STRADDLING EAST AND WEST

Lin Yutang, A Modern Literatus

The Lin Yutang Family Collection of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

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Shi-yee Liu
Edited by Maxwell K. Hearn

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK

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FOREWORD

In the winter of 2005 the Department of Asian Art received an important group of gifts and promised gifts from the family of the noted author Lin Yutang (1895–1976). Consisting of forty-three modern Chinese paintings, calligraphies, and prints, this donation, together with the earlier gift of nineteenth- and twentieth-century paintings from Robert H. Ellsworth, significantly enhances the Museum's ability to present China's traditional literati arts of the mid-twentieth-century.

The donation comes through the generosity of two generations of the Lin Yutang family as a way of honoring the memory of Lin Yutang's second daughter Taiyi Lin Lai (1926–2003). The largest portion of the collection comes from Taiyi's husband Richard Lai and their two children, Jill Lai Miller and Larry C. Lai. Five additional pieces are gifts from Taiyi's younger sister Hsiang Ju Lin. Because all of the family members now live in the Washington D.C. area, they first approached Joseph Chang, Associate Curator of Chinese Art at the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution, about making a donation. Dr. Chang, with the assistance of Mr. John S. C. Wang, made an initial selection and prepared a preliminary checklist along with digital images. When it was determined that the Metropolitan Museum would be the most appropriate institution for the collection, Dr. Chang generously shared his files. Subsequent meetings with Richard Lai, his children, and Hsiang Ju Lin, as well as the chance to view the works firsthand, confirmed the collection's importance and historical connection to the Metropolitan.

Lin Yutang moved to New York City with his family in 1936 in response to an invitation from Pearl Buck and her husband Richard J. Walsh, the publisher of John Day Company. Initially prevented from returning home by Japan's invasion of China in 1937, Lin remained in New York for nearly three decades. Almost overnight, he became the most widely read authority on China in America, serving as an early interpreter of Chinese culture to Western audiences. Lin Yutang's first book in English, *My Country and My People*, published in 1935, went through seven printings within four months and was translated into several European languages. His third book, *The Importance of Living*, topped *The New York Times* bestseller list for fifty-two weeks and was the most widely sold book in the United States in 1938. It was eventually translated into a dozen foreign languages.

During the Second World War, Lin became an important spokesman for China's war effort. Given his stature, it is understandable that Xu Beihong (1895–1953), one of China's preeminent contemporary artists, would turn to him for help in organizing an exhibition of contemporary Chinese art in New York. While the war prevented Xu's project from being realized, two exhibitions of Chinese contemporary painting were held at the Metropolitan Museum in 1943 and 1948, and Lin wrote introductions for both catalogues. The calligraphy and three paintings by Xu Beihong in the present catalogue were all lent by the Lin family to the Metropolitan's 1943 exhibition while the letters written to Lin by Xu Beihong during this period are primary documents chronicling Xu's efforts to bring an exhibition to the Museum. It is fitting that these testimonies to the Metropolitan's early efforts to introduce modern Chinese painting to a Western audience should now become part of its permanent collection.

Another major figure represented in the Lin Yutang collection is the painter-connoisseur Zhang Daqian (1899–1983). Six highly personal paintings by Zhang, all done around 1965, are dedicated to either Lin or his son-in-law Richard Lai. Zhang, like Lin, was forced to flee the Japanese occupation of China and subsequent Communist revolution in what is often referred to as the Chinese Diaspora. Many Chinese émigrés found a home in America, and their presence has

greatly enriched the intellectual and cultural diversity of our country. Indeed, Zhang's name is also intimately linked to that of the Metropolitan Museum because many of its finest early calligraphies and paintings were once part of Zhang's private collection.

Twenty-one of the works in the Lin Family gift are linked directly to Lin Yutang, a connection that is reflected in the organization of this catalogue. The entries begin with four calligraphies by Lin Yutang himself, written for his daughters Taiyi and Hsiang Ju and for Taiyi's husband Richard Lai. These are followed by two late Qing dynasty works that Lin collected while living in Shanghai in the early 1930s and by fifteen works that were presented by the artists to Lin or, through him, to Taiyi or Richard Lai. The remaining twenty-two works in the gift were either presented to or purchased by Taiyi and Richard Lai when they were living in London and Hong Kong in the 1950s through the 1980s. This group features concentrations of works by a several prominent twentieth-century painters and calligraphers—Qi Baishi (1864–1957), Feng Kanghou (1901–1983), and Zhao Shao'ang (1904–1998)—who were also contemporaries and friends of Lin Yutang.

The creation of the catalogue and its accompanying exhibition represents the dedicated work of many professionals. In the Metropolitan Museum's Department of Asian Art, James C. Y. Watt, Brooke Russell Astor Chairman, lent his guidance and strong support to the project. Research Associate Dr. Shi-yee Liu worked diligently for over one year to prepare the individual catalogue entries and the essay on Lin Yutang. During that time, nearly all forty-three works were expertly conserved and remounted in the Department's Asian Art Conservation Studio by Yuanli Hou under the direction of Takemitsu Oba and Sondra Castile and with the assistance of Grace Jan. Hwai-Ling Yeh-Lewis, Jillian Schultz, and Alison Clark of the Department's Collections Management team coordinated and supervised the movement of the works from their initial registration through conservation, photography, and installation. Department Administrator Judith Smith oversaw the catalogue's production. Senior Photographer Oi-Cheong Lee of the Museum's Photograph Studio created the excellent digital images and Einar Brendalen, Image Systems Analyst, diligently assisted in organizing the delivery of the images for publication. Thanks also go to Philomena Mariani for assistance in copy editing and to Joseph Cho and Stefanie Lew of Binocular, who are responsible for the book's elegant design. We would also like to acknowledge the Lin Yutang House in Taipei for providing the historical photographs of Lin Yutang.

All of us who have contributed to this project are deeply grateful to the members of the Lin and Lai families for entrusting these artworks to the Metropolitan Museum for care, study, and display. Thanks to their generosity, the collection has now found a permanent home in the city where Lin Yutang spent half a lifetime building bridges of cultural understanding between China and the West. That work was carried on by Taiyi Lin Lai as a translator, author, and founding editor of the Chinese edition of *Reader's Digest*, and by Richard Lai, who served as Director of Government Information Services for Hong Kong and director of the Chinese University Press. As the repository for the gift of the Lin Yutang Family Collection, the Metropolitan Museum continues that tradition of building bridges that straddle East and West.

Maxwell K. Hearn
Douglas Dillon Curator
Department of Asian Art

PREFACE

The gift of the Lin Yutang Family Collection of Chinese paintings and calligraphy to the Metropolitan Museum commemorates the career of Lin Yutang (1895–1976) and honors the memory of his daughter Taiyi Lin Lai (1926–2003) as a loving spouse, sister, and mother.

Lin Yutang acquired the earliest pieces in the collection in the early 1930s. By that time he was already widely known in China as a writer and editor and had begun to publish humorous essays in English. From 1931 to 1935 he contributed to a column entitled "The Little Critic," in the Shanghai weekly journal *The China Critic*. His essays caught the attention of the author Pearl Buck and her husband, publisher Richard J. Walsh. In 1935 Walsh published Dr. Lin's first book in English *My Country and My People*. With the publication of *The Importance of Living*, two years later, Dr. Lin gained an international reputation as a writer of books in English on the subject of China.

In 1936 the Walshes invited Dr. Lin, his wife, Tsuifeng, and their three daughters, Jusu, Taiyi, and Hsiang Ju, to visit the United States. He brought with him two of his favorite paintings, Cui He's (ca. 1800–1850) *Portrait of Li Xiangjun* and Tong Yu's (1721–1782) *Plum Blossoms in the Moonlight*, as well as books that he intended to use in teaching his children Chinese. With the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937, the Lins decided to stay in New York rather than return to China, as they had originally planned when they left Shanghai. Both Dr. Lin and his wife joined in the effort to raise funds for Chinese war victims. In 1938 the renowned artist Xu Beihong (1895–1953) wrote to Dr. Lin requesting his assistance in organizing an exhibition of Chinese paintings in the U.S. Over the next decade, the two men exchanged many letters. Dr. Lin used Xu's letters as teaching materials for the lessons in Chinese language and culture that he gave his daughters twice a week upon their return home from school. Taiyi, then age fifteen, was particularly inspired by Xu's patriotism. She also admired Xu Beihong's calligraphy and diligently strove to copy his style of writing. Taiyi's enthusiasm was rewarded when her father gave her the letters. She later assembled them together with two letters that Xu had written to her and had them remounted as a handscroll, with a frontispiece by the noted calligrapher and family friend Chin Hsiao-yi (1921–2007).

In 1944 Lin Yutang returned to China for six months to gather material for his book *Vigil of a Nation*. He visited a number of cities, including Kunming, Chongqing, Guilin, Chengdu and Xi'an, and met with government officials, including President and Mme. Chiang Kai-shek, as well as leaders in education, industry, and business. During his visit to Chengdu, Dr. Lin became acquainted with the artist Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), thus beginning a friendship that would continue for more than three decades. After he moved from China to Brazil in the early 1960s, Zhang made frequent trips to Europe and Asia to exhibit his paintings. He would often stop over in New York and on those occasions would arrange to take a meal with the Lins, either at their home or at a Chinese restaurant managed by one of Zhang's former chefs. Over the years, Zhang presented several paintings to Dr. Lin and contributed a frontispiece to a handscroll in Lin's collection, *Early Autumn after Qian Xuan*, by Yu Jingzhi (1890–after 1967), all of which are included in the present gift.

As much as they enjoyed their years in the U.S., Dr. Lin and his wife decided to return to Asia in 1965, the year he turned seventy. Their new home, built to Dr. Lin's specifications, was located in the mountains outside Taipei, Taiwan. The Lin's youngest daughter, Hsiang Ju, a biochemist, joined the University of Hong Kong in 1968 as head of the clinical biochemistry laboratory. In celebration of her appointment and move to a new home, Dr. Lin transcribed for her a famous couplet by the eleventh-century Northern Song poet Yan

Shu, changing one character to embed Hsiang Ju's name in the poem. When they visited her in Hong Kong in 1971, the Lins presented Hsiang Ju with the two paintings by Cui He and Tong Yu, which had once hung in their home in Shanghai, along with the painting by their friend Yu Jingzhi, *Early Autumn after Qian Xuan*, and Zhang Daqian's *Mountains Clearing after Rain*.

The remaining thirty-eight works in the Lin Yutang Family Collection come from Taiyi and her husband, Richard Ming Lai, and their children, Jill and Larry. Some of these works were given to the Lais by Lin Yutang; others were presented to them by the artists themselves or were purchased. The Lais moved to London in 1954, when Richard accepted a position with the BBC. A family friend, Chen Yuan, then the Republic of China's delegate to UNESCO, asked if they would be interested in buying some paintings by Qi Baishi (1864–1957). Chen said his predecessor at UNESCO, Guo Youshou, was selling them because he needed to raise money for his son's tuition. Richard and Taiyi, impressed by Qi's expressive brushwork, bought three of the paintings. While living in London, the Lais also befriended the artist Guo Dawei (1919–2003), who presented them with *Wine Jar and Melon*, which he painted on the spur of the moment after a dinner at their home.

In addition to being a mother and wife, Lin Taiyi found time during the eight years the family lived in London to continue her writing career, producing *The Lilacs Overgrow* (*Dingxiang bianye*), published in English in 1966, and to translate into English the Chinese classic *Flowers in the Mirror* (*Jinghua yuan*), by the novelist and phonetician Li Ruzhen (ca. 1763–ca. 1830). Her first novel, *War Tide*, published in 1943 when she was seventeen, was written at the suggestion of the noted author and family friend Pearl Buck.

The Lai family moved to Hong Kong in 1962, when Richard joined the Government Information Services. In time, he became its first Chinese director, a post he held until 1979, when he became director of the Chinese University Press. In 1965, Taiyi was appointed the founding editor of the Chinese edition of *Reader's Digest*. After retiring in 1988, she returned to writing books. Her *Biography of Lin Yutang* received the 1990 National Award for Literature from the Taiwan government; her autobiography, *The Second Daughter of the Lin Family*, received the Sun Yat-sen Award for Literature from the Zhongshan Academic and Cultural Foundation of Taiwan.

