wei dynasty. He developed a noticeably plump and angular manner that he followed in his brush writings and seal carving.

Zhao was the first master of the epigraphic school to apply the new aesthetic to painting: “The principle of painting originates from calligraphy. If you are not good at calligraphy, but pursue painting, it is just like feeding a baby rice before he is weaned....if the painter cannot do calligraphy, his work will be vulgar.”

Zhao Zhiqian focused his commitment to calligraphic brushwork upon the genre of flower painting. Such images, with their sumptuous colors and symbolic associations with beauty, prosperity, and good fortune, appealed to the tastes of the new urban consumer. Often he painted on folding fans, a format popular during the late Ming and the Qing dynasties, when fans were fashionable accoutrements for gentlemen. *Peony and Cherry Blossoms* captures the sense

of boldness and simplicity that Zhao Zhiqian had admired in early carved-stone scripts.

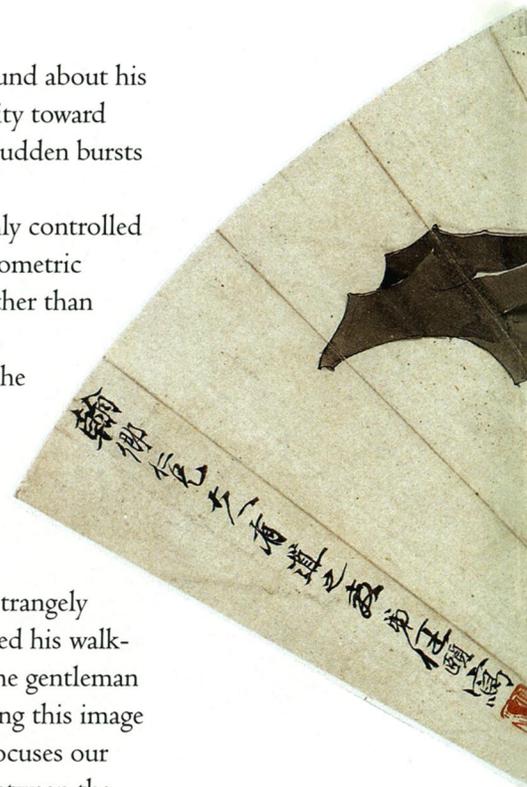
Here, the yin-yang interplay of complementary opposites that Zhao learned as a seal carver appears in the bold juxtaposition of the monochromatic peony and the richly colored cherry blossoms, which are executed in two contrasting modes: the monochrome sketch method and the “boneless” technique of drawing in color without ink outlines. The pinwheel effect of the swirling cluster of blooms is held in check by the compact inscription, which counterbalances the expansive leftward thrust of the peony. Zhao’s blending of contrasting compositional and graphic effects—positive forms and negative spaces, dry and wet ink, round and angular movements, as well as heavy and light brushwork—derives from his calligraphic training; for this reason, Zhao’s style inaugurated a new direction for traditional Chinese artists.

In contrast to the literati taste of Zhao Zhiqian, the most popular mode of painting in Shanghai during the second half of the nineteenth century was practiced by a group known as the Four Rens. The oldest of these artists, the noted figure painter Ren Xiong (1823–1857), died at an early age, but his younger brother, Ren Xun (1835–1893), carried on something of his style, as did Ren Xun's nephew Ren Yu (1853–1901). But it was Ren Xun's student, Ren Yi (1840–1895; not related), generally known by his pseudonym, Ren Bonian, who created a boldly drawn and vividly colored style for figure, flower-and-bird, and landscape painting that by the 1870s made him one of the most acclaimed artists in Shanghai and one of the most popular of the century. The impact of Ren Yi's work extended into the twentieth century through his numerous students and followers, notably Wu Changshi (pp. 15–17).

Ren Yi began painting for a living in his native Shaoxing, in Zhejiang Province, about the age of twenty, having learned the rudiments of portrait drawing from his father. After his father's death in 1861 at the hands of Taiping rebels and a brief period when Ren Yi was forced into their service, Ren expanded his horizons, taking the works of Ren Xiong as his model and training himself by becoming a skilled copyist. By 1864 he had made his way to Suzhou, where he studied with Ren Xun before moving to Shanghai in 1868. In Shanghai Ren Yi pursued his interest in early painting but also explored Western techniques of modeling and shading and even tried his hand at life drawing at the painting studio of the Xujiahui Catholic Church. Ren Yi's Western methods are most apparent in his portraits, in which he combined chiaroscuro for facial features with calligraphic rendering of draperies and setting. For the most part, however, Ren Yi eschewed foreign influences in favor of traditional approaches to painting, mastering a wide range of subject matter and methods. Ren also cultivated the image of the

eccentric artist, and anecdotes abound about his unkempt appearance, irresponsibility toward patrons, addiction to opium, and sudden bursts of creative energy.

*Scholar on a Rock*, rendered in highly controlled contours of uniform width and geometric perfection that appear engraved rather than brushed, is probably an early work, exemplifying Ren Yi's mastery of the archaic idiom of his fellow townsman Chen Hongshou (1598–1652), who was an important model for each of the Four Rens (fig. 7). He depicts a scholar, out for a stroll, resting on a large, strangely eroded garden rock. Having propped his walking stick in a crook of the stone, the gentleman is engrossed in his book. By isolating this image against a blank background, Ren focuses our attention on the subtle interplay between the scalloped contours of the rock and the patterned folds of the man's robes, conveying a sense of the deep harmony between these kindred spirits. The pictorial association of craggy rocks and gentlemanly virtues goes back to scholar-amateur paintings of the eleventh century (fig. 2).





Ren Yi (or Ren Bonian, 1840–1895). *Scholar on a Rock*. Folding fan mounted as an album leaf; ink and color on alum paper, 7½ x 21¾ in. (19.1 x 53.8 cm). Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne Hatfield Ellsworth, 1986 (1986.267.49)

Fig. 7. Chen Hongshou (1598–1652). *Drunken Gentleman*. Ca. 1627. Leaf from an album of eleven paintings; ink and color on silk, 8¾ x 8¾ in. (22.2 x 21.7 cm). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wan-go H. C. Weng, 1999 (1999.521)



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## INNOVATION WITHIN TRADITION: SHANGHAI SCHOLAR-PAINTERS OF THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

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The first decades of the twentieth century marked the end of the insular, tradition-bound Qing empire and the forceful entry of China into the modern age. Foreign influences, largely restricted to a handful of ports and missionary initiatives during much of the nineteenth century, now flooded into China in an irresistible tide. Indeed, the massive influx of Western ideas and products constituted the most important factor defining China's culture during the twentieth century.

China's defeat in the first Sino-Japanese War (1894–95), which began as a dispute over control of Korea, spurred a movement for reform among members of the scholarly class with the ideal of marrying “Chinese essential principles with Western practical knowledge.” For one hundred days in 1898 the Guangxu emperor (r. 1897–1908), acting on the advice of the scholars Kang Youwei (1858–1927) and Liang Qichao (1873–1929), issued edicts aimed at the radical transformation of Chinese government and society. At that point the alarmed opposition of the political establishment enabled Dowager Empress Cixi (1835–1908) to repress the reformers, seize power, and send the emperor into seclusion.

During its final years the Qing dynasty did launch a number of initiatives aimed at modernization, but its efforts were too feeble and too late. Advocates for radical change, particularly the revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), were able to capitalize upon growing feelings of nationalism and profound dissatisfaction with Manchu rule to topple the Qing dynasty. The founding of the Republic of China in 1912

brought about an end to two millennia of imperial rule. During the next two decades the young republic struggled to consolidate its power: initially by uniting central military and political leadership after the misguided attempt by Yuan Shikai (1859–1916), the first president, to establish himself as emperor; and second by bringing together China's diverse regions, after wresting control over certain areas from local warlords. While only partially successful in creating a unified state, the republic did foster a new sense of intellectual purpose, in which “science and democracy” were seen as essential components of the modern Chinese identity.

In the arts a schism developed between conservatives and innovators, between artists seeking to preserve their heritage in the face of rapid Westernization by following earlier precedents and those who advocated the reform of Chinese art through the adoption of foreign media and techniques. During the opening decades of the twentieth century a group of artists working in Shanghai saw itself as protectors of China's cultural legacy. Some, who had served as officials during the Qing dynasty, took refuge in foreign concessions, where they lived as “left-over” subjects of the fallen Qing, supporting themselves through the sale of their calligraphy and painting. Exemplifying the heritage of the scholar-official, these artists were the most influential practitioners of the epigraphic movement initiated by Zhao Zhiqian and applied calligraphic principles to their painting.




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### Wu Changshi

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The leading exponent of traditional literati painting was Wu Changshi (Wu Changshuo, 1844–1927), the only senior master of the Shanghai school to survive into the twentieth century. Wu fused the classical epigraphic approach with the popular style of Ren Yi, and

Wu Changshi (Wu Changshuo, 1844–1927). *Spring Offerings*. Dated 1919. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper, 57<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 31<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (145.7 x 79.4 cm). Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne Hatfield Ellsworth, 1988 (1988.324.2)

he continued the literati ideal of uniting poetry, calligraphy, and painting in a single work of art.