For the Lin and Lai families, the forty-three works in the Lin Yutang Family Collection, many of which have for decades hung on the walls of their various homes, are more than works of art. They have sentimental value because of the families' involvement with the artists who created them or the stories and memories associated with them. Both Lin Yutang and Taiyi Lin Lai would have been pleased and honored that this collection has now been entrusted to the Metropolitan Museum. We are grateful to those who have helped to secure a permanent home for these works. At the Metropolitan Museum, we especially acknowledge three members of the Department of Asian Art: Maxwell K. Hearn, Douglas Dillon Curator of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, James C. Y. Watt, Brooke Russell Astor Chairman, and Hwai-ling Yeh-Lewis, Collections Management Coordinator. Our thanks also go to Joseph Chang, Associate Curator for Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, and John S. C. Wang.

Richard M. Lai
Jill Lai Miller
Larry C. Lai

舟從此逝江海寄
餘生
戊申冬擬來之於香
港去七為德
語堂

STRADDLING EAST AND WEST: LIN YUTANG, A MODERN LITERATUS

Lin Yutang (1895–1976) was one of the most important Chinese writers and intellectuals in the first half of the twentieth century. In his eventful life, he witnessed sweeping revolutions in China's political system and cultural orientation that fundamentally changed the nation and its people. He was born under imperial rule, lived through the birth of the Republic and its struggle for unification, and died after China had split into the rival polities of a Communist mainland and a Nationalist Taiwan. In 1936 Lin left Shanghai for New York. Thirty years later he retired to Taiwan. In the interim he wrote prolifically to introduce China to the West, becoming the first person in modern Chinese history to write so well in both Chinese and English that the subtlety and flair embedded in one language is beyond translation into the other.[1] He famously expressed his aspiration in a couplet:

Feet straddle the cultures of East and West;
The mind plumbs all the writings of the world.[2]

It was an ambitious ideal, but to a remarkable degree it was one he fulfilled.

Lin Yutang's easy traverse between East and West, almost unique among Chinese intellectuals of the early twentieth century, was thanks to his very unusual upbringing. His father, a Presbyterian minister in a rural town in Fujian Province, was interested in everything Western. Early on he resolved that his sons should study English and receive a Western education. Yutang studied in missionary elementary and middle schools. He went to college at St. John's in Shanghai, an Anglican university with the best English program in China.[3] Reflecting on his college days, Lin said, "I had taken to English like a duck to water. In my enthusiasm, I abruptly forsook the study of Chinese."[4] He graduated second in his class in 1916 despite flunking Chinese courses year after year, which was common among his schoolmates. Moving to Beijing shortly afterwards to teach English at Tsing Hua College, a preparatory school for students planning to study abroad, he felt a cultural shock opposite to that experienced by most native Chinese intellectuals, as he confessed in his autobiography: "Imagine my shame when plunged into Peking, the center of China. It was not only my studies, but the Christian background. I had been forbidden to see Chinese theatres, from which all Chinese learned about Chinese famous men and women. I knew all about the trumpets of Joshua which brought about the fall of Jericho, but I did not know how Meng Jiangnü's tears washed away a section of the Great Wall. And yet I was a college graduate and therefore considered an *intelligentsia*."[5]

Lin's arrival in Beijing marked a turning point in his intellectual growth that coincided with a profound transformation in Chinese culture, though in a contrary direction. The academic atmosphere in Beijing at the time was very different from that in Shanghai, especially that in Western-oriented St. John's. Chen Duxiu (1879–1942), dean of the Faculty of Letters at National Peking [Beijing] University and the progressive thinker who was to cofound the Communist Party of China in 1921, had just published his article "Our Final Awakening" in February 1916. Frustrated by the failure of the Nationalist revolution in 1911 to establish a republican government, he argued that, "A constitutional republic which does not derive from the conscious realization and voluntary action of the majority of the people is a bogus republic and bogus constitutionalism." Chen called for a

1 Zhao Yiheng 2004, pp. 96–97.
2 See Lin Taiyi 1990, p. 214.
3 On Lin Yutang's experience at St. John's, see Qin Xianci 2007, pp. 161–70.
4 Lin Yutang 1975, p. 28.
5 Ibid., p. 31.

Detail of plate 2: Lin Yutang, *Ci Poem by Su Shi.*

Figure 1 Lin Yutang, *Lu Xun Whacking a Pekinese Pug*, drawing, 1926. From *Jianfu ji* (Shanghai: Beixin Shuju, 1928), reprinted in *Jianfu ji, Dahuang ji* (Beijing: Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe, 1988), p. 64.

"change in the thought or the character of the majority of the [Chinese] people" because a new political system cannot operate without the basis of a new culture.[6] The article, with its bold vision and urgent tone, roused like-minded intellectuals and became a virtual manifesto of the nascent "New Culture Movement" that was to continue through the 1920s. Its advocates attacked traditional Chinese values, blamed them for China's political, military, and industrial backwardness in the modern age, and exalted Western ideas as the only solution to national crises.

Lin Yutang was responsive to the new ethos. He lauded Chen Duxiu's article on the incompatibility of Confucianism and modern life and Hu Shi's (1891–1962) advocacy of a comprehensive cultural revolution.[7] Barely twenty-one, Lin realized that he did not know the "old culture" of China, much less understand the need for a new one. He began studying Chinese classics and philology with a passion. At a time when the majority of the educated elite immersed itself in Western learning, Lin turned to China's past. With formidable intelligence, he taught himself the basics of classical Chinese and eventually developed a broad command of traditional scholarship.

The New Culture Movement eventually merged into the strongly anti-imperialist May Fourth Movement of 1919, which arose in response to China's inequitable treatment at the end of World War I. The Chinese government had joined the Allied Triple Entente in 1917 on condition that all German colonial territories and rights on the Shandong Peninsula be returned to China. But after the war ended in late 1918, the Treaty of Versailles handed former German concessions in Shandong to Japan, which had occupied them during the war. On May 4, 1919, more than three thousand college students in Beijing held a demonstration to protest the Allies' betrayal of China and the government's inability to secure its national interests. The growing awareness of China's low standing in the international arena intensified the rejection of Chinese traditions that had launched the New Culture Movement. Calls for the importation of democracy and science dominated public opinion and intellectual discourse. While Lin sympathized with the May Fourth Movement, joined in the intelligentsia's harsh criticism of China's past, and advocated the need for modernity through Westernization, he never went to the extreme of insisting on the total eradication of the old in favor of the new.

CHINESE HUMOR AS LITERATURE

One of the most important outgrowths of the May Fourth Movement was the democratization of the Chinese language through vernacularism and new systems of simplification, romanization, and indexing, to all of which Lin Yutang made significant contributions. Prior to this time, the language of serious literature and scholarship in China had been classical Chinese. The validation of vernacular Chinese (*baihua* 白話) revolutionized Chinese literature. In August 1919, Lin Yutang left behind the chaos of the May Fourth Movement to study comparative literature at Harvard University for a year, earning a Master's degree. In 1921 he entered Leipzig University in Germany and by 1923 he had received a doctorate in ancient Chinese phonology before returning to China to teach English at National Peking University and National Normal University.

China had changed a great deal during the four years of Lin's absence. Vernacular Chinese had become the official language; vernacular literature had produced several important writers, and introductions to Western ideas and translations of Western writings had flourished. This vibrant open atmosphere was a congenial environment for Lin's own creativity. Well versed in both Chinese and Western literature, Lin adopted the reformist goals of the May Fourth Movement with the intention of creating a new prose style that conveyed "humor," an important ingredient in Western writings that was largely unappreciated in China. In the summer of 1924 he published

two essays on humor.[8] Lin argued that, constrained by Confucian propriety, humor existed only in the minor genres of drama, the novel, popular song, and the casual essay.[9] Lin wanted to introduce humor into serious literature such as poetry and essays on the classics, ethics, or national affairs because he believed it was a sign of an advanced culture and an inevitable product of mature literary sensibility: "Once human intelligence advances, man has leftover energy from dealing with his various problems. The measured release of this energy leads to humor. Or, once man gets smart, he starts questioning human intelligence itself, and sees human follies, contradictions, prejudices, and arrogance everywhere. Humor thereupon naturally arises."[10]

Lin Yutang's own awareness of the psychological and aesthetic value of humor was sparked by the many late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century scholarly publications on this subject in Europe and America.[11] Although humor colors many Chinese expressions, there is no equivalent in the Chinese language that connotes all the nuances of the Western word. Resorting to transliteration to avoid misunderstanding, in his 1924 articles Lin Yutang coined the term *youmo* 幽默 for humor but refused to define it because its magic lay beyond words. Humor, according to Lin, was a mystery that could only be intuited rather than taught. From many possible transliterations and homophones he deliberately chose *you* and *mo*. *You* refers to an obscure, ineffably profound quality; *mo* means voluntary taciturnity. "The humor of those who are good at it is always ambiguous. Those who are good at appreciating humor savor it quietly in their heart, feeling unable to share it with others. This is how humor differs from crude, obvious jokes. The more elusive and tongue-in-cheek, the smarter the humor." Humor does not always have to challenge one's intelligence or be elegantly phrased but, at its highest level, it makes people smile rather than roar with laughter.[12] The higher a person's social status and the more serious his social image, the stronger the humorous effect.[13] A humorist does not preach, but he is no buffoon either.[14] According to Lin, since humor is born of fresh viewpoints on life rather than of wordplay, if an idea is clichéd, no matter how one expresses it, it cannot be humorous. That is why there is "ultimate truth" (*zhili* 至理) in humor.[15]

Central to Lin Yutang's humorist attitude is a realistic view of life, a generosity of spirit, and compassion. A humorist has an eye for hypocrisy, to which he responds with an understanding laugh. He is critical of himself but generous to others. He "sees this pathetic, imperfect society struggling to get by. In it there are so many frailties, prejudices, delusions, and worldly desires. He first finds them laughable, then pitiable, but eventually lovable." Instead of ridiculing or sneering at people for their absurdities, the humorist, "filled with the compassion of Buddha," uses his pen to inspire "self-examination" (*zijian* 自鑒) through light-hearted language. Most importantly, a humorist does not elevate himself above the masses, but identifies with them and seeks ways in which people can help each other. Self-righteousness, he recognizes, is the worst sin against humor.[16] In other words, generosity does not necessarily lead to humor, but humor must connote generosity.[17]

Lin Yutang illustrated his type of humor in a 1926 cartoon entitled "Mr. Lu Xun Whacking a Pekinese Pug" with an inscription that reads, "For dogs, one must first knock them into the water and then beat them up" (fig. 1).[18] The picture shows Lu Xun (Zhou Shuren, 1881–1936), leader of left-wing writers, using a long pole to pound a dog struggling in the water. It alludes to a debate between Lin and Lu on "fair play," a Western concept first introduced by Zhou Zuoren (1885–1967) during the May Fourth Movement.[19] Lin Yutang favored it, considering it resonant with Chinese sensibilities as reflected in epigrams like "Don't throw rocks down the well after [your rival] has fallen in." Lu Xun, on the other hand, called for thorough demolition of one's opponents, leaving no room for "fair play." He compared corrupt intellectuals to cute Pekinese pugs fawning on bulldog-like warlords and foreign invaders, for whom he had no mercy. The humor of Lin's cartoon lies in its literalness in illustrating the metaphor. The seemingly faithful rendering of Lu Xun acting out his belief is in fact a ludicrous

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6 Chen Duxiu 1916a, p. 4, translated in Gentzler 1977, p. 171.
7 Chen Duxiu 1916b. Lin Yutang 1975, pp. 32–33.
8 Lin Yutang 1924.
9 Lin Yutang 1934c, p. 88.
10 Ibid., p. 84.
11 Sohigian 2007, pp. 89–90.
12 Lin Yutang 1924, pp. 170–74.
13 Lin Mingchang 2007, pp. 188–89.
14 Lin Yutang 1934c, p. 96.
15 Lin Yutang, "Da Qing'ai lun 'youmo' yiming" (In Response to Qing'ai Regarding the Translation of "Humor") (1932), quoted in Lin Mingchang 2007, p. 194.
16 Lin Yutang 1924, pp. 176–78.
17 Lin Mingchang 2007, p. 193.
18 This cartoon was first published in *Yusi* (March 1926). My gratitude to Diran John Sohigian for confirming Lin Yutang as the author.
19 For a summary of the debate, see Sohigian 2007, pp. 95–98.

subversion of reality. In the picture, the focused look of the figure's face and the matter-of-fact tone of the inscription suggest that Lu actually engages in dog-whacking, which could not have happened in real life. The contradiction inherent in the illustration would certainly bring a smile to those who knew its allusion. Significantly, there is no exaltation on Lu Xun's face over his opponent's fall. He is simply doing what he considers necessary. His cool image looks absurd in the context of this emotional scene, but it is not a demeaning caricature. Lin Yutang presents his critique of Lu's militancy with understanding and compassion.[20]

In Lin Yutang's judgment, the Western literary genre best suited to the expression of humor was the "familiar essay," which he equated with the Chinese genre of light essays (*xiaopinwen* 小品文).[21] In such essays the author regards his readers as close friends. He reveals personal thoughts and emotions in a subjective, uninhibited tone, and the primary concern of the composition shifts from its content to its voice. According to Lin, the Chinese prototype of such "light essays" can be found in the prose of the late Ming (1368–1644) and early Qing (1644–1911) periods, most noticeably in that of the Gongan School.[22] Not only did their works express fresh observations on life in a distinctly personal voice, but most of them also convey humor.[23] Yet these works are not great literature because their language is fettered by the classical Chinese requirements of concision and refinement (*jianlian* 簡練).[24] This problem was readily solved in the post–May Fourth era with the official and critical recognition accorded to vernacular literature, which Lin championed. The relaxed, improvisational (*xianshi* 閒適) voice, essential to humor, flows with greater verve in the looser structure of the vernacular language.

The years between 1932 and 1935 mark the period in which Lin Yutang was most active and influential in China.[25] He launched *Lunyu* 論語 (*Analects*), a biweekly, in Shanghai in 1932 to promote humor in literature. Its instant popularity, enhanced by George Bernard Shaw's high-profile visit to Shanghai the following February, made 1933 "The Year of Humor" and won Lin the honorific of China's "Master of Humor." He later started two other biweeklies, *Renjianshi* 人間世 (*The Human World*) and *Yuzhou Feng* 宇宙風 (*Winds of the Universe*), in 1934 and 1935 respectively, presenting familiar essays on subjects "as immense as the universe or as puny as a fly."[26] The publishing world enjoyed an unprecedented boom in periodicals in 1934; more than two hundred appeared in Shanghai alone. Some commentators regarded Lin's *Lunyu* as the catalyst for this phenomenon. Humor became a trend, giving birth to ten more publications devoted to its appreciation.[27]

Humor and its scrutiny of life's trifles, however, was not without its detractors. The early 1930s also saw the rise of leftist writers under the leadership of Lu Xun, who advocated proletarian literature. The intellectuals of the May Fourth Movement were mostly concerned with larger social issues. Lin Yutang, on the other hand, was best at conveying personal insights about minor subjects. Literature, Lin argued, is self-expression. It serves only its author and no one else. Whether it improves people's morals or facilitates national causes is ultimately irrelevant. His views enraged leftist writers, who criticized him for lacking the spirit of "struggles and combats."[28] Lin's enthusiastic advocacy of humor during the harrowing social upheavals of the 1930s, as Zhou Zhiping has observed, constituted an appeal for freedom of speech. To Lin, even though the country was in crisis, one should have the freedom *not* to talk about its deliverance. Lin, in other words, had no concern for "political correctness."[29] It was his insistence that literature's raison d'être was self-expression, not politics, that eventually established a prominent place for him in the history of modern Chinese literature. And it is due to his efforts that humor has become an integral component of serious writing in China.[30]

Lin Yutang's initial motivation in promoting humor in 1924 was to modernize Chinese literature and people's way of thinking, but his ideas gained resonance in the political climate of the years that followed. Placed on a wanted list by the warlord regime of Duan Qirui (1864–1936) due to his involvement in a student demonstration on March 18, 1926, in which more than two hundred people were killed, Lin left Beijing in May for Xiamen and taught briefly at Xiamen University. Next he worked for the Nationalist government in Hankou, Hubei Province, but quit politics after five months, in late 1927. He moved to Shanghai to focus on a literary career, where he encountered debilitating censorship for the first time.[31] Describing the birth of his personal style in an autobiography published after his move to New York in 1936, he wrote:

> *. . . What good is freedom of speech anyway? Indeed, my own literary success and the development of my own style were entirely due to the Nationalist Party. If our freedom had not been so suppressed and restricted, probably I would*

not have been a writer. Severe censorship compelled me to express myself in a roundabout way; I didn't have to call a spade a spade. . . . [I] thus managed to avoid the hardship of a prison cell. . . . In this strange and fascinating climate, I became what people call a humorist or a satirist. Probably it is as people say, when life is too miserable, one cannot but be comical; otherwise you will die of sadness.[32]

This wry celebration of censorship, viewed against his insistence on politics-free self-expression, represents a poignant paradox in the discourse on freedom of speech. By the mid-1930s Lin faced both suffocating Nationalist censorship and vehement personal attacks from the Communists, who resented the great popularity of his liberal periodicals among students. In September 1934 Lin wrote, "My neighbor to the east is a Proletarian; my neighbor to the west is a Fascist. I have no respect for such things. If I have to endorse some ideology, I can only say I simply want to be human."[33] To protect his integrity as a writer, Lin Yutang moved with his family to New York in August of 1936.

ENGLISH PUBLICATIONS

Lin Yutang's literary reputation rests in large measure on his prodigious number of publications in English in the 1930s and 1940s. No Chinese writer rivaled Lin's Western readership. In the 1930s most Westerners' knowledge of China was limited to the novels of Pearl Buck (1892–1973).[34] Lin's writings, by contrast, present Chinese life and culture through the prism of deeply felt personal experiences. Drawing on his knowledge of Western culture, Lin made telling comparisons between East and West to render his observations accessible and enjoyable to Western readers. The image of China Lin constructs is vivid, intimate, and illuminating. Twice nominated for the Nobel Prize in literature, in 1940 and 1950, Lin's popularity and critical recognition in the West in the mid-twentieth century was extraordinary.

In 1935, a year before moving to New York, Lin Yutang had already published an article in *Harper's Magazine* and his first book in English, *My Country and My People*. The book went through seven printings within four months and was translated into several European languages. Almost overnight Lin acquired an international reputation.[35] In December 1937 his third book, *The Importance of Living*, was selected for special recommendation by the Book-of-the-Month Club and stayed at the top of *The New York Times* best-seller list for fifty-two weeks. The most widely sold book in the United States in 1938, it was translated into a dozen foreign languages, confirming Lin's status as a world-class writer.[36]

Written barely two years apart but in the totally different environments of Shanghai and New York, these two books, despite sharing certain topics, have different emphases that create very different reading experiences. While *The Importance of Living* primarily addresses pleasant truths, *My Country and My People* points up certain flaws in the Chinese character that Lin blamed for China's multiple failings in the modern age. On the dedication page of *My Country and My People*, Lin Yutang cites Confucius, "Truth does not depart from human nature. If what is regarded as truth departs from human nature, it may not be regarded as truth." This statement sets the tone for the book. Human nature is far from perfect. Truth, therefore, can be beautiful or ugly. Lin is determined to bare truths as he perceives them. In the preface he states that his observations were the product of much "painful" rumination and would offend many Chinese, especially "the great patriots." As he predicted, while Western critics admired the book for its honesty and insights, many Chinese accused Lin of betraying his country and his people.[37]

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20 Lin changed his attitude to the "fallen dogs" after the massacre of March 18, 1926. See Lin Yutang 1926.
21 Lin Yutang 1934d.
22 On the theory and members of the Gongan School, see Zhou Zhiping, *Yuan Hung-tao and the Kung-an School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
23 Lin Yutang 1932, pp. 8–9.
24 Lin Yutang 1933a, p. 10.
25 Zhou Zhiping 2007, p. 12.
26 Lin Yutang's opening remarks for *Renjianshi*, quoted in Qin Xianci 1986–87 (*Wen Xun* 26), p. 208.
27 Sohigian 2007, p. 85.
28 Zhou Zhiping 2007, p. 14.
29 Zhou Zhiping 1996, p. 163.
30 Sohigian 2007, p. 88.
31 See Lin Yutang's preface to *Jianfu ji*, in Lin Yutang 1928, pp. 3–6.
32 Lin Yutang 1936b (*Yi Jing* 19), p. 24; translated in Sohigian 1991, pp. 388–89.
33 Lin Yutang, "*Youbuwei Zhai congshu* xu" (Preface to *Series from the Youbuwei Studio*) (1934), quoted in Zhou Zhiping 1996, p. 162.
34 Buck was instrumental to Lin Yutang's move to the United States. Most of Lin's books written in English from the 1930s to 1953 were published by her husband, Richard Walsh, of the John Day Company. See Lin Taiyi 1990, pp. 127–28, 158–59, 167, 174–75, 194. Their friendship and collaboration collapsed in the mid-1950s. Ibid., p. 254.
35 Lin Taiyi 1990, p. 158.
36 Ibid., pp. 175, 182.
37 Ibid., pp. 157–58, 203–4.

The book consists of two parts. The first introduces the Chinese people: their character, attitudes, and ideals; the second offers Lin's views on various aspects of China's culture: its social and political systems, literature, art, lifestyles, and the status of women. Although its account of China's pride and shame is well balanced, the latter drew more attention. A most telling example is his discussion of "old roguery." This, "the highest product of Chinese intelligence," he notes with a certain sarcasm, "works against idealism and action." Rooted in the Daoist concepts of taking no action and disregard for man-made rules, this attitude has generated both apathy toward progressive reform and audacious readiness "to break all systems, to ignore them, circumvent them, play with them, and become superior to them."[38] Lin is referring to the Chinese tendency to manipulate Western ideas to suit old habits. In the preface to the book, Lin states that he addresses the negative traits of his countrymen frankly because he has confidence in China's ability to right itself. But he does not judge Chinese character traits as simply good or evil; rather, they lie somewhere in between, depending on the situation and the degree of intensity.[39] Moreover, he recognizes that even "old roguery" has its value as a shrewd strategy of self-protection.[40] Lin also finds qualities in the Chinese mindset that he considers superior to what he has witnessed in the West. Chinese "reasonableness," for instance, embodies a higher truth than Western logic because it balances the immutable law of the universe with the flexible human elements.[41] The Spirit of Reasonableness, Lin asserts, "is the essence and best side of Chinese civilization" and "the best thing that China has to offer to the West."[42]

While *My Country and My People* has its humorous moments, *The Importance of Living* reads much more like one of Lin Yutang's "familiar essays." He makes his approach clear in the preface: "This is a personal testimony, a testimony of my own experience of thought and life. It is not intended to be objective and makes no claim to establish eternal truths." This deemphasis on objective truth contrasts sharply with the historian's sensibility underlying the preface to *My Country and My People*. Lin wrote *The Importance of Living* under very different circumstances. He had just settled into the vibrant cultural milieu of New York City as a famous writer, and he found that people had different concerns. He told a friend back in Shanghai that the Chinese lifestyle had long been admired by Westerners, but there was no book introducing the ways in which Chinese took aesthetic pleasure in nature and the trivial aspects of daily life. In *My Country and My People* one chapter in particular, "The Art of Living," fascinated American readers, who saw in it an antidote to their frenetic lifestyle. Lin thus decided to develop that chapter into a new book.[43]

Lin recognized that the China Westerners were curious about was the traditional, exotic one, not the one striving for modernization.[44] Consequently, *The Importance of Living* selectively explores China's old culture to document how to enjoy life. The book's success derives from the fact that Lin was genuinely sympathetic to that way of life. Living away from his detractors in China, he seems to have seen his countrymen in a more positive light. After all, the "flawed" Chinese character he had criticized in *My Country and My People* had also shaped many characteristics of the literature and art he loved.[45]

The Importance of Living delves into the simple pleasures of daily life such as lying in bed, sitting in chairs, eating, drinking, and smoking. Lin sees beauty in the most mundane aspects of nature. Citing the thirty-three happy moments of life listed by the renowned literary critic Jin Shengtan (1608–1661), including "To open the window and let a wasp out of the room," Lin illuminates what he considers most essential to true happiness: the inextricable union of spiritual and sensual pleasures.[46] The conscious enjoyment of life is not selfish or socially irresponsible because, he explains, "no man who loves the trees truly can be cruel to animals or to his fellowmen."[47] If Lin's affirmation of the pursuit of happiness sounds familiar now, his view of leisure is almost prophetic of our own age: "The constant rush for progress must certainly one day reach a point when man will be pretty tired of it all, and will begin to take stock of his conquests in the material world. I cannot believe that, with the coming of better material conditions of life, when diseases are eliminated, poverty is decreased and man's expectation of life is prolonged and food is plentiful, man will care to be as busy as he is today. I'm not so sure that a more lazy temperament will not arise as a result of this new environment."[48] For Lin, culture is born of leisure and the enjoyment of leisure is a manifestation of true wisdom.[49]

During the next two decades Lin Yutang wrote prolifically. He introduced to the West the wisdom of Confucius (1938), China and India (1942), and Laozi (1948). In *The Gay Genius: The Life and Times of Su Tungpo* (1947), he portrays his most beloved historical figure with such a sense of spiritual affinity that it is sometimes unclear whether he is describing Su or himself.[50] In response to the Sino-Japanese War (1937–45), Lin authored three novels with the war as their backdrop:

Moment in Peking (1939), *A Leaf in the Storm* (1940), and *The Vermilion Gate* (1953), which he later called his trilogy.[51] He also published two works of nonfiction. In *Between Tears and Laughter* he discusses the problem of attaining world peace from the perspective of Chinese political philosophy (1943).[52] And in *The Vigil of a Nation* (1944) he describes the conflicts between the Nationalists and the Communists during the war, a topic that brought him a great deal of negative publicity in the United States, where left-leaning American officials and intellectuals criticized the book as propaganda for the Nationalist Party.[53] During the Sino-Japanese War, he also published many articles in American journals in support of China's war effort.