Born into a straitened gentry family in northern Zhejiang, near the Anhui Province border, Wu managed to gain the classical education required to become a scholar-official. In 1860, when Taiping rebels captured his village, he and his father were forced to flee for four years to avoid conscription. By 1866 Wu had passed the local civil-service examinations, and for the next thirty years he held low-level clerical jobs before his appointment as a district magistrate in 1899. He resigned after a month. Wu had already made a name for himself as a painter. He was basically self-taught but did not become recognized as an artist until his midfifties, long after he had taken up calligraphy and seal carving. In painting, Wu adopted the “antiquarian epigrapher’s taste” (*jinsiqi*) pioneered by Zhao Zhiqian (pp. 10–11). In 1913 Wu settled in Shanghai as a professional artist. By the 1920s he had a number of disciples and was well known in Japan.

Wu’s favorite subjects were bold, colorful images of flowers and rocks, which found a ready market among Shanghai’s urban class. *Spring Offerings*, done in 1919, when Wu was seventy-five, presents popular emblems of long life and renewal appropriate for a New Year’s greeting: *lingzhi* mushroom, narcissus, a garden rock, and the bright red berries of the nandina plant. It is not an image from nature, however, but an abstract arrangement that emphasizes epigraphic elements: awkward, heavy, emphatic ink lines, contrasts of form and blank space, and a simplification of the composition, which is dominated by strong, diagonal cross movements.



Wu's transformation of his models is apparent when *Spring Offerings* is compared with a Ming-dynasty tapestry, woven to resemble a hanging-scroll painting, that shows a nearly identical array of auspicious plants (fig. 8). The tapestry is meticulously and realistically delineated in spite of the technical limitations of the medium, while Wu's hanging scroll emphasizes the artist's hand and spirit through assertive brushwork and bold application of color washes. In contrast to Zhao Zhiqian's approach to his fan painting (pp. 10–11), Wu tempered the late-nineteenth-century taste for lush color with emphasis on thick ink outlines and the addition of ink to some of his colors, which imparts a sober antique patina. Wu's round, centered-tip strokes, derived from his study of seal script, are at once monumental and sensuous.

*Spring Offerings* was painted at a fateful moment in the history of the young Chinese republic. On May 4, 1919, students in Beijing protested the Treaty of Versailles, which in bringing to a close World War I transferred all former German possessions in China to Japan. By June, when Wu completed this picture, demonstrations had broken out in Shanghai. Thus, although the painting's ostensible subject is one of good wishes for the New Year, its time of execution suggests more poignant layers of meaning. On one hand, the seventy-five-year-old master found solace at life's end in the symbols of springtime renewal but felt himself enslaved by the demand for his brightly colored images; on the other, he must have believed that, like the rock, his art and his country, though

Opposite

Detail of *Spring Offerings*, p. 15

Fig. 8. *Auspicious Signs of the New Year*. Ming dynasty (1368–1644). Vertical panel 39½ x 17 in. (100.3 x 43.2 cm); silk tapestry weave (*kesi*) evocation of a painting by Cui Bo (active ca. 1060–85). John Stewart Kennedy Fund, 1913 (13.220.102)

Right: Fig. 9. Li Yaofu (active ca. 1300). *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi River on a Reed*. Before 1317. Inscribed by Yishan Yining (died 1317). Hanging scroll; ink on paper, 33¾ x 13⅜ in. (85.6 x 34.1 cm). Edward Elliott Family Collection, Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1982 (1982.1.2)

humbled by present circumstances, would endure. Wu's poem, inscribed in bold running script along the left side of the painting, reads:

The narcissus is long-lived and the *lingzhi* mushroom  
never fades,  
At year's end their appearance consoles my loneliness.  
The gnarled rock, set down by Heaven,  
Is like the Kunlunnu tribesman who waits upon the  
[singing girl clad in] red silk.

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### Wang Zhen

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Wu Changshi's best-known disciple was Wang Zhen (1867–1938). Wang was born in Pudong, just across the Huangpu River from Shanghai. At fifteen he became an apprentice in a bank and studied Japanese in a local language school. In 1900 he was employed as an agent for a Japanese trading company. Wang became a successful businessman, eventually serving as chairman of the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce. With the beginning of the second Sino-Japanese War (1937–45) and the occupation of Shanghai in 1937, he felt the need to prove his loyalty. Resisting collaboration with the Japanese, he left for Hong Kong, only to return in 1938, terminally ill. He died the morning after his homecoming.

Wang started his artistic training with his father, who had a passion for painting. In 1882



Wang began to study formally; he was noticed by Ren Yi (pp. 12–13) and became his disciple. About 1914, shortly after Wu Changshi arrived in Shanghai, Wang became his pupil. In spite of his travels to Japan and exposure to Western culture, Wang did not adopt a Western-influenced style. He learned to master figural motifs and painterly effects from Ren Yi, while from Wu Changshi he acquired powerful calligraphic brushwork.

Late in life Wang Zhen became a devout Buddhist. His beliefs are manifested in his late works, many of which show the influence of Chan (Zen in Japanese) Buddhist painting as practiced by Southern Song (1127–1279) and Yuan (1279–1368) monk-artists (fig. 9). Most of their surviving works have been preserved in Japan, where Wang might have seen them.



Wang Zhen (1867–1938). *Buddhist Sage*. Dated 1928. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper, 78½ x 36⅞ in. (199.4 x 93.7 cm). Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne Hatfield Ellsworth, 1986 (1986.267.156)

Detail of *Buddhist Sage*



*Buddhist Sage*, painted in 1928, a depiction of the legendary Indian monk Bodhidharma, who is credited with introducing Chan Buddhism into China in the late fifth century, is a thinly veiled homage to Wu Changshi, who died the preceding year. The painting shows Bodhidharma seated beside the cave where he is said to have meditated for nine years. Approaching the sage from below is his Chinese disciple Huike, who cut off his arm to demonstrate his spiritual conviction and prove his worthiness as a follower.

Wang Zhen's inscription reads:

A sage from the West preaches the wonderful doctrine of the Upper Vehicle. He sits preaching under a Bodhi tree with roosting birds listening in silence. His Wheel of the

Law bright as a full moon, its precious light illuminating the lamp of transmission. An ailing worshiper travels from afar to leave word with the monk at the stone cave.

Wu Changshi's influence is evident in the strong, round brushwork, rich colors, and bold ink dots of the wild landscape, which surrounds Bodhidharma like a luminous halo. Rejecting a life of meditative detachment, however, Wang's animated sage holds his own within the surging forms of his surroundings, just as the artist was unyielding in both his faith and his life.

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## PAINTING ACADEMIES AND WESTERN INFLUENCE

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With the establishment of the republic in 1912, one of the first initiatives undertaken by the new government was the restructuring of China's educational system. Cai Yuanpei (1868–1940), a traditionally educated scholar who had studied Western philosophy for seven years in Berlin and Leipzig, was appointed minister of education. Cai believed that aesthetic education should take the place of religion as a vehicle for remaking society. To lead this initiative Cai appointed Chen Duxiu (1879–1942), a revolutionary journalist and later the founder of the Communist party, to the post of dean of letters at Beijing University and Lu Xun (1881–1936), the leading leftist writer of the day, to be the head of the Social Education Bureau with responsibility over cultural institutions. Both Chen and Lu advocated the reform of Chinese painting. In 1917 Chen published an article criticizing literati painting, particularly the orthodox school of Dong Qichang (fig. 4), insisting that “painters must follow the tenets of realism” as a means of rejuvenating Chinese painting.

The humiliation China suffered on May 4, 1919, when the former German-occupied territories were turned over to Japan, caused students and intellectuals to advocate strongly China's modernization and Westernization, including the practice of a new realism in literature and the visual arts. This trend, known as the May Fourth Movement, or the New Culture Movement, led to a number of students going abroad. In contrast to such students as the Cantonese artist Gao Jianfu (1879–1951) and his brother Gao Qifeng (1889–1933), who had their first exposure to Western-style painting in Japan, a

growing group now traveled to Europe, where they came into contact with the diverse currents of Western tradition and modernism. Returning to China, many became educators who played a prominent role in establishing the curriculum of newly founded arts academies in Nanjing, Shanghai, and Hangzhou. While these artists instituted classes in life drawing and Western techniques, a schism soon arose between those who advocated the study of classical models and nineteenth-century academic realism and those who embraced the modern European styles of Van Gogh, Cézanne, Picasso, and Matisse.

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### Xu Beihong

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The most influential champion of Western academic realism was Xu Beihong (1895–1953). The son of a painter in Yixing, Jiangsu Province, Xu moved to Shanghai in 1914, where he made backdrops for photography studios. Inspired by the ideas of the political reformer Kang Youwei (1858–1927), who advocated “an integration of Chinese and Western art to create a new era of Chinese painting,” in 1917 Xu went to Japan to study Western techniques, returning the following year to be an instructor at Beijing University. In 1919 Xu became the first government-sponsored artist to study in Europe. Until 1927 he was in Paris and Berlin, mastering an already moribund academic manner.

Returning to China in 1927, Xu assumed the leadership of the art department of Liangjiang



Xu Beihong (1895–1953). *Grazing Horse*. Dated 1932. Hanging scroll; ink on paper, 20½ x 14¾ in. (52.1 x 37.5 cm). Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne Hatfield Ellsworth, 1986 (1986.267.192)

Liu Haisu (1896–1994). *Pine Cliff and Waterfall*. Dated 1964. Hanging scroll; ink on paper, 75 x 26 in. (190.5 x 66 cm). Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne Hatfield Ellsworth, 1986 (1986.267.366)

Normal College, in Nanjing, which later became part of the prestigious National Central University. Believing that the reform of Chinese painting required the assimilation of Western methods, Xu strongly criticized the slavish imitation of his country's ancient masters and urged artists to “adopt the materials and techniques invented to depict real objects.”

*Grazing Horse*, dated 1932, exemplifies Xu Beihong's fusion of East and West. He employed the conventional Chinese medium of brush and ink, but his drawing technique is purely Western. Rather than defining the horse with calligraphically energized outlines, Xu sketched the horse impressionistically, with light and dark washes and uninked areas of white paper left to suggest the modeling of light and shadow. Reflecting studies from life, the horse's complex pose—foreshortened body, twisting neck, and naturalistically splayed forelegs—is deftly rendered in a few well-placed brushstrokes, while the layered tones of the animal's tail give the feeling of movement.

Xu Beihong's depictions of spirited stallions evoke the long tradition of images of horses as emblems of state power and metaphors for men of talent. However, Xu's terse comment in the upper left of this painting, “Short grass covers only the horse's hooves,” indicates his frustration at the lack of government action following the Japanese establishment of a puppet regime in Manchuria and bombing of Shanghai in 1932. Xu painted countless similar images of horses throughout his career. This early example was done for the son of the noted artist Qi Baishi (pp. 26–37) on the occasion of a visit by Xu to Qi in Beijing. Three years later Qi added two inscriptions to the picture, explaining in the second that when Xu painted it he had failed to bring his seals, which is why the work lacks the artist's impression.



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## Liu Haisu

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One of the artists who challenged Xu Beihong's academic approach to Western art was Liu Haisu (1896–1994). Born into a prosperous family in Changzhou, Jiangsu Province, Liu attended a private school to acquire a classical education. By the age of fourteen his precocious talent led to his enrollment in a Shanghai school devoted to oil painting. In 1912, at sixteen, Liu started his own school, which later became the Shanghai Academy of Art, one of the three centers for Western painting in China before World War II. Liu introduced life drawing into classes, but a display of nude figure studies in 1915 led one critic to accuse Liu of being a “traitor in art,” a label Liu proudly had cut into a seal.

In 1918 Liu visited Japan for a year. Three years later he lectured on Impressionism and Postimpressionism at Beijing University. Liu went to Europe in 1929 to study in Paris and to travel before returning to Shanghai in 1932. He made a second European sojourn from 1933 to 1935. After 1949 he was director of the East China Arts Academy, the successor to the school

he founded in 1912. However, during the anti-rightist campaign of 1957 against intellectuals who had opposed Communist policies during the Hundred Flowers Movement of the preceding year, he was criticized for his unwillingness to be transferred to a teaching post in Xi'an and for his disparagement of Soviet-style art. He was stripped of all his titles. During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, launched in 1966 by Mao Zedong (1893–1976) and his supporters to combat the bureaucratization of the party, Liu was kept under house arrest until 1972, but he continued to paint until his death in 1994.

In spite of Liu's progressive outlook, his oils in the coarse impasto manner of Van Gogh changed little during his long career, and his Chinese-style paintings show a similarly vigorous, unsubtle brushwork. *Pine Cliff and Waterfall*, dated 1964, exemplifies Liu's enduring interest in traditional landscapes, especially in the bold style of the early Qing individualist master Shitao (fig. 10). Like Shitao, Liu sought inspiration directly from nature, particularly the dramatic cliffs and craggy pines of Yellow Mountain (Huangshan). As he proudly proclaims in the legend on one of the seals on this painting, “Yellow Mountain is my teacher.” In this monumental

Fig. 10. Shitao (Zhu Ruoji, 1642–1707). *Outing to Master Zhang's Grotto*. Ca. 1700. Handscroll; ink and color on paper, 18 x 112 $\frac{5}{8}$  in. (45.7 x 286 cm). Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1982 (1982.126)

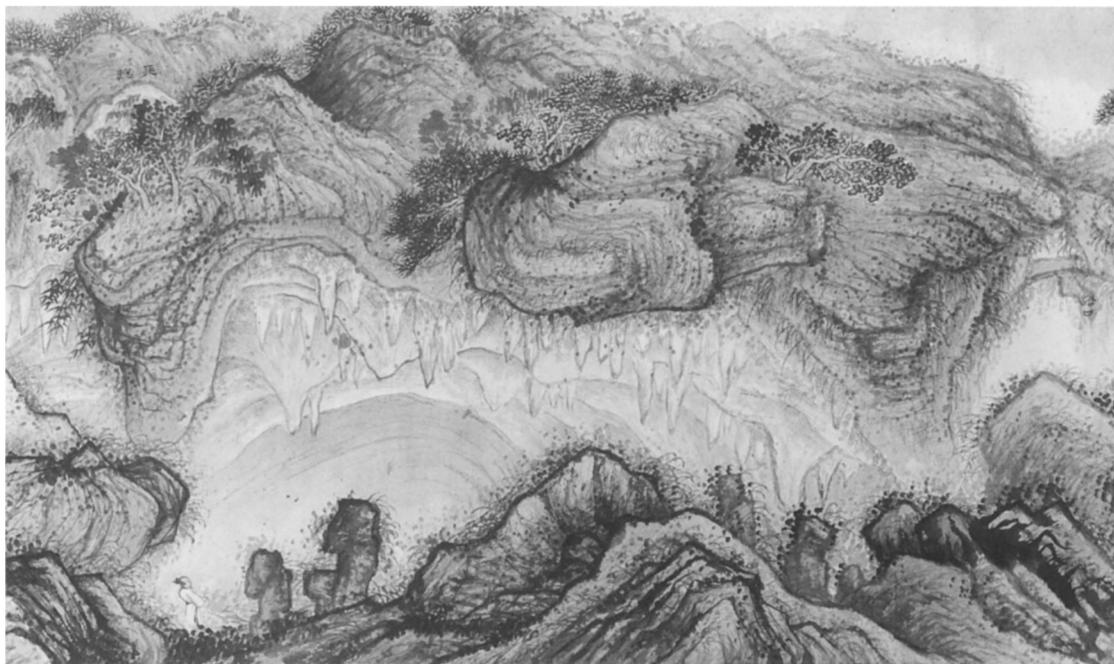


image Liu's dashing brushwork and ink washes are swept up in a single dynamic compositional movement, in which the rearing cliff is made to resemble a giant cresting wave.

*Lotus Peak*, a small album leaf done in 1975, when the artist was nearly eighty, reveals a very different approach. Liu's picture, the subject of which is one of the principal peaks of Yellow Mountain, resembles a sketch from nature in its sensitively drawn contours. Gone is the bravura brushwork of a decade earlier. Instead, Liu animated his landscape by juxtaposing areas of ink wash and blank paper to create the effect of sun and shadow, white clouds, and verdant foliage.

Liu's experimentation with Western ideas and techniques, reflected both in his drawing and in the strongly contrasting areas of light and dark, was a way of liberating himself from traditional constraints. His inscription reads: "I haven't painted for a long time. [My brush] has grown cold and clumsy. It is a pleasure to wash away [styles] of the past and present." At the same time Liu remained attached to his native landscape, as he reminds us with the seal "Yellow Mountain is my teacher."

Liu Haisu (1896–1994). *Lotus Peak*. Dated 1975. Album leaf; ink on paper, 11 3/8 x 16 1/8 in. (28.9 x 41 cm). Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne Hatfield Ellsworth, 1986 (1986.267.365)



蓮花嶺絕頂

久不寫畫法拙自生

一洗古今為快

亞順醫師畫

劉海



乙丑秋年



## A NEW TRADITIONALIST

The first half of the twentieth century was a period of almost continuous political and military turmoil in China. After Sun Yat-sen's death in 1925, the leadership of his Nationalist party was dominated by the military under Chiang Kai-shek (1887–1975), who struggled to unify a nation fragmented into a number of semi-autonomous regions controlled by local warlords. From 1924 to 1928 Chiang waged a series of campaigns against the northern warlords; after 1927 he launched a prolonged attack on the Communist party, which had been established in 1921. In 1931 Japan invaded Manchuria. For the next six years Chiang avoided open engagement with the Japanese, a policy that, though militarily prudent, led to widespread disillusionment with the Nationalist party. Chiang's troops were still no match for the Japanese army, however, when it swept southward from Manchuria in 1937, rapidly occupying large portions of China's eastern seaboard and forcing the Nationalist government to retreat inland to the mountain fastness of Sichuan. For the next eight years China struggled under Japanese aggression and occupation. When the conflict broadened into world war, America and its allies sought to unite Nationalists and Communists against the Japanese, but both sides were intent on achieving total control of the country. After the Japanese

Qi Baishi (1864–1957). *Bodhidharma*. Dated 1913. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper, 32 $\frac{5}{8}$  x 17 $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (83 x 45.4 cm). Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne Hatfield Ellsworth, 1986 (1986.267.208)



surrender civil war erupted, culminating with the flight of the Nationalist forces to Taiwan and the founding by Mao Zedong of the People's Republic of China on the mainland in 1949.

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### Qi Baishi

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One of the towering figures in the Chinese art world who successfully transcended the political turmoil of the early twentieth century was Qi Baishi (1864–1957). In contrast to the artists who sought inspiration in Europe and Japan, Qi Baishi was deeply rooted in the traditions of his native country. Practicing a highly individualistic style that defies easy classification, he also differed from most artists of the period in his mastery of landscape, a genre that was largely overlooked by late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Chinese painters. Longevity also played an important role in Qi's career, since he did not develop his mature style until he was in his sixties.