ART AND ARTISTS

Lin Yutang was interested in art throughout his life. His last book prior to the appearance of the autobiographical *Memoirs* of 1975 is *The Chinese Theory of Art* (1967), a compilation of translations of classical art texts. On the nature of art he writes: "Art is both creation and recreation. Of the two ideas, I think art as recreation or as sheer play of the human spirit is more important."[54] This view led Lin to endorse the "ink plays" of Su Shi (1037–1101) and Mi Fu (1051–1107), but to ignore works that emphasize brush methods and structural complexity. It also distinguishes him from many intellectually inclined scholar-artists who take art as a manifestation of spiritual cultivation and metaphysical insight.

Lin Yutang explained artistic creation in biological terms. "Genius itself is but an oversupply of glandular secretions" and creativity is the result "an overflow of physical and mental energy" regulated by the amount of hormones in the blood. True art has to be an impulsive, purposeless outburst of that energy, like children's play, in which the faculty of reason takes no part. This attitude parallels that of Su Shi, who described his creative process as a fountain gushing out of the earth and running hundreds of miles until naturally exhausted. Art with any utilitarian agenda, be it political or moral, is not art, but "prostitution." From the utilitarian perspective, dancing is an inefficient form of walking, a waste of energy to move from one point to another, but it is this "glorious inefficiency" in dancing, poetry, and painting that makes physical movement, verbal expression, and image-rendering an aesthetic experience.

Lin Yutang held Chinese visual arts in the highest regard. He writes, "I think of all phases of the Chinese civilization, Chinese art alone will make any lasting contribution to the culture of the world. . . . There are certain hidden, innermost recesses of the Chinese soul that can be known only through its reflection in Chinese art."[55] The art to which he refers, however, is very narrowly defined. His aesthetic ideal centers on nature and the natural. Traces of human effort or what is man-made should be kept to a minimum.[56] Lin's ideal artist is one who is immersed in nature, free from the contamination and entanglement of society; nature is the incubator as well as the inspiration of art. Lin regarded Western art schools, where students learn to paint by drawing nudes and plaster figures, as "backward." A Chinese artist, on the other hand, cultivates his mind and trains his eyes and hands in nature. In order to represent nature in its myriad forms, the "cold, objective observations" prized in the West are not enough. The artist must genuinely love nature and commune with it. He must undergo a "spiritual baptism in nature" to capture its essence beneath surface likeness.

Rhythm, Lin Yutang believed, is the soul of all the visual arts. While the West finds perfect rhythm in the female body, the Chinese artist distills it from nature, especially plants and animals, and establishes the "animistic principle" as the foundation of Chinese aesthetics. Elastic vines, springing deer, and fighting snakes lend their different rhythms, first of all, to calligraphy, making it an abstract art independent of semantic references. It provides Chinese with their basic notions of form generated through line. The harmony, contrast, balance, or irregularity embedded in natural forms and movements

38 Lin Yutang 1935, pp. 52–56.
39 Wang Zhaosheng 2006.
40 Lin Yutang 1935, pp. 118–19.
41 Ibid., p. 90.
42 Lin Yutang 1937, pp. 421, 422.
43 See Lin Yutang's letter to Tao Kangde, cited in Lin Taiyi 1990, pp. 171–72.
44 Gao Hong 2005, pp. 47–48, quoted in Zhong Yiwen 2007, p. 30.
45 Most noticeably, he recognized Daoism, which underlies the mentality of the "old rogue," as essential to Chinese aesthetics. Lin Yutang 1937, p. 105.
46 Ibid., pp. 130–36.
47 Ibid., p. 137.
48 Ibid., p. 149.
49 Ibid., pp. 150–51.
50 Zhou Zhiping 2007, p. 11.
51 Lin Yutang 1975, p. 135.
52 For an overview of this book, see Lin Taiyi 1990, pp. 199–203; Chen Yong 2003, pp. 201–5.
53 Lin Taiyi 1990, pp. 221–22.
54 The following summary of Lin Yutang's view of art comes from Lin Yutang 1937, pp. 366–76, and Lin Yutang 1935, pp. 302–4.
55 Lin Yutang 1935, p. 287.
56 The following summary of Lin Yutang's views of Chinese visual arts comes from Lin Yutang 1935, pp. 287–321.

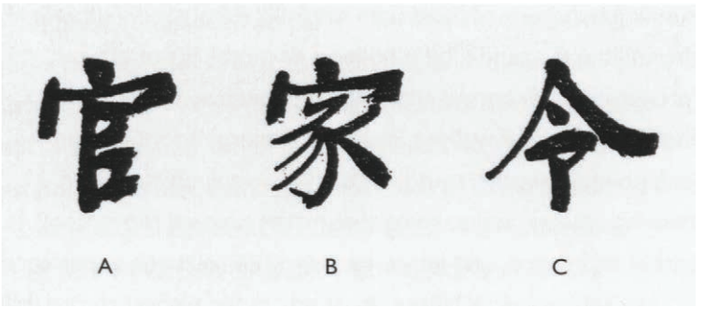

Figure 2 Three characters taken from Zheng Xiaoxu's (1860–1938) calligraphy. From Lin Yutang, *My Country and My People* (New York: John Day Company, 1935), p. 316.

also shape the structural concepts of calligraphy. Nature is so important in calligraphic theory that organic, anatomical terms such as flesh, bone, and tendon are used to describe brushstrokes. As a result, Lin maintained that straight, even lines or symmetrical designs lack life and movement.[57] In tune with his time, he considered the inscriptions on the steles of the Northern Wei period (386–535) the highest achievement of Chinese calligraphy for the vigor and simplicity of their brushwork and the asymmetrical openness of the characters' structure.

Although Lin Yutang appreciated calligraphy as abstract art, he had no taste for Western modernist painting or abstract art. Since he lived in New York for thirty years, his objection to modernist art was not due to ignorance or lack of exposure. He criticized modernist artists for their jarring geometric abstractions of natural form. He felt that such works were little more than "geometric puzzles" that were unintelligible to common people. Chinese painting, on the other hand, "shows a certain economy of material, marked by the many blank spaces, an idea of composition determined by its own harmony and marked by a certain 'rhythmic vitality,' and a boldness and freedom of the brush." The resulting picture, shorn of irrelevancies and contradictions, is true to life yet different from it. The physical world has been transformed into something in perfect harmony with nature, in which the painter loses himself instead of asserting his ego like the Western modernists.

Lin Yutang correctly saw the modernist movement as a revolt against the academic realism of the preceding age. The problem with representing material reality, in Lin's view, was solved intuitively by painters in eighth-century China, who never took objective mimesis seriously. Traditional Chinese painting avoids slavish mimesis; instead, calligraphy gives it its technique and poetry lends it its spirit. In addition to delineating forms, lines are aestheticized. As in calligraphy, they become expressive, which liberates them from subservience to the painted object as in mimetic art. In terms of content, the modernist celebration of the artist's subjectivity actually accords with the spirit of Chinese painting, which Lin sums up as *lyricism* and relates it to the lyrical tradition of Chinese poetry. Like Chinese poets, Chinese painters present only their impression of the world, stimulate imagination by economic use of imagery, create evocative atmosphere, and embrace a "pantheistic union with nature." To banish mimesis in favor of self-expression, Lin believed, Western artists could have resorted to Chinese paradigms instead of degrading nature to unintelligible, grotesque forms through excessive manipulation.

Chinese architecture is another subject that Lin Yutang singled out for analysis. Due to its utilitarian function and heavy reliance on manual labor, architecture was not considered a fine art in traditional China. Lin, however, elevated it to the same level as calligraphy and painting—no doubt because of its high regard in the West. Lin particularly appreciated the role of geomancy—the art of choosing the location, orientation, and form of a structure in order to harmonize with and benefit from nature's spiritual power. "The best architecture," Lin claimed, "is that which loses itself in the natural landscape and becomes one with it, belongs to it."[58]

Lin believed that Chinese architecture, like painting, tends to reveal an object's skeletal structure. Just as the brushed lines in a painting may be appreciated without reference to their descriptive function, the wooden framework of rafters and beams in a Chinese building is both functional and aesthetic. Consequently, it is intentionally exposed in order to show off the beauty of its structural patterns. Chinese architecture also embodies the calligraphic principle of complementary straight and curved lines. The exterior of a Chinese temple or palace, for instance, features a curving roof supported by straight vertical pillars. Similarly, the three-dimensional ornaments on the ridges of the roof break their geometric sweep, just as in calligraphy the axis of a character is offset by the curved, broken strokes around it.

The curving roof is the most unique and noticeable characteristic of Chinese architecture. Its origin, Lin suggested, lies in the elongated horizontal or diagonal calligraphic strokes that sag a little in the middle and curve up on either end (fig. 2). They exude a strength and tension that straight lines lack. The top component of the first two characters in figure 2 (A and B) is the radical that signifies a roof, while the outward sweeping

diagonals at the top of the third character (C) literally resemble the silhouette of a Chinese roof. The curving roof resonates with the curves of hills, rivers, and tree branches. Rather than "point its fingers at heaven" as do the spires of Western cathedrals, the roof in Chinese architecture "only shows peace and bows in modesty before the firmament. It is a sign of the place where we humans live, and it suggests a certain amount of decency by covering up our human habitations."[59]

The Chinese have invented other devices to break or soften the straight lines in their architecture. The balustraded round bridge harmonizes with nature through its curving arch and irregular profile. The silhouette of the pagoda is broken as well as accentuated by a series of projecting, upward-curving eaves. Straight pillars are decorated with irregular wavy patterns of clouds or dragons, windows take the shapes of celestial bodies or plants and fruits, and rockeries effortlessly soften architecture and help to integrate it with the lines and forms of nature.