Born in Xiangtan, Hunan Province, the son of poor peasants, Qi Baishi had less than a year of schooling before starting to work, first as a cowherd, then as an itinerant furniture maker. Although he enjoyed drawing, it was not until he was twenty-seven that he undertook the study of portraiture, painting, calligraphy, and seal carving. During his forties and fifties Qi traveled across north and south China doing landscapes and seeking a personal style before settling in Beijing about the age of sixty. Here, Qi was befriended by the artist Chen Hengke (Chen Shizeng, 1876–1923), who encouraged him to abandon the technical lessons of his earlier training and pursue a simpler, more expressive style in the manner of such earlier individualist masters as Bada Shanren (fig. 11, p. 33), Jin Nong (fig. 5), and Wu Changshi (pp. 15–17). In 1927 Qi joined the faculty of the newly established National Beijing Academy of Art to teach traditional Chinese painting. By the decade's end his growing success as an artist had gained him powerful friends and financial ease. For the next thirty years Qi cultivated his own style without regard for politics or artistic trends, becoming

one of the best-known Chinese painters of all time.

*Bodhidharma*, done in 1913, when Qi was forty-nine and visiting Beijing, is an image of the fifth-century Chan patriarch that is both accessible and strikingly monumental. The monklike robe, shoe, and stubble of his shaven head are details that give Bodhidharma a very contemporary appearance—not unlike that of Qi himself. But in Qi's vision the master remains beyond reach. Except for some cursory highlighting around the eye and cheek, Qi avoided the Western-influenced techniques for rendering form that he learned as a portraitist. And he has concealed most of the figure's anatomy beneath the engulfing robe, the simplified contours and flat silhouette of which are as daring in their abstraction as those of the cloak Rodin sculpted for his portrayal of Balzac in 1897.

Bodhidharma is depicted against a blank background; only the straw prayer mat and the hem of his robe hint at three-dimensional form in the otherwise flat composition. Although the bold outlines of the garment and the blunt, square calligraphy of the inscription show close stylistic affinities with the epigraphic manner of Zhao Zhiqian (pp. 10–11), Qi's expressive portrait exhibits the simplicity and directness that characterized his mature style of the 1920s. In his inscription Qi reflected on his inspiration—a visit to Mount Song, where Bodhidharma meditated for nine years—and also took pleasure in acknowledging his own growing critical recognition: he recounted a poem written on the wall of a Beijing inn about his earlier painting of Bodhidharma that clearly prompted him to repeat his performance.

After his mentor in Beijing, Chen Hengke, counseled Qi to abandon his technical training for a calligraphic approach to painting, Qi's style was transformed, a change illustrated by comparing *Scuttling Crab* of 1919 with *Shrimp* of eight years later (pp. 28, 29). The earlier painting shows him employing a representational mode of depiction rather than calligraphic brushwork. Every stroke that defines the crab's body and legs is painstakingly individualized to perform a specific descriptive function. In



Qi Baishi (1864–1957). *Scuttling Crab*.  
 Dated 1919. Hanging scroll; ink on paper,  
 20¼ x 14¾ in. (51.4 x 36.7 cm). Gift of  
 Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of  
 La Ferne Hatfield Ellsworth, 1986  
 (1986.267.209)

*Shrimp*, on the other hand, each crustacean—like a single Chinese character—is formed through the repetition of the same conventionalized pattern of marks. Thus released from the need to visualize the shrimp separately, Qi was free to explore the abstract, expressive possibilities of structure, ink tone, and composition, achieving the direct, childlike spontaneity and naturalness that are hallmarks in his works. Qi’s exhilaration at the new possibilities of this method are reflected in his inscription:

If you can forget painting theory, you will not suffer from its deeply rooted bad effects. Then your brush will fly like a heavenly horse moving through the sky.

During the next decade Qi applied the same lesson to other genres of painting, particularly landscape. *Viewing Antiquities at the Studio of Humility* of 1930 effortlessly incorporates an archaic color scheme and landscape forms into an image of deceptive simplicity (p. 30). The painting depicts a solitary gentleman in his study, arms folded on the table, contemplating a tray of objects.

Qi Baishi (1864–1957). *Shrimp*. Dated 1927.  
Hanging scroll; ink on paper, 38 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 18 $\frac{3}{4}$  in.  
(97.5 x 47.6 cm). Gift of Robert Hatfield  
Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne  
Hatfield Ellsworth, 1986 (1986.267.212)





Qi Baishi (1864–1957). *Viewing Antiquities at the Studio of Humility*. Dated 1930. Album leaf; ink and color on paper, 11¼ x 13¼ in. (28 x 33.7 cm). Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne Hatfield Ellsworth, 1986 (1986.267.214)

The scholar appears perfectly at home in a world of blue and red hills and schematic trees, motifs that convey Qi's knowledge of the sixth-century murals at the Buddhist cave temples at Dunhuang, in northwest Gansu Province. But Qi incorporates these motifs in an unpedantic manner that is completely in harmony with his folklike vision.

*Lamp-lit Pavilion on a Rainy Night*, painted when Qi was sixty-nine, evokes an entirely different mood. Broad streaks of wash and saturated blobs of ink convey a sense of misty darkness and lonely isolation. A two-storied hall, nearly engulfed by the shadowy silhouettes of trees, offers the only sanctuary from the night, its

uninked walls and interior standing forth as the sole bright spot in the picture. Seated by a window, a scholar reads a book by the light of a single lamp. The significance of this image is suggested by an inscription that Qi added to another work created in his early years in Beijing: "Leading a vagrant life in the northern land, I sit before an inkstone under a lonely light."

Although Qi had been a resident of Beijing for fifteen years when he painted this work, he still felt like a stranger within the society of the capital and held a lingering nostalgia for the simpler existence of his childhood home. Qi's confidence in his own vision and refusal to lapse into sentimentality is demonstrated by his



Qi Baishi (1864–1957). *Lamp-lit Pavilion on a Rainy Night*. Dated 1933.  
Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper, 21 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 18 $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (55.6 x 46.7 cm).  
Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne Hatfield  
Ellsworth, 1986 (1986.267.215)

Qi Baishi (1864–1957). *Eagle on a Pine Tree*. Hanging scroll; ink on paper, 68 1/8 x 21 1/2 in. (173 x 54.6 cm). Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne Hatfield Ellsworth, 1986 (1986.267.216)

boldly brushed inscription, written in the sharp, blocky stele style that stands in stark contrast to the soft, blurry quality of the image.

Qi remained in Beijing throughout the tumultuous years of the second Sino-Japanese War and subsequent Communist revolution, too old and too stubborn to become a refugee. *Eagle on a Pine Tree*, a powerful work painted sometime in the late 1930s, reflects the artist's defiance in the face of foreign aggression. Inspired by the imagery and brush style of the seventeenth-century loyalist Bada Shanren (fig. 11), Qi depicted the noble bird standing erect and unmoving on the curving trunk of a powerful pine; the tree's pendent branches and feathery needles form a natural canopy for this regal creature. But if the eagle embodies the artist's steadfastness, the accompanying inscription, which borrows lines from the eighth-century poet Du Fu, reflects his distress at the senseless loss of innocent lives during the Japanese invasion of 1937:

Why attack ordinary birds,  
Spraying blood and feathers on the ground?

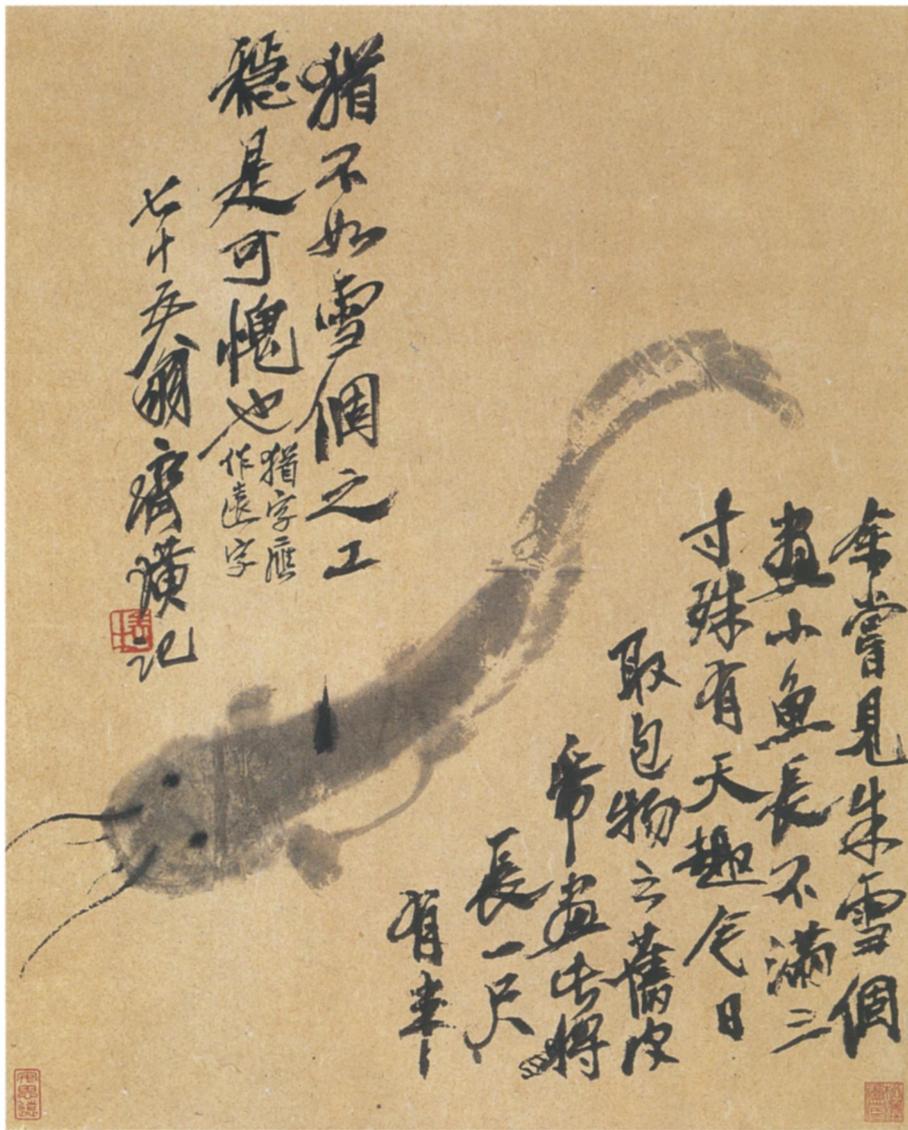


Fig. 11. Bada Shanren (Zhu Da, 1626–1705).  
*Two Eagles*. Dated 1702. Hanging scroll; ink on  
paper, 73 x 35<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (185.4 x 90 cm). Ex coll.:  
C. C. Wang Family, Lent by Oscar L. Tang



Detail of *Eagle on a Pine Tree*





Qi Baishi (1864–1957). *Catfish*. Dated 1937. Hanging scroll; ink on paper, 21 $\frac{1}{8}$  x 17 $\frac{1}{8}$  in. (53.7 x 43.5 cm). Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne Hatfield Ellsworth, 1986 (1986.267.222)

Qi Baishi's great admiration for Bada's paintings, in which a few deft brushstrokes might conjure up a fish, bird, or plant that is at once beguilingly simple yet psychologically complex, is apparent in his frankly imitative *Catfish*, dated 1937. Its self-mocking inscription reads:

I saw a picture showing great natural simplicity by [Bada] of a small fish, no more than three inches long. Today I took an old piece of wrapping paper, and painted [a fish] measuring one and a half feet. Compared to [Bada's], mine is less skillful, less solid. This is embarrassing. "Less" should read "far from."

Qi's ability to reduce his depiction to a minimum and still convey meaning with a sense of

humor is epitomized by *Water Buffalo under a Willow Tree*. Qi portrayed the animal from the rear, its hindquarters forming a perfect circle, from which tail, legs, horn, muzzle, and the dark line of a rope protrude. The ink used to describe the rump is mixed with water, creating the rough appearance of hair. A broken horizon line bisects the beast, which would otherwise appear to be hovering like an inflated balloon. The attenuated form of the willow, its long, stringy wisps seeming to flutter lightly in the breeze, contrasts with the sturdy immobility of the buffalo.

Throughout his life Qi Baishi was inspired by objects of everyday existence, particularly the



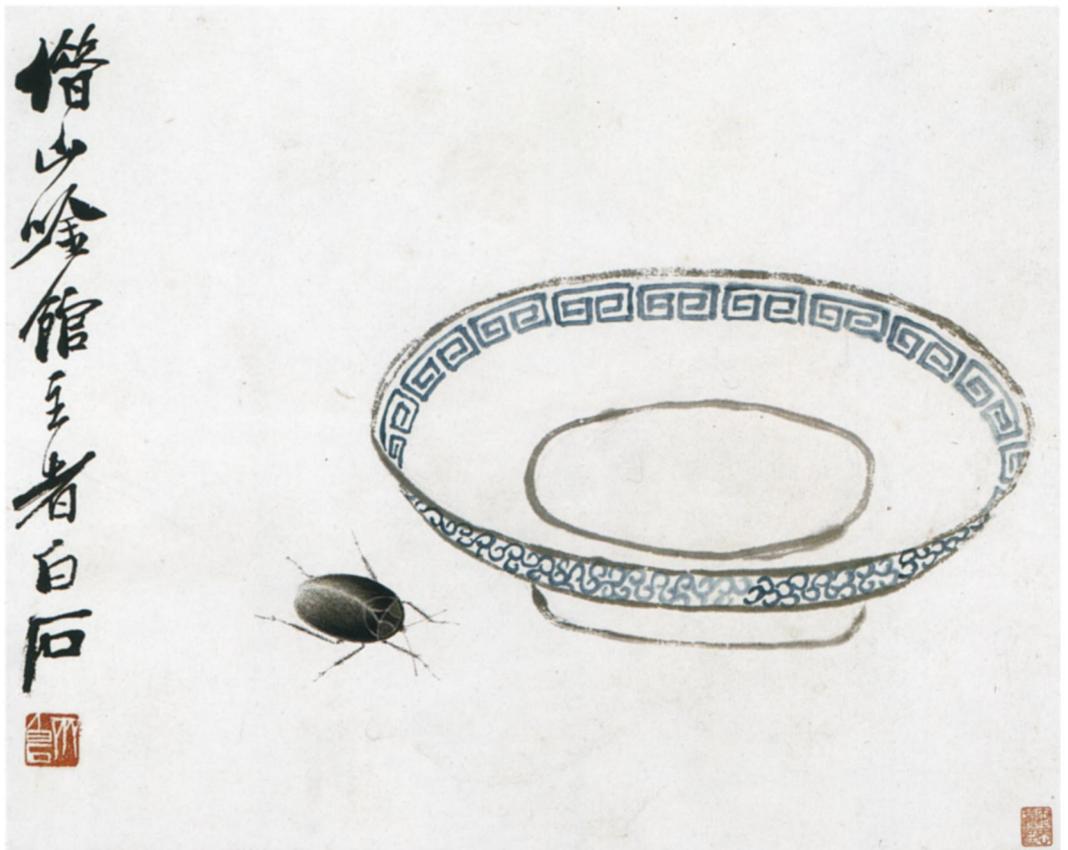
Qi Baishi (1864–1957). *Water Buffalo under a Willow Tree*.  
Hanging scroll; ink on paper, 34<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 11 in. (87.2 x 27.9 cm).  
Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne  
Hatfield Ellsworth, 1986 (1986.267.223)

humble flowers, vegetables, and living creatures that he observed as a boy. In *Insects and Plants* (pp. 36–37), a series of twelve album leaves done in 1943, Qi matched insects and objects in a visual chronicle of the seasonal markers of rural life. Juxtaposing insects drawn in an extremely meticulous fine-line style with flowers and vegetables executed in a colorful, free-sketch manner, Qi created a tour de force of technical breadth that he proudly entitled: “What I am capable of!”



Qi Baishi (1864–1957).  
*Insects and Plants*. Dated  
1943. Four leaves from an  
album of twelve paintings;  
ink and color on paper, each  
leaf 10½ x 13½ in. (25.7 x  
34.3 cm). Gift of Robert  
Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory  
of La Ferne Hatfield  
Ellsworth, 1986  
(1986.267.237a-1)





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## NEW ASIAN ART: A SYNTHESIS OF EAST AND WEST

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Fu Baoshi and Zhang Daqian, the two most prominent figures after Qi Baishi represented in the Ellsworth Collection, studied in Japan and traveled abroad late in their lives, thereby gaining exposure to other artistic traditions. Although very different in their responses to the past and to the West, both created hybrid styles that reflect a cosmopolitan attitude toward art and a willingness to modify inherited idioms through the incorporation of foreign idioms and techniques. Zhang, who became a leading connoisseur and collector, based his diverse painting styles on the firsthand study of early masterpieces, while Fu, an academic, learned about earlier works from reproductions and copies.

At a time when most Chinese painters revered the landscape tradition of Dong Qichang (fig. 4) and his orthodox-school followers, both artists shared a fascination with the boldly individualistic styles of the Ming loyalist-painters Shitao (fig. 10) and Bada Shanren (fig. 11), who were appreciated by Japanese connoisseurs. Zhang later became a proficient imitator and forger of the seventeenth-century painters' works, while Fu not only found inspiration in Shitao's landscape style but also adopted the name Baoshi (Treasuring Shi) as a mark of profound admiration for Shitao's works.

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### Fu Baoshi

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Fu Baoshi (1904–1965) was born into an impoverished farming family in Xinyu, Jiangxi Province. When Fu was eleven his father died, and he was apprenticed to a ceramics shop in

Nanchang. He used his spare time to study calligraphy, seal carving, and painting. In 1926, after attending a local teachers college, Fu became an art instructor; with the help of Xu Beihong (pp. 20–22) he eventually was able to study in Japan. Fu enrolled in the Imperial Institute of Fine Arts in Tokyo in 1933. There he began to develop his notions of a new national painting style based on the same fusion of Western realism and traditional brushwork practiced by Japanese artists of the *Nibonga* movement, who synthesized the natural light and the luminous colors of Western art with Eastern materials, techniques, and subject matter. Fu returned to China in 1935 and at Xu Beihong's invitation became a teacher at National Central University in Nanjing. After the Japanese invasion in 1937 the university moved to the wartime capital of Chongqing, in Sichuan Province, and Fu joined the faculty there in 1940 after several years of anti-Japanese propaganda work. Following the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949, Fu Baoshi executed a number of important government commissions, including a mural-size painting for the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Fu died a year before the start of the Cultural Revolution at the age of sixty-one.