Lin Yutang not only theorized about art, he also practiced it. Unconcerned with his lack of technical training, he dabbled in painting to entertain family and friends. Asserting that "painting was, and still is, the scholar's recreation," his own paintings followed the scholarly tradition of "ink plays."[60]

Lin Yutang purchased old paintings (cat. nos. 5, 6). The works of art that he collected from his contemporaries are mostly occasional pieces done as marks of friendship. The paintings and calligraphy he received from Xu Beihong were gifts offered in appreciation for his help in advancing Xu's exhibition plans (cat. nos. 8–11; fig. 3). The two paintings dedicated to Lin and his wife from Guo Dawei were done after Lin became acquainted with the artist in the late 1950s (cat. nos. 20, 21). Yu Youren transcribed four of his own poems for the Lins on their first visit to Taiwan in 1958 (cat. no. 22). Lin first met Zhang Daqian in Chengdu, Sichuan, in December 1943 during the Sino-Japanese War and later at dinner parties in New York in 1963.[61] But it was not until the summer of 1965, when Zhang left his home in Brazil for New York for a physical

Figure 3 Lin Yutang with Xu Beihong's horse painting, given to his daughter Taiyi by the artist in 1942. Courtesy of The Lin Yutang House, Taipei.

examination, that their friendship seemed to blossom.[62] In the summer and autumn of that year, Zhang made a few paintings for Lin (cat. nos. 13–17).[63]

Apart from entertaining visiting artists like Zhang Daqian, Lin Yutang also participated in the New York art world during his thirty-year sojourn there. He contributed a laudatory comment to the pioneering catalogue of the Moore collection of Chinese paintings in 1940.[64] He enthusiastically helped Xu Beihong organize an exhibition of contemporary Chinese art in New York scheduled for 1942. Although that project was aborted, two exhibitions of a similar nature were held at the Metropolitan Museum in 1943 and 1948, and Lin wrote an introductory note for both catalogues. He also lent four pieces

57 Lin Yutang 1947, p. 279.
58 Lin Yutang 1935, p. 321.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid., p. 303.
61 Qin Xianci 1986–87 (*Wen Xun* 29), p. 283; Li Yongqiao 1987, p. 354.
62 Li Yongqiao 1987, p. 362.
63 Lin might have seen in Zhang Daqian a latter-day incarnation of his beloved Su Shi. According to Shen Fu, Zhang "thought of himself as a modern Su Shi: both were from Sichuan Province and both practiced printing and calligraphy and composed poetry. Zhang even wore a hat and long gown modeled after Su Shi's costume." See Fu 1991, p. 246.
64 On the Moore collection and its catalogue, see Sensabaugh and Matheson 2002. Lin Yutang's comment is on the dust jacket of the catalogue. My gratitude to David Sensabaugh for the information about Lin's contribution.

of painting and calligraphy presented to him and his daughter by Xu Beihong (cat. nos. 8–11) to the 1943 exhibition.

Yu Jingzhi, a renowned painter from China who was active for decades in New York, gave Lin Yutang her *Early Autumn* (1938, cat. no. 12) and at least three other paintings based on masterworks by Zhou Fang (active ca. 780–810), Mi Fu, and Xia Gui (active ca. 1200–40)—all now lost—in the summer of 1965.[65] Zhang Daqian happened to be in New York at the time, and he wrote frontispieces for three of these works. Lin subsequently contributed a preface to a catalogue of Yu's collected works published in 1967.

INVENTION OF A "SCIENTIFIC" CHINESE TYPEWRITER

Lin Yutang deplored that natural science did not develop in China, and attributed it to "the characteristics of Chinese thinking." Traditional intellectuals, who tended to rely on common sense and intuition for philosophical theories, considered scientific routines of observation and experiment "beneath the dignity of a scholar."[66] Lin's own career was enriched by his work as an inventor. Interested in the natural sciences from an early age and exposed to Western scientific methods in college, Lin invented several "gadgets," including a toothbrush with paste-feeding mechanism (1950, fig. 4) and an automatic card-counter for playing bridge. But far more important and ambitious was his invention of a Chinese-character typewriter. As part of the language reform movement prevalent in the post–May Fourth era of the 1920s and early 1930s, several leading scholars advocated making Chinese writing easier to learn and use by replacing traditional Chinese characters with a Roman alphabet.[67] When Lin Yutang returned from Germany in 1923, he became a key figure in this endeavor to bridge the cultural gap between China and the rest of the world and to facilitate the adaptation of Chinese language to modern technology.[68] By the early 1930s, however, convinced that Chinese characters could not and need not be supplanted by a Western alphabet, he laid out proposals for simplifying Chinese characters.[69] In the meantime, he set to work on a new kind of typewriter that would replace the extremely cumbersome one currently in use, which was equipped with a tray of twenty-five hundred readymade characters. Lin envisioned a typewriter that used a regular-size keyboard like Western typewriters, but which employed a modular system that would enable a typist to compose individual characters from a set of component parts. He was

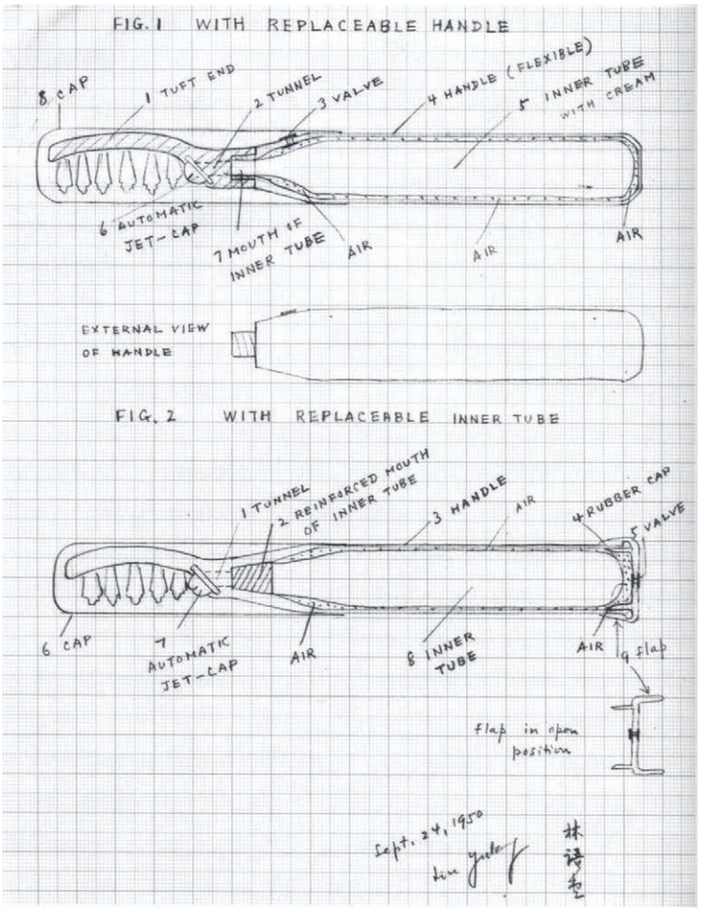

Figure 4 Lin Yutang. Design of a toothbrush with paste-feeding mechanism, 1950. Ink on paper. The Lin Yutang House, Taipei.

well prepared for such a daunting task. His deep interest and rigorous discipline in linguistics already had led to the invention of at least four indexing systems between 1917 and 1925.[70] He continued to dissect Chinese characters and categorize their components with piles of charts and diagrams. By 1931 he believed that he had solved the theoretical problems inherent in such a typewriter, but the technical challenges of building it were beyond him. Engaging the help of British engineers on a trip to England, he brought back a preliminary model later that year. Unfortunately, Lin ran out of money before he could finalize production.[71] It was not until 1946, after the publication of several best-sellers and incurring a heavy debt nonetheless, that he realized his dream. The typewriter he produced takes only three key strokes to compose any character, a momentous breakthrough in the automation of the Chinese writing process. Lin introduced his invention as follows:

> *In the past year, I have deserted my literary activities to concentrate on bringing to fruition a cherished plan that*

I have been perfecting for about thirty years. I have now developed a machine the size of a standard American typewriter, which is designed for everybody's use without previous training. It prints about 5,000 whole characters, and by combination of elements, a theoretical total of about 90,000 characters. There are only about 43,000 characters in the whole Chinese language. It is a machine at which any one who knows the Chinese writing can sit down and start typing at once, because the key-board is self-evident like the keyboard in the American typewriter. There is nothing to learn, nothing to memorize.[72]

Lin Yutang's invention was announced by the press in 1947 and patented in the United States in 1952 (fig. 5). Although it was not produced commercially due to high manufacturing costs, its keyboard was used in machines for telecommunication and phototypesetters by the American Air Force in the 1960s, operated by Americans that did not read Chinese. Another of Lin's aspirations was the compilation of an up-to-date Chinese-English dictionary. In 1967 he resumed the preparation of a manuscript that he had first begun in the 1930s. The result, *Lin Yutang's Chinese-English Dictionary of Modern Usage*, was published in Hong Kong in 1972.

Lin Yutang's involvement in Chinese language reform epitomizes his self-definition at the age of eighty as "a bundle of contradictions."[73] While creating new indexing systems and a typewriter to facilitate the use of traditional characters, he made practical proposals to modernize the characters through romanization and simplification. In life, he claimed to be one of the three hardest working persons in China, while upholding "the philosophy of Loafing" all the time.[74] In the sphere of religion he was born a Christian. College education turned him into a pagan, which was later strengthened by exposure to the Confucian belief in the innate goodness of man. In the

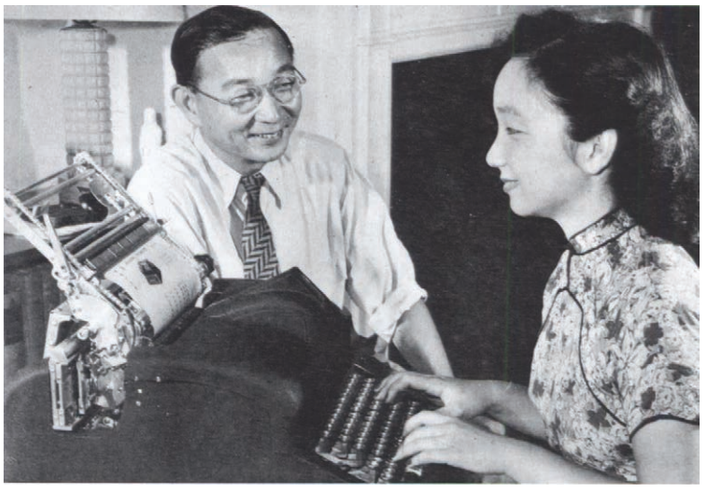

Figure 5 Lin Taiyi takes a letter from Lin Yutang using the new Chinese typewriter he invented. From an article by Hal Burton in an unknown publication by King Features Syndicate, Inc., 1947. Courtesy of The Lin Yutang House, Taipei.

mid-1950s, however, he returned to Christianity, as he wrote in 1959 in *From Pagan to Christian*, because he had lost faith in man's ability to be good without divine help.[75] In politics he criticized Chiang Kai-shek (1887–1975) in the 1935 edition of *My Country and My People* as not "half the size of a Gandhi," but in a chapter added to the 1939 edition he praised Chiang as "the supreme chessplayer of the Far East, and one of the greatest political chessplayers of all time."[76] Through 1936, Chiang Kai-shek's censorship and other deeds infuriated Lin, but after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, Lin began to see Chiang's presumed weaknesses as strengths, and he developed a close personal relationship with the Generalissimo that lasted for decades. Lin Yutang's most endearing attribute, one could say, was his ability to remain true to himself, even as he changed repeatedly in response to a changing world. Instead of defending old views or stances like many other intellectuals, he embraced and revealed his new self honestly, proud of being "a bundle of contradictions."

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65 For the other three paintings, see Yu Jingzhi 1967, vol. 3, pp. 34–39, vol. 4, pp. 7–9, and vol. 3, pp. 27–28. All three originals of Yu Jingzhi's copies were once in Ada Small Moore's collection in New York, which she gave to the Yale University Art Gallery in 1952 and 1953. See Sensabaugh and Matheson 2002. Yu copied the paintings nos. X, XVI, and XXI in Hackney and Yau 1940.

66 Lin Yutang 1935, pp. 85–87.

67 Chen Zhenlian 1996, pp. 7–9.

68 See Lin Yutang 1923. Discussed in Sohigian 1991, pp. 298–99.

69 Lin Yutang 1933b.

70 In the 1980s, Lin's latest indexing system for Chinese characters, patented in Taiwan in 1967, was successfully adapted into one of the input programs for Chinese computers. See Lin Taiyi 1990, pp. 246–49.

71 Lin Taiyi 1990, pp. 33–35, 78–82.

72 Lin Yutang, "Invention of a Chinese Typewriter," *Asia* (February 1946), p. 60, quoted in Zhou Zhiping 2007, p. 22.

73 Lin Yutang 1975, p. 1.

74 The other two were Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang. Lin Yutang 1975, p. 3.

75 For a thoughtful discussion on Lin's view of religion, see Zhou Zhiwen 2007.

76 Lin Yutang 1935, p. 358; 1939 ed., p. 369.

CATALOGUE

Detail of plate 14: Zhang Daqian,
Radishes and Mustard Greens.

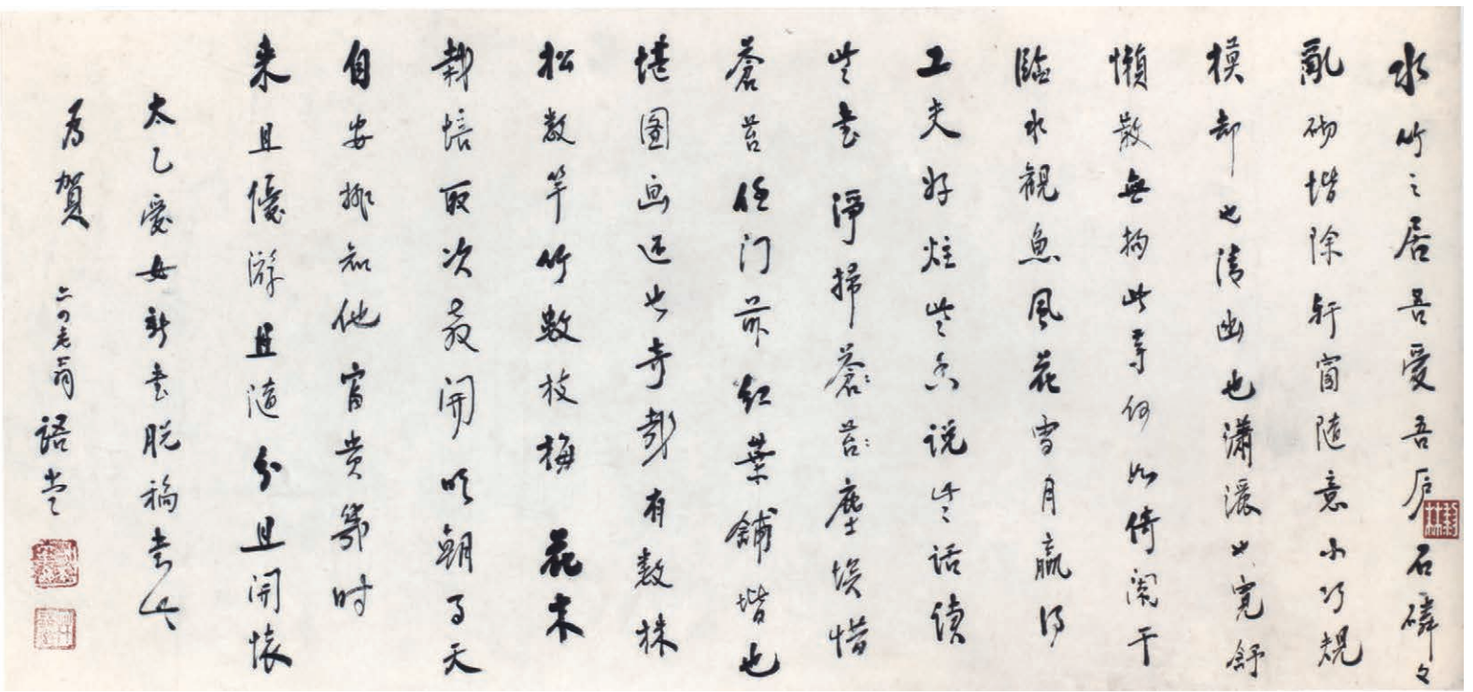
1

林語堂
Lin Yutang (1895–1976)

The Pond-Bamboo Dwelling
行書水竹之居
Xingshu Shui zhu zhi ju

Dated 1958. Album leaf,
ink on paper, 13⅞ × 29½ in.
(35.2 × 74.8 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection,
Partial and Promised Gift of
Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller,
and Larry C. Lai in memory
of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.17)



Lin Yutang brushed this work for his second daughter Taiyi to celebrate the completion of her new book, *The Eavesdropper*, published in 1958. A transcription of two *ci* 詞 poems in the tune of *Xingxiangzi* 行香子, the work expresses Lin's personal philosophy of life. The first poem was composed by Zhongfeng Mingben (1263–1323), a renowned Buddhist monk of the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368), and the second by an anonymous Yuan poet.[1]

Mingben's poem describes his beloved dwelling as quiet and casual, small in scale, but comfortably spacious. Lin considered the ideal Chinese interior to be defined by "simplicity and space."[2] And no matter how large a house one might have, one's favorite room was invariably small and unpretentious.[3] As to the architecture itself, Mingben mentioned only one component, the windows. As if echoing him, in *The Importance of Living* Lin wrote: "For everyone knows it is more important in selecting a house to see what one looks out on from the house than what one sees in it. The location of the country and its surrounding landscape are the thing."[4] In order to harmonize the house with its natural surroundings, "all signs of artificiality must be hidden as much as possible, and the rectilinear lines of the walls must be hidden or broken by overhanging branches."[5] The same aesthetic principle led Mingben to have the stairs to his dwelling paved with rugged stones in a random manner and the anonymous poet to appreciate the moss and scattered leaves in his garden.

The second half of Mingben's poem describes his insignificant but delightful daily routines and, more importantly, his laid-back attitude toward life. As a distinguished Buddhist monk in quest of spiritual enlightenment, he may have valued leisure for the same reason as Lin Yutang, who saw the enjoyment of leisure as a manifestation of wisdom: "Culture, as I understand it, is essentially a product of leisure. The art of culture is therefore essentially the art of loafing. From the Chinese point of view, the man who is wisely idle is the most cultured man. For there seems to be a philosophic contradiction between being busy and being wise. Those who are wise won't be busy, and those who are too busy can't be wise. The wisest man is therefore he who loafs most gracefully."[6]

In response to the vicissitudes of life, the second half of the anonymous poem celebrates the Daoist attitude of joyous passivity—letting nature take its course without worry or regrets—a viewpoint that Lin Yutang also adopted. In *The Importance of Living*, citing the famous story of an old man losing his horse, he affirmed the Daoist teaching that "there are no such things as luck and adversity" because one is often the cause of the other.[7]

In keeping with the spirit of the poems, Lin Yutang transcribed them in a casual running script with generous spacing between columns and between characters. The brushstrokes fluctuate in thickness and ink tonality without apparent calculation. The structure of the characters is loose yet well balanced.

Artist's inscription and signature
(15 columns in running script)

I love my dwelling beside water
and bamboo.
Rugged stones pave the stairs
at random;
Windows are casually set.
Though small in scale,
It is clean, quiet, unpretentious,
and feels comfortably roomy.
What is it like to lay back and
be free?
Leaning against the balustrade,
I watch the fish in the water.
Nature is enjoyable with its wind,
flowers, snow, and moon.
With more free time,
I can burn some incense, have some
talks, and read some books.

Sweep away the dust, but cherish
the green moss.
Let the red leaves in front of my
door cover the stairs.
They are worth painting, for they
too are wonderful.
There are a few pines, a few
bamboos, and a few plum trees.
Flowers and plants are cultivated to
blossom when the time is right.
For the future, let Heaven make
the arrangements.
How can we know when wealth
or rank might come?
So just relax, follow the course
of nature, and be happy.

Taiyi, my beloved daughter, just
finished the manuscript of her new
book. I wrote this to celebrate it.
An old man at sixty-four, Yutang

水竹之居, 吾愛吾廬,
石磷磷亂砌堦除。
軒窗隨意, 小巧規模,
卻也清幽, 也瀟灑, 也寬舒。
懶散無拘, 此等何如?
倚闌干臨水觀魚。
風花雪月, 贏得工夫,
好炷些香, 說些話, 讀些書。

淨掃蒼:苔:塵埃, 惜蒼苔。[8]
任門前紅葉鋪堦,
也堪圖畫, 還也奇哉。
有數株松, 數竿竹, 數枝梅。
花木栽培, 取次教開,
明朝事天自安排。
知他富貴幾時來,
且優游, 且隨分, 且開懷。

太乙愛女新書脫稿, 書此為賀。
六四老翁語堂

Artist's seals
有不為齋 *Youbuwei Zhai*
("Selective Disengagement Studio")
林語堂 *Lin Yutang*

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Notes

1 Lin Yutang's choice of these poems reveals his familiarity with the classic vernacular novels of the Ming and Qing periods. Both are found in the poetic prologue to *The Plum in a Golden Vase* (*Jin Ping Mei*). See Lanling Xiaoxiaosheng, *Jin Ping Mei cihua*, edited by Mei Jie (Hong Kong: Mengmei Guan, 1993), "Tici," 1. Lin Yutang must have taken these otherwise unrelated poems from the novel's prologue because it seems to be where they were first cited together and because Lin's transcription of Mingben's poem shows the same textual variation as that found in this source.
2 Lin Yutang 1937, p. 275.
3 Ibid., p. 268.
4 Ibid., p. 266.
5 Ibid., p. 267.
6 Ibid., p. 150.
7 Ibid., pp. 160–61.
8 The two characters "蒼:苔:" in this line were written by mistake. Lin Yutang used the mark ":" to indicate that they should be deleted.

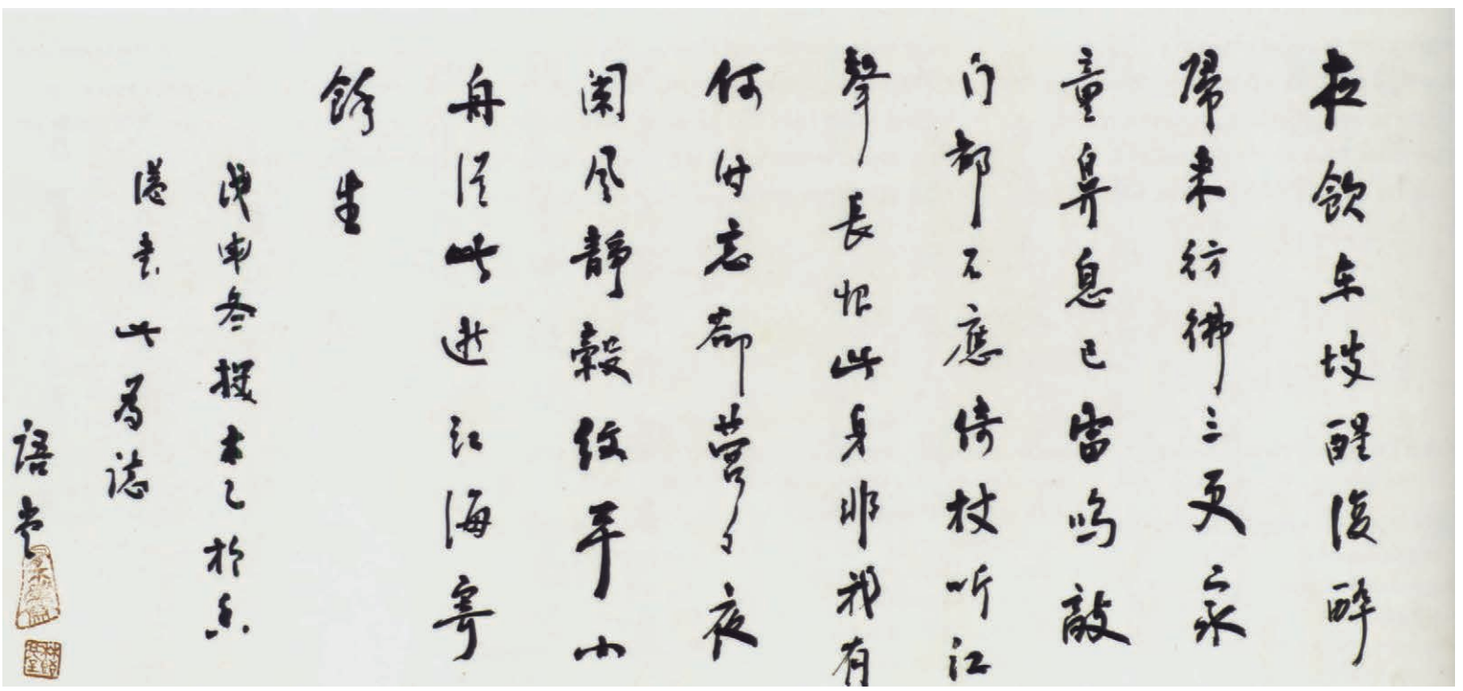
2

林語堂
Lin Yutang (1895–1976)

Ci *Poem by Su Shi*
行書東坡詞
Xingshu Dongpo ci

Dated 1968. Album leaf,
ink on paper, 10¾ × 23 in.
(27.5 × 58.5 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection,
Partial and Promised Gift of
Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller,
and Larry C. Lai in memory
of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.18)



In 1968, two years after his move from New York to Taipei, Lin Yutang wrote this piece of calligraphy for his daughter Taiyi during a visit to her home in Hong Kong, where she was working as editor-in-chief of the Chinese edition of *Reader's Digest*. It is a transcription of a *ci* poem in the tune of *Linjiangxian* 臨江仙 by the renowned scholar, poet, and calligrapher Su Shi (1037–1101).[1] Compared with Lin's other autographs, the asymmetrical structure and the rounder, plumper brushstrokes of individual characters in this work suggest a conscious emulation of Su Shi's calligraphic style, which reflects Lin's familiarity with and admiration for Su's art.