*Playing Weiqi at the Water Pavilion* was done during the war years, between 1940 and 1945, when Fu lived in Sichuan. The setting, a garden pavilion buttressed by powerful rocks next to a rushing stream, may refer to Fu's personal retreat identified in the inscription: "The Mountain Studio at the foot of Mount Jin'gang in Eastern Sichuan." But it may also be understood as a metaphor for China's enduring culture. The two scholars engrossed in *weiqi* (Chinese chess; *go* in

Fu Baoshi (1904–1965).  
*Playing Weiqi at the Water Pavilion*. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper, 49¾ x 29½ in. (126.4 x 74.9 cm). Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne Hatfield Ellsworth, 1988 (1988.324.3)



新喻隱居石梁川金野亭山齋



Fu Baoshi (1904–1965). *Goddess of the River Xiang*. Dated 1947. Album leaf; ink and color on paper, 10½ x 12⅞ in. (26.7 x 32.7 cm). Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne Hatfield Ellsworth, 1986 (1986.267.277)

Japanese) recall the four traditional accomplishments of the gentleman—*weiqi*, playing the zither, calligraphy, and painting—but they may also allude to China’s long history of military strategy.

The painting, framed top and bottom by silhouetted forms rendered in saturated daubs of black ink, presents a shallow space densely packed with richly colored garden elements that draw attention to the figures. Only the free-standing screen behind the figures remains unpainted, serving as a bold accent that throws them into high relief and accentuates the stage-like drama of their actions.

Fu’s combination of Chinese and foreign methods is most evident in his treatment of the stream, which is delineated with dry-brush contours and alternating passages of wash and uninked paper that suggest the play of sunlight across the surface—a treatment borrowed directly from Western watercolor technique.

Concealed among the rocks of the painting are three seals that together proclaim Fu’s artistic manifesto: “All orbits in the universe” reflects his ambition to encompass various traditions in his painting; “Always when drunk” reveals a penchant for working while inebriated; “My

mission is only to create the new” bespeaks the aspiration to produce a totally new artistic vision.

The youthful Fu Baoshi, fiercely idealistic and proud, often painted images of unrecognized virtue, a theme that found its earlier expression in the poetry of Qu Yuan (343–278 B.C.), a loyal minister of the Chu kingdom who drowned himself in a tributary of the River Xiang in response to slander by his enemies. *Goddess of the River Xiang*, dated 1947, is inspired by verses in *The Nine Songs*, a cycle of poems traditionally attributed to Qu Yuan. In one of them the goddess appears at water’s edge and enchants the poet with her beauty, only to remain out of reach as he pledges his love. The painting illustrates the first four lines of the poem:

The Child of God, descending the northern bank,  
Turns on me her eyes that are dark with longing.  
Gently the wind of autumn whispers;  
On the waves of Dongting Lake the leaves are falling.

Fu matched the antiquity of his source with an appropriately ancient painting style, finding inspiration in the archaic simplicity and curvilinear rhythms of Six Dynasties models (fig. 12) to impart an ethereal elegance to his goddess.

However, the earlier style is transformed by Fu's modern sensibility. Fu's light, sketchy drapery lines echo the fluid patterns of antique painting. But their overlapping contours also describe forms in space, while the naturalistic treatment of the nose, eyes, and wisps of hair across the forehead reflect Fu's training in Western-style life drawing. Indeed, Fu's model may have been his wife, whom Fu is said to have often portrayed during the war years as the Xiang River goddess in gratitude for her loyalty.

At the end of 1950, barely a year after the founding of the People's Republic, when Fu was again living in Nanjing, he added a second inscription to the painting, dedicating it to the French ambassador to China and his wife, who were preparing to return to France.

Primarily a figure painter, Fu Baoshi also reinvigorated the practice of landscape, which he saw as an essential component of Chinese art. Moved by the dramatic mountains he had seen in Sichuan during the war years, Fu followed the example of Shitao (fig. 10) and other seventeenth-century Ming loyalist-painters who, in the face of the Manchu conquest in 1644, sought sanctuary and inspiration in landscape, transforming their images of Yellow Mountain and other scenic spots into personal symbols of political defiance

and moral purity. Fu Baoshi similarly transformed his depictions of natural scenery. Advocating the "writing of ideas" over realistic description, he integrated Western watercolor effects with animated brushwork, bold contrasts of light and dark, and dramatic compositional structures to evoke wild, moisture-suffused worlds pervaded with brooding melancholy.

As the political situation worsened in 1948, Fu Baoshi's growing sense of isolation became evident in *Playing the Qin and Watching Geese in Flight*, which he did in Nanjing in March of that year (pp. 42–43). The painting, depicting a scholar strumming a zither at the edge of a desolate floodplain, was inspired by the story of Boya, a legendary zither master whose mentor brought him to the island of the immortals to encourage him to play more expressively. In Fu's interpretation the figure of Boya is silhouetted against a marshy expanse, while his servant, huddled against an embankment, appears oblivious to his master's music. A delicate formation of descending geese, suspended in the dense atmosphere, evokes the fleeting tones of Boya's zither. A striking metaphor for the ephemeral quality of artistic creation, the figure in its erect posture may signal Fu Baoshi's resolve to continue working in the face of an uncertain future.

Fig. 12. Attributed to Gu Kaizhi (ca. 344–ca. 406; probably a Tang dynasty copy). *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies* (detail). Handscroll; ink and color on silk, 9¾ x 137½ in. (24.8 x 348.2 cm). ©The British Museum, London





戊子三月朔  
石陵古地石





Fu Baoshi (1904–1965). *Playing the Qin and Watching Geese in Flight*. Dated 1948. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper, 14 1/4 x 23 3/4 in. (36.2 x 60.3 cm). Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne Hatfield Ellsworth, 1986 (1986.267.359)

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## Zhang Daqian

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A native of Neijiang, Sichuan Province, Zhang Daqian (Chang Dai-chien, 1899–1983) learned to paint flowers as a child from his mother. At the age of nineteen he went to Kyoto to study textile weaving and dyeing. Returning to China in 1919, Zhang lived briefly as a Buddhist novice, adopting the name Daqian, before moving to Shanghai, where he learned painting and calligraphy from the Qing loyalists Zeng Xi (1861–1930) and Li Ruiqing (1867–1920). These mentors urged Zhang to study the works of such individualist masters as Shitao and Bada Shanren (figs. 10, 11). For the next two decades Zhang supported himself through his art and art dealing in Shanghai and Suzhou, where for five years he had a studio in the courtyard of the Garden of the Master of the Fishing Nets, which later served as the model for the Metropolitan Museum's Astor Court.

After being trapped in Beijing at the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, Zhang, in the guise of a monk, escaped to Sichuan and eventually made his way to the remote Buddhist cave temples of Dunhuang. Between 1940 and 1943 he studied, catalogued, and copied the brilliantly colored murals, mostly dating from the fifth to the tenth century. After 1949 Zhang lived for a time in Hong Kong and India before building residences in São Paulo, Brazil; Carmel, California; and, in 1977, in Taiwan, close to the National Palace Museum.

Zhang Daqian's great facility as a figure painter, improved by years of studying early scroll paintings and the Dunhuang murals, is exemplified by *Yang Guifei with a Parrot*, his 1946 depiction of the infamous consort of the eighth-century Tang emperor Xuanzong. Zhang's portrayal is an eclectic mix of sources and styles. Yang Guifei's elaborate coiffure recalls Tang models, but her costume and the animated brushwork defining her fluttering scarves and swirling hem derive from sixteenth-century prototypes; her coquettish expression



Zhang Daqian (Chang Dai-chien, 1899–1983). *Yang Guifei with a Parrot*. Dated 1946. Hanging scroll; ink on paper, 64½ x 32½ in. (163.8 x 82.6 cm). Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne Hatfield Ellsworth, 1986 (1986.267.359)

and theatrical pose recall cinematic images of contemporary beauties. Like Fu Baoshi's goddess, Zhang's consort, with her long, narrow eyebrows, fleshy nose, and heavy-lidded eyes, is a thoroughly modern woman draped in ancient garments. Zhang's lithe brushwork and his facile rendering of Yang Guifei's animated stance infuse the figure with a sense of immediacy and drama. Capturing Yang at the moment when a parrot alights on her shoulder, he showed her recoiling slightly, raising her hands and leaning away; but her special relationship with the pet is emphasized by their eye contact and the

Zhang Daqian (Chang Dai-chien, 1899–1983).  
*Buddha's Manifestation of Joyfulness*. Dated 1946.  
Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper,  
59½ x 28¼ in. (151.1 x 71.2 cm). Gift of  
Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of  
La Ferne Hatfield Ellsworth, 1986  
(1986.267.360)



juxtaposition of the parrot with the phoenix ornamenting her coiffure. Zhang's inscription explains the conspiratorial connection:

In the Tianbao reign [745–55], the Lingnan [Guangdong] provincial governor presented the emperor with a pure white parrot of exceptional intelligence. The emperor and Yang Guifei named the parrot "Girl in a Dress of Snow." Now, the emperor often played dice with his concubines and princes. Whenever the emperor was winning, his companions would cheer. Yang Guifei trained the parrot to take this as a signal to fly into the dice bowl and upset the game with its wings.