In his copious writings, Lin Yutang expressed a strong affinity with several Chinese historical figures, but Su Shi (Su Dongpo) is the only one about whom he wrote a biography. *The Gay Genius: The Life and Times of Su Tungpo* (1947) is the earliest extensive study on Su in English, and it contributed significantly to public awareness of Su in the West. The amazing amount of information that Lin presented and interpreted in the book fully justifies his view of Su Shi as "an incorrigible optimist, a great humanitarian, a friend of the people, a prose master, an original painter, a great calligraphist, an experimenter in wine making, an engineer, a hater of Puritanism, a yogi, a Buddhist believer, a Confucian statesman, a secretary to the emperor, a confirmed winebibber, a humane judge, a dissenter in politics, a prowler in the moonlight, a poet, and a wag."[2]

This particular poem describes, in a humorous tone, an awkward situation Su Shi encountered when he was banished to Huangzhou (present-day Huanggang, Hubei) from 1080 to 1084. Returning home late one night, half drunk, this scholar-official of national fame found himself locked out of his own house by his snoring servant. Rather than lose his temper over this predicament, he transformed it into an enjoyable aesthetic experience by taking advantage of the quiet night to listen to the sound of the river.

Self-mockery is rare in Chinese poetry. The comic helplessness of Su Shi's language certainly appealed to Lin Yutang, the modern master of Chinese humor. In *The Gay Genius* Lin singled out this poem as representative of Su's transition from the satiric bitterness, tension, and anger of his earlier writing to "a glowing, warm, intimate, and tolerant humor, thoroughly mellow and mature."[3] The ability to laugh at oneself, Lin commented, made humans unique among all creatures.[4]

Artist's inscription and signature
(12 columns in running script)

After a drink at night at Dongpo
[in Huangzhou], I wake up and
get drunk again;
By the time I come home it seems
to be midnight.
The boy servant is asleep, snoring
like thunder,
And does not answer the door.
Resting on a cane I listen to the
murmur of the river.
I always regret that I am not master
of my own life.
When can I stop this hustling about?
The night is late, the air is calm,
and the water has a sheen of
unruffled light.
Let me take a small boat down
the river hence,
To spend beyond the seas the
remainder of my days.[5]

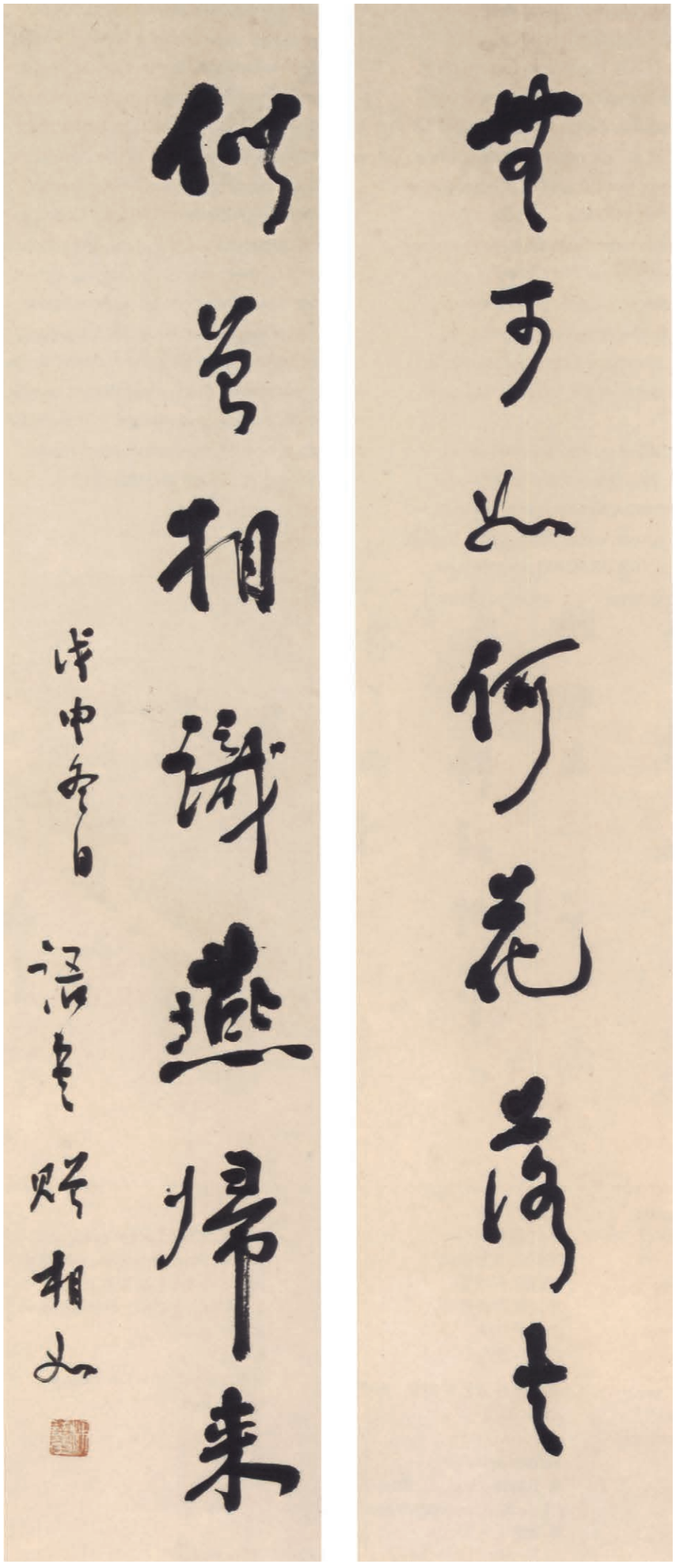
In the winter of the *wushen* year
[1968] I visited [my daughter]
Taiyi in Hong Kong and wrote this
for the occasion. Yutang

夜飲東坡醒復醉,
歸來彷彿三更。
家童鼻息已雷鳴,
敲門都不應,
倚杖聽江聲。
長恨此身非我有,
何時忘卻營營。
夜闌風靜縠紋平,
小舟從此逝,
江海寄餘生。

戊申冬投太乙於香港, 書此
為誌。語堂

Artist's seals
有不為齋 *Youbuwei Zhai*
("Selective Disengagement Studio")
林語堂 *Lin Yutang*

Notes
1 See Su Shi, *Dongpo yuefu jian* (Taipei: Huazheng Shuju, 1974), *juan* 2, 12a–b (pp. 213–14).
2 Lin Yutang 1947, "Preface," p. vii.
3 Ibid., p. 227.
4 Ibid.
5 Translated after Lin Yutang. Ibid., p. 226.



3

林語堂
Lin Yutang (1895–1976)

Poetic Couplet for Xiangru
戲改晏殊詞句以贈相如
Xi gai Yan Shu ciju yi zeng Xiangru

Dated 1968. Pair of hanging scrolls, ink on paper, 58 × 14 in. (147.3 × 35.6 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Gift of Hsiang Ju Lin in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.510.4a, b)

In this pair of hanging scrolls, Lin Yutang transcribed a famous couplet from a *ci* poem by Yan Shu (991–1055), a high-ranking official and major poet of the Northern Song period (960–1127).[1] Written in Lin's typical informal manner, the calligraphy achieves an overall effect of easy grace with little regard to the articulation of individual strokes.

This work is dedicated to Lin's third daughter, Xiangru (Hsiang Ju). As the third character in the second line of the poem, *xiang* 相, corresponds to the first character of his daughter's given name, Lin cleverly personalized his gift by replacing the matching third character of the first line in the original poem, *nai* 奈, with the second character of her name, *ru* 如, thus embedding her name within the fabric of the couplet. Lin's ingenious tampering with a well-known text shows how well he had internalized it. More importantly, it reflects the playfulness in his personality and his affectionate thoughtfulness for family members.

Artist's inscription and signature
(3 columns in running script)

No matter what, flowers die.
As if they once knew me,
swallows return.

In the winter of the *wushen* year [1968], [Lin] Yutang wrote this for Xiangru [Hsiang Ju Lin]

無可如何花落去,
似曾相識燕歸來。

戊申冬日語堂贈相如

Artist's seal
林語堂 *Lin Yutang*

Note
1 The poem is in the tune of *Wanxisha* 浣溪紗. See Tang Guizhang, ed., *Song ci sanban shou jianzhu* (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1972), pp. 11–12.

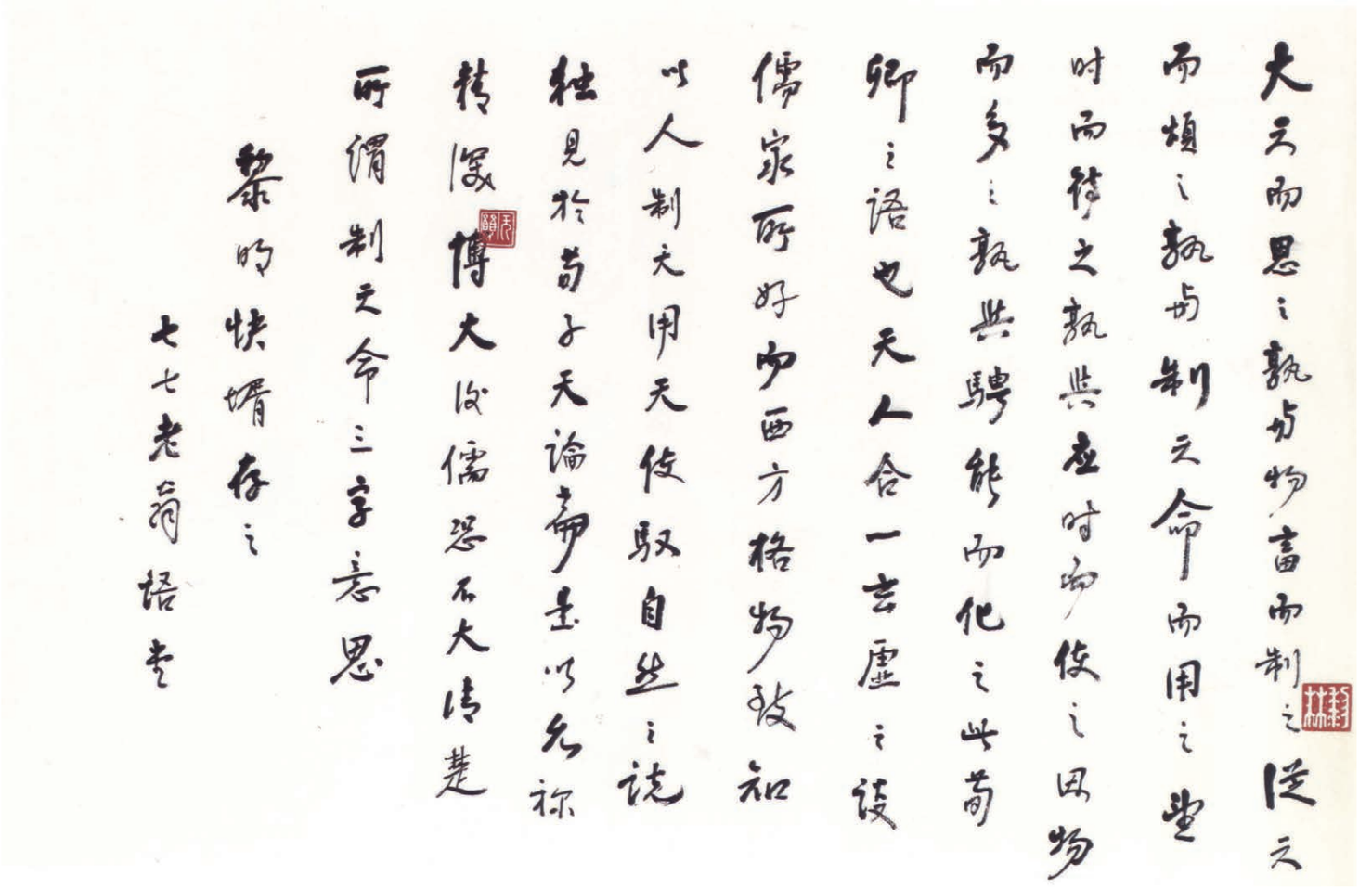
4

林語堂
Lin Yutang (1895–1976)