*Buddha's Manifestation of Joyfulness*, also painted in 1946, epitomizes Zhang's uncanny ability to synthesize diverse stylistic sources. The bold inkwash lotus leaves reflect his early fascination with the expressive works of Bada Shanren. The precise, descriptive style of Zhang's blossoms and water plants derives from his mastery of the academic tradition of bird-and-flower painting, while the vivid palette and the coloristic enhancement of the ink washes, suffused with blurry highlights of red and green, reveal his familiarity with techniques practiced by Japanese artists of the *Nihonga* movement. Zhang set the three-dimensional forms of his crimson lotus blossoms and blue green water caltrops against a flat, screenlike array of lotus leaves, which blocks our view beyond the shallow foreground scene. He gave a sense of layering to his leaves through contrasting light and dark tonalities, but there is no consistent light source modeling his forms. Instead, he relied entirely on supple outlines to define the twisting and bending leaves and petals. On the lotus blossoms the lines are reinforced in gold, a stunning accent that functions not as naturalistic highlighting but as embellishment. Zhang's inscription suggests that his inspiration came from the visions of paradise that he

studied at the cave temples of Dunhuang: "Blue, yellow, red, and white express [the Buddha's] infinite benevolence. I offer these lotuses as Buddha's manifestation of joyfulness." But stylistically this image has nothing to do with Tang models; instead, its sumptuousness comes closest to the decorative imagery of early-twentieth-century Japanese flower paintings.

Zhang Daqian's long residency outside China during the 1950s and 1960s brought him into contact with currents of modern Western art, including Abstract Expressionism. *Splashed-Color Landscape* of 1965, painted with intense mineral colors and broad washes of layered ink, may represent Zhang's response to these influences. Zhang maintained that such works, which he first painted in 1956 in Europe, derived from the "broken-ink" techniques of random splashing and soaking employed by Tang-dynasty artists, but it seems more likely that his encounter with Western abstract art may have encouraged him to further develop the Japanese technique of splashed colors that he had employed earlier in *Buddha's Manifestation of Joyfulness*. During the 1940s Fu Baoshi had also used random applications of ink as a starting point for many of his compositions.

Whatever Zhang's sources, he clearly welcomed the liberating effect of this mode, which gave spontaneity to his compositions. In spite of their abstract qualities, however, these works remained resolutely descriptive of the natural world. In *Splashed-Color Landscape* Zhang first applied ink and color in a seemingly random manner, then added contour lines and other details in order to transform his composition into a highly suggestive vision of storm-engulfed mountains, suddenly illuminated by a burst of sunlight that turns the somber clouds iridescent.

Zhang Daqian (Chang Dai-chien, 1899–1983). *Splashed-Color Landscape*.  
Dated 1965. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper, 23¾ x 37¾ in. (60.3 x  
95.9 cm). Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne  
Hatfield Ellsworth, 1986 (1986.267.361)



With the founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949, commonly referred to in China as the "Liberation," cultural activities came under the control of the state. Seeking to reform traditional painting to make it "serve the people," the Communist government mandated that artists pursue a "revolutionary realism" that would celebrate the heroism of the common people or convey the majesty of the motherland. Taking the social-realist art of the Soviet Union as orthodoxy, Chinese painters found a model in their own country and emulated the Western-derived academic realism of Xu Beihong (pp. 20–22). Painting from life rather than copying ancient masterpieces became the principal source of inspiration for most artists. But excessive bureaucratic oversight and the shifting demands of politics often had a detrimental effect. The Communist party's effort to encourage plurality and free expression under the Hundred Flowers Movement of 1956–57, for example, was soon cut short by the antirightist purge of 1957; while the Great Leap Forward, of 1958–62, and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, of 1966–76, although intended to bring society into conformance with the party's progressive ideals, actually led to the persecution of many well-known artists and had a stultifying impact on creativity.

Two artists who managed to develop their own styles during this period, emerging from the trauma of the Cultural Revolution as respected masters, were Li Keran and Wu Guanzhong. These men represented strikingly different approaches to painting—traditional versus modern; native versus foreign—but both

were inspired and transformed by war and revolution to achieve personal artistic expressions.

### Li Keran

Li Keran (1907–1989) mastered orthodox styles of Chinese painting as a young man, studied Western watercolor and oil-painting techniques in his twenties, and then returned to traditional Chinese idioms, selectively utilizing what he had learned from Western methods to infuse his works with a new expressive freedom. Born to poor, illiterate parents in Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province, Li Keran began to paint at the age of thirteen with a local artist who instructed him in the landscape style of the early Qing orthodox school. In 1923 he enrolled in Liu Haisu's (pp. 23–25) Shanghai Academy of Art, where he practiced traditional ink painting and studied Western-style techniques for two years, winning recognition at graduation for a landscape in the manner of the Qing orthodox master Wang Hui (1632–1717). In 1929 he began sketching and oil painting at the National Academy of Art, in Hangzhou, then under the direction of the European-trained artist Lin Fengmian (1900–1991). The following year Li joined the Eighteen Art Society (founded eighteen years after the

Opposite: Li Keran (1907–1989). *The Immortal Liu Haichan Playing with a Toad*. Dated 1937. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper, 43 x 29<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (109.2 x 74.8 cm). Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne Hatfield Ellsworth, 1986 (1986.267.384)

1911 overthrow of the Qing dynasty), which advocated a Marxist approach to art. When Li and other radical members of the society protested the lack of social conscience at the academy, he was forced to leave school and return to Xuzhou. In the 1930s Li became an active organizer of exhibitions for the anti-Japanese propaganda campaign, traveling widely before settling in the wartime capital of Chongqing, Sichuan Province. There he became acquainted

with a number of leading artists, including Fu Baoshi (pp. 38–43) and Xu Beihong. In 1946 Xu recommended Li for a faculty position at Beijing National Art College. During the intervening decade Li became a devoted student of traditional painting, a course he was encouraged to pursue in Beijing by fellow faculty members Qi Baishi (pp. 26–37) and Huang Binhong (1865–1955). After the “Liberation” in 1949 Li continued to teach landscape at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, in Beijing. Except for the decade of the Cultural Revolution, when Li’s family was dispersed to the countryside and he was forbidden to paint for several years, he remained an innovative practitioner of traditional idioms until the end of his life.

*The Immortal Liu Haichan Playing with a Toad*, dated 1937, is an early example of Li’s renewed interest in ancient Chinese styles of figure painting. Li began experimenting with traditional freehand figural images in 1934 and was further inspired by ancient works in the Palace Museum that he had viewed during a trip to Beijing in 1935. This image depicts Liu Haichan (*Liu* means “Sea Toad”), a minister in one of the small kingdoms that existed briefly during the tumultuous era following the collapse of the Tang dynasty (618–906). One day a Daoist sage warned Liu of the danger of his position, and he immediately renounced his titles and became a recluse. By Ming times Liu was popularly referred to as Liu Hai and was venerated as an immortal. He was always depicted as unkempt, unshod, and carrying a three-legged toad.

Li’s bold portrait of this favorite symbol of good fortune, done the same year that he led a group of students to create posters urging resistance to the Japanese, reflects his interest in both popular and high culture. Li’s choice of subject indicates his familiarity with the ubiquitous New Year’s prints and woodblocks; the ragged figure may also indicate his direct experience with the suffering of peasants. But the uninhibited brushwork and freely splashed ink are related to the spontaneous ink-wash style of Liang Kai (active first half of the thirteenth century), who served as a painter in attendance at the Song painting academy in Hangzhou



from about 1201 to 1204 but later relinquished that position to work at a Chan Buddhist temple. As a monk, Liang achieved a boldly abbreviated style, rooted in the representational goals of his academic training, that greatly influenced such early-twentieth-century masters as Wang Zhen (pp. 17–19). Li Keran, who sought an expression based on observation rather than calligraphic abstraction, clearly found Liang Kai's style, and that of Liang's Ming-dynasty followers, an ideal model.

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### Wu Guanzhong

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Wu Guanzhong (born 1919), son of a school-teacher in Yixing, Jiangsu Province, studied to be an electrical engineer before transferring to the Hangzhou Academy of Art in 1936. Under the influence of Lin Fengmian and other Western-trained artists, Wu specialized in oil painting. In 1947 Wu won a government scholarship to Paris, where he immersed himself in the works of French modernists, particularly Cézanne, Gauguin, and Matisse. Returning to China in 1950, he became a lecturer at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, in Beijing. But Wu's modernist views eventually conflicted with those of the academy's director, Xu Beihong, and with the social-realist style of Soviet models; he was soon moved to another post. For the next thirteen years Wu held teaching positions, but during the Cultural Revolution he was sent into the countryside for three years and did not paint. He was recalled to Beijing in 1972 and, under the directive of Premier Zhou Enlai (1898–1976), began producing large pictures for hotels and other public spaces. Later they were criticized as bourgeois by a faction led by Mao Zedong's wife, Jiang Qing. At this juncture Wu began painting in Chinese ink on paper. The end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 allowed him to pursue his own work, which has been the subject of one-man shows in China and abroad.

Wu's *Seascape at Beidaihe*, of 1977, inspired by a poem by Mao Zedong, is an early example of

the artist's transformation of actual scenery into compositions that verge on total abstraction. Except for the tiny boats that dot the high horizon line and the black silhouettes of several protruding rocks, the entire surface of *Seascape* is given over to a mesmerizing depiction of waves. Upon close examination it is apparent that Wu painted out a number of his ink lines with opaque white pigment, something a traditional Chinese artist would never have done. Wu wished to prevent linear patterns from dominating the illusion of light reflected off the water's faceted surface. In contrast to the literati objective of capturing the essence of the natural world through abstract, calligraphic brushwork, Wu exploited the tension between compositional abstraction and the vivid evocation of three-dimensional forms moving in space to create an intensely emotional encounter with nature.

Wu Guanzhong's fusion of modern Western-style abstraction with traditional media and Li Keran's innovative reinterpretations of ancient Chinese models reveal the two directions of modernism in Chinese art. One course is to downplay Western culture while pursuing personal expression through indigenous idioms; the other is to turn away from most of China's cultural heritage in favor of Western models. Yet artists taking either path have selectively integrated foreign and native methods and ideas. For the foreseeable future Western material culture and artistic traditions will exert a profound influence on Chinese art; but China's ancient heritage, the oldest continuous tradition in the world, offers a unique resource through which Chinese artists may find renewal in the revival and exploration of their past. If the past is any indication of the future, as China enters the twenty-first century, the country's artists will still draw upon the wellsprings of its natural scenery and its cultural heritage to forge a new identity for themselves and for Chinese art.





Wu Guanzhong (born 1919). *Seascape at Beidaihe*. Dated 1977. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper, 38 1/8 x 45 1/4 in. (96.8 x 114.9 cm). Gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, in memory of La Ferne Hatfield Ellsworth, 1986 (1986.267.431)

- p. 5 "on the old bottom" John K. Fairbank, Edwin O. Reischauer, and Albert M. Craig, *East Asia: The Modern Transformation* (Boston, 1965), p. 77.
- In addition to the scholarly sources cited in these notes, I would particularly like to acknowledge Wen Fong, for generously making available early versions of his forthcoming book, *Between Two Cultures: Late-Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century Chinese Paintings from the Robert H. Ellsworth Collection in The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York, 2001), and Caron Smith, formerly a member of the Department of Asian Art at the Metropolitan and now associate director and curator of Asian art at the San Diego Museum of Art. In the preparation of this *Bulletin* I have benefited greatly from Smith's early work on the Ellsworth Collection, including the label copy she wrote for many of the pieces. Finally, I would like to thank my family, Vera, Garrett, and Alex, for their unstinting encouragement and support
- p. 5 was traumatized See Stephen R. Mackinnon, "The Significance of the Nineteenth Century for Modern Chinese History," in Ju-hsi Chou, ed., *Art at the Close of China's Empire*, Phoebus: Occasional Papers in Art History, vol. 8 (Tempe, Arizona, 1998), pp. 11–17.
- p. 6 *ethos began to emerge* See Jonathan Spence, "China's Modern Worlds," in Julia F. Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China*, exh. cat., Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York, 1998), pp. 10–17.
- p. 11 "his work will be vulgar" Zhao Zhiqian, *Zhang'an zashuo* [Miscellaneous Notes from Zhang'an] (Shanghai, 1989), as quoted in Shan Guolin, "Painting of China's New Metropolis: The Shanghai School, 1850–1900," in Andrews and Shen, *A Century in Crisis*, p. 32.
- p. 12 *Xujiabui Catholic Church* See Shan Guolin, "New Metropolis," p. 27.
- p. 14 *Western practical knowledge* The following slogan was popularized by the reform-minded high official Zhang Zhidong (1837–1909) in the 1890s: "Chinese learning for the essential principles, Western learning for the practical applications." See Fairbank, Reischauer, and Craig, *East Asia*, p. 386. See also Mayching Kao, "Reforms in Education and the Beginning of the Western-Style Painting Movement in China," in Andrews and Shen, *A Century in Crisis*, p. 148.
- p. 14 *into seclusion* See Fairbank, Reischauer, and Craig, *East Asia*, pp. 392–93.
- p. 14 "science and democracy" See Shan Guolin, "New Metropolis," p. 22.
- p. 17 "red silk" Wu Changshi's poetic description of the rock not only describes its subsidiary position to the red berries of the nandina but recalls a Tang story about a foreign attendant from the Kunlunnu tribe who works in the household of a high official. When a young soldier who comes to visit the official becomes ill, the official orders a beautiful entertainer dressed in red silk to attend him. The two fall in love, and the Kunlunnu attendant helps them to escape. See "Kunlunnu," in *Zhongwen daidian* (Encyclopedic dictionary of the Chinese language) (Taipei, 1973), vol. 3, pp. 926–27.
- p. 17 *after his homecoming* See Hsing-yuan Tsao, "A Forgotten Celebrity: Wang Zhen (1867–1938), Businessman, Philanthropist, and Artist," in Ju-hsi Chou, ed., *Art at the Close*, pp. 94–109.
- p. 19 "the monk in the cave" Wen Fong, trans., *Between Two Cultures*.
- p. 20 *minister of education* For Cai Yuanpei, Chen Duxiu, Lu Xun, and other reformers, see Mayching Kao, "Reforms in Education," in Andrews and Shen, *A Century in Crisis*, pp. 146–61.
- p. 20 "tenets of realism" Quoted in Lang Shaojun, "Traditional Chinese Painting in the Twentieth Century," in Yang Xin et al., *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting* (New Haven and Beijing, 1997), p. 307. For the May Fourth Movement, see Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York and London, 1990), pp. 310–19.
- p. 20 "a new era of Chinese painting" Xu Beihong, "Beihong's Autobiography," in *Xu Beihong yishu wenji* (Collected writings on the art of Xu Beihong) (Taipei, 1979), pp. 170, 172, as quoted in Lang Shaojun, "Traditional Chinese Painting," in Yang Xin et al., *Three Thousand Years*, p. 317.
- p. 20 *moribund academic manner* See Kuiyi Shen, "Traditional Painting in a Transitional Era, 1900–1950," in Andrews and Shen, *A Century in Crisis*, p. 86.
- p. 22 "depict real objects" *Ibid.*
- p. 22 *lacks the artist's impression* For the full translations of Xu's and Qi's inscriptions, see Ellsworth et al., *Later Chinese Painting*, vol. 1, p. 146.
- For the significance of the horse in Chinese history and art, see Robert E. Harrist Jr., *Power and Virtue: The Horse in Chinese Art* (New York, 1997).
- p. 23 "traitor in art" Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1996), p. 45.
- p. 23 *all his titles* See Julia F. Andrews, *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China* (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 198–99.
- p. 24 "past and present" Ellsworth et al., *Later Chinese Painting*, vol. 1, p. 212.
- p. 27 *his portrayal of Balzac in 1897* For Rodin's sculpture, see Albert E. Elsen, *Rodin*, exh. cat., The Museum of Modern Art (New York, 1963), pp. 88–105.
- p. 27 *repeat his performance* For a translation of Qi's poem on this painting, see Ellsworth et al., *Later Chinese Painting*, vol. 1, p. 156.
- p. 28 "through the sky" *Ibid.*
- p. 30 "under a lonely light" Lang Shaojun, "Traditional Chinese Painting," in Yang Xin et al., *Three Thousand Years*, p. 309.
- p. 32 "on the ground?" Ellsworth et al., *Later Chinese Painting*, vol. 1, p. 158.
- p. 34 "should read 'far from'" *Ibid.*, p. 160.
- p. 34 *immobility of the buffalo* For a nearly identical composition by Qi, dated 1935, see Wan Qingli, *Li Keran pingzhuan* (Critical biography of Li Keran) (Taipei, 1994), p. 185, fig. 77.
- p. 35 "What I am capable of!" Ellsworth et al., *Later Chinese Painting*, vol. 1, p. 165.
- p. 38 *reproductions and copies* See Wen Fong, *Between Two Cultures*.
- p. 40 *new artistic vision* I am indebted to Caron Smith for drawing attention to the importance of Fu's seals as a reflection of the artist's personality and aspirations.
- p. 40 "leaves are falling" David Hawkes, trans., *Ch'u Tz'u: The Songs of the South* (Oxford, 1959), p. 38. In his inscription, written along the right margin of the composition, Fu Baoshi quotes only the second line of the poem.
- p. 41 *for her loyalty* Wen Fong makes the link between the goddess and Fu's wife, Le Shihui. See Fong, *Between Two Cultures*.
- p. 41 *return to France* The identification of the recipients of this painting is from Ellsworth et al., *Later Chinese Painting*, vol. 1, p. 181, n. 2. See p. 181 of the same volume for a complete translation of Fu's inscriptions.
- p. 41 For Boya, see "Po Ya," in Herbert A. Giles, *A Chinese Biographical Dictionary* (London and Shanghai, 1898), p. 633. I am indebted to Caron Smith's label copy for the comparison of this figure to that of Boya practicing beside the ocean.
- p. 44 *National Palace Museum* For a full treatment of Zhang Daqian's biography and art, see Shen C. Y. Fu, with Jan Stuart, *Challenging the Past: The Paintings of Chang Dai-chien*, exh. cat., Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D.C., 1991).
- p. 46 "with its wings" Ellsworth et al., *Later Chinese Painting*, vol. 1, p. 210.
- p. 46 "of joyfulness" Fong, *Between Two Cultures*.
- p. 48 For the Communist government's mandate that artists pursue a "revolutionary realism," see Lang Shaojun, "Traditional Chinese Painting," in Yang Xin et al., *Three Thousand Years*, p. 339.
- pp. 48–50 For Li Keran, see Wan Qingli, *Li Keran pingzhuan*.
- pp. 50–51 For Wu Guanzhong, see Lucy Lim, ed., *Wu Guanzhong: A Contemporary Chinese Artist* (San Francisco, 1989). See also Anne Farrer, with Michael Sullivan and Mayching Kao, *Wu Guanzhong: A Twentieth-Century Chinese Painter* (London, 1992).
- pp. 50–51 For a precursor to Wu's *Seascape*, painted in oil in 1976, see *Wu Guanzhong huaji* [Collected Paintings of Wu Guanzhong] (Hebei, 1984), pl. 25. This comparison was first noted by Richard Barnhart in "The Odyssey of Wu Guanzhong," in Lim, *Wu Guanzhong*, p. 17, n. 2.