On Man and Nature
行書荀子天論
Xingshu Xunzi Tian lun

Datable to 1971–72. Album leaf, ink on paper, 14⅝ × 23¾ in. (37.2 × 60.5 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.19)



Lin Yutang wrote this piece of calligraphy for his son-in-law, Li Ming (Richard Lai). It begins with a transcription of a passage from the essay "On Nature" (*Tian lun*) by Xunzi (Xun Qing, 340–245 B.C.), one of the twin pillars of early Confucianism. On two fundamental issues Xunzi was diametrically opposed to the rival branch of Confucians who, following the lead of Mencius (372–289 B.C. or 385–302 B.C.), eventually came to represent the orthodox view. While Mencius believed in the innate goodness of human nature, Xunzi asserted that the nature of man was evil. Furthermore, in his essay "On Nature," Xunzi took pains to refute the theory of the "unity of man and nature" that was first expressed in *The Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhong yong*), one of the earliest and most important Confucian classics, and dominated later Chinese thought.[1]

After the quotation Lin Yutang offers his own comment on Xunzi's idea. He notes that this is the only place in the history of Chinese philosophy where the notion of mankind overcoming nature for its own benefit is so strongly articulated. He also sees in Xunzi's words a parallel to the Western scientific and utilitarian approach to nature. Lin's comments reflect a radical change from the philosophical stance he had held for decades. He used to keep deep faith in the theory of the "unity of man and nature."[2] Now calling it abstruse metaphysics, he implies that it is not useful in real-life situations, and instead champions the Western attitude toward nature as a material resource to be exploited.

It is noteworthy that, after being neglected for sixteen hundred years, Xunzi's theory regained attention in the nineteenth century when Western science and thought poured into China through imperialism. His pragmatism appealed to Chinese intellectuals when orthodox Confucianism seemed to have little to offer an imperiled nation. It is in this vein that we can speculate on Lin Yutang's perplexing change of mindset. Lin wrote this work between October 10, 1971, and October 9, 1972, when he had been living in Taiwan for over five years. On October 25, 1971, after years of struggle, the Republic of China under the Nationalist government in Taiwan lost its membership in the United Nations to the People's Republic of China. Because the Republic of China was a founding member of the U.N. in 1945 and one of the five permanent members of its Security Council, this political defeat devastated the morale of people in Taiwan, especially those who, like Lin Yutang, had been denouncing communism for decades. Perhaps in the depth of depression and insecurity, Lin became skeptical of the relevance of orthodox Confucianism to building national power and prestige in the modern world, and looked to Xunzi for more viable solutions. Whatever the cause, Lin's ideological shift proved short-lived. He reverted to his previous embrace of the unity of man and nature in his final years.

Artist's inscription and signature
(12 columns in running script)

"Instead of regarding Nature as great and admiring it, why not foster it as a thing and regulate it? Instead of obeying Nature and singing its praise, why not control the Mandate of Nature and use it? Instead of watching the seasons and waiting for them, why not respond to them and make use of them? Instead of letting things multiply by themselves, why not exercise your ability to transform [and increase] them?"[3] These are the words of Xun Qing [Xunzi]. Confucians like to discuss the abstruse metaphysics of the unity of nature and mankind. The West, on the other hand, upholds the acquisition of knowledge through the investigation of things and human control and manipulation of nature. The theory of taking command of nature is only found in Xunzi's essay "On Nature." That is why it can be rightly considered profound and broad in scope. Later Confucians may not know clearly what "control the Mandate of Nature" means.

For Li Ming [Richard Lai], my fond son-in-law, to keep. Yutang, an old man at seventy-seven [*sui*]

大天而思之，孰與物畜而制之。從天而頌之，孰與制天命而用之。望時而待之，孰與應時而使之。因物而多之，孰與騁能而化之。此荀卿之語也。天人合一玄虛之談，儒家所好。而西方格物致知，以人制天用天。使馭自然之說，獨見於荀子天論篇，是以允稱精深博大。後儒恐不大清楚所謂制天命三字意思。

黎明快婿存之。七七老翁語堂

Collectors' seals
無雙 *Wushuang* [Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai)]

Notes
1 The date of the book is controversial. Most scholars believe that it was composed before the time of Mencius and Xunzi. See Chan 1963, pp. 96, 97n6.
2 For further evidence of Lin's views on this topic, see Lin Yutang 1947, pp. 284–85, and Lin Yutang 1959, pp. 81, 207.
3 Passage from Xunzi's "Tian lun," translated in Chan 1963, p. 122.

5

童鈺
Tong Yu (1721–1782)

Plum Blossoms in Moonlight
浸月圖
Jin yue tu

Undated. Hanging scroll,
ink on paper, 62 × 19 in.
(157.5 × 48.3 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection,
Gift of Hsiang Ju Lin in memory
of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.510.1)

Since the Song poet Lin Bu (967–1028) first celebrated the blossoming plums of his native Hangzhou (in present-day Zhejiang Province), plum painting has been a specialty of artists from that region.[1] Tong Yu, from nearby Shaoxing, was a late specialist in this genre. Known primarily in northeastern Zhejiang, he is mentioned in at least a dozen publications on the arts dating from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century.

The thrusting limbs of a blossoming plum energize this composition. Typically, neither tree trunk nor ground plane is depicted; instead the artist focuses on the dynamic counterpoint of two sturdy branches that curve in opposite directions. They are drawn in bold strokes of darker ink, while crisply delineated blossoms dot the spiky twigs. The moon and the flowers stand out in uninked plain paper left in reserve against the lightly tinted night sky. Except for the moon, the composition and brushwork of this piece closely resemble those of Tong's plum painting of 1781 in the Guangdong Provincial Museum and may date to the same period.[2]

At a time when his Yangzhou contemporaries such as Jin Nong (1687–1763 or 1764) and Luo Pin (1733–1799) were exploring new ways of representing this familiar subject, Tong Yu followed the tradition of his townsman Wang Mian (1287–1359), whose works continued to define the mainstream development of this genre.[3]

Tong Yu was also an accomplished calligrapher. His inscription on this painting, which combines clerical and cursive scripts—his two specialties—plays on the same aesthetic of juxtaposing contrasting script types found in his "Poem on a Trip to Mount Ping" of 1762 in the Nanjing Museum.[4]

According to Hsiang Ju Lin, her father acquired this painting in the early 1930s when he was living in Shanghai.

Artist's inscription and signature
(2 characters in large clerical script; 2 columns in small cursive script)

Drenched in Moonlight
The ocean of clouds disperses; after the snowfall it begins to clear.
The myriad valleys, in silent chill, remain frozen and muted.
Only the plum trees in the moonlight on Mount Gu [in West Lake, Hangzhou]
Branch out at will, unconcerned with the passage of time.

Ershu [Tong Yu]

浸月
海雲飛散雪初晴,
萬壑寒寂凍不鳴。
惟有孤山梅共月,
不分今古自縱橫。

二樹

Artist's seals
童鈺之印 Tong Yu zhi yin
二樹 *Ershu*
茶癖兼詩癖 梅痴亦畫痴
Chapi jian shipi meichi yi huachi
("Obsessed by tea and poetry, infatuated with plum blossoms and painting")

Notes

1 On the significance of the plum blossom and the history of its representation in Chinese painting, see Maggie Bickford, *Ink Plum: The Making of a Chinese Scholar-Painting Genre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) and *Bones of Jade, Soul of Ice: The Flowering Plum in Chinese Art* (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1985).

2 See *Zhongguo gudai shuhua tumu* (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1986–2000), vol. 13, p. 287, no. Yue 1–0820.

3 For examples of Wang Mian's work and a thoughtful discussion of his style, see Bickford 1985 (note 1 above), pp. 76–82.

4 See *Zhongguo gudai shuhua tumu* (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1986–2000), vol. 7, p. 227, no. Su 24–1015.

6

崔鶴
Cui He (act. 1800–1850)

Portrait of Li Xiangjun
李香君小影
Li Xiangjun xiaoying

Dated 1817. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 35 × 14 in. (89 × 35.5 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Gift of Hsiang Ju Lin in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.510.2)

This scroll portrays Li Xiangjun (fl. mid-17th century), a courtesan celebrated for her loyalty and courage after the fall of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). She famously rebuked powerful politicians for their treachery and risked her life to remain chaste for her true love, Hou Fangyu (1618–1654), one of the "Four Scions" of the late Ming. When a high-ranking official tried to take her by force, Li struck her head against the floor in an attempted suicide.[1] Her blood spattered a fan given to her by Hou, which was later transformed into a painting of peach blossoms. This heroic deed was immortalized in *Peach Blossom Fan* (*Taohua shan*), a well-known play by Kong Shangren (1648–1718). Above the painting is a transcription of Hou Fangyu's biography of Li. Hou emphasized Li's integrity and sagacity in the factional politics of their time, praising her selfless patriotism in total disregard of her beauty or the incident with the fan—the defining elements of her image as a romantic heroine in popular imagination.

In the painting, Li Xiangjun is shown in her boudoir holding a fan painted with peach blossoms. She leans against a circular opening framed by willow boughs and blossoming trees, which may allude to her profession as a courtesan. Her tilted head, sloping shoulders, and downcast eyes all convey a sense of sadness. Despite an elaborate hairdo, she wears little jewelry. The mirror on her table and the garment or comforter draped across a chair indicate that she is not expecting patrons and perhaps no longer has a personal maid since she was forced to live in reduced circumstances after her vow of chastity. An open book on the table tells us that she is not only virtuous but also literate.

Li is framed and highlighted by a circular window—a graphic device most likely adapted from woodblock printed images. This device is also employed in eighteenth-century court paintings of high-born ladies such as the *Twelve Beauties in the Yuanming Yuan* datable to 1709–23.[2] Typically such works make use of the geometry of the setting to intensify their focus on the protagonist. In Cui He's portrait, the rolled-up curtain and the angular forms of the room's furnishings artfully frame the head of the lady. The detailed depiction of objects of daily use in Li's boudoir reflects another aspect of this courtly tradition—a celebration of the material world.

This painting, based on a copy of a now-lost portrait of Li Xiangjun, was done in 1817 by the obscure painter Cui He.[3] Although we know nothing about his life, the work suggests the influence of Gai Qi (1773–1828), a painter known for his depictions of beautiful women. The soft, childlike sweetness of Li Xiangjun's face, with its prominent forehead, short, down-curved eyebrows, and widely spaced eyes and eyebrows, is typical of Gai Qi's ladies. In addition, Gai Qi also employed circular openings as a framing device to highlight the private moments of women in their boudoirs.[4] In depicting the window opening, both painters also indicate the thickness of the wall, a feature first seen in early-eighteenth-century court paintings that may be attributed to Western influence.[5]

Twelve colophons embellish this scroll. The earliest, added in the upper left corner of the painting by Li Erhan [Shiyu Jushi] in 1817, is a transcription of a poem composed for Li Xiangjun by Hou Fangyu. The other eleven colophons completely fill the borders of the mounting. Ten were written between 1916 and 1927 by scholars from northeastern Zhejiang, including the owner of the painting prior to Lin Yutang. The longest of these (no. 3), mounted above the painting, is a transcription of Hou Fangyu's biography of Li Xiangjun by Zhu Linxiang.[6] All of the others transcribe a total of twenty-six poems. But only one couplet mentions the painting itself, which indicates the colophon writers' overwhelming interest in the subject matter rather than the art.[7] The poems are invariably nostalgic, lamenting Li's tragic life and the trauma of dynastic change in the seventeenth century. Lin Yutang added a final colophon of four poems sometime after purchasing the scroll in May 1934. It, in contrast, was pointedly written in response to the political situation of his day.

According to Lin Taiyi, Li Xiangjun was the woman Lin Yutang venerated most. Having acquired this portrait of Li, he carried it wherever he moved.[8] He once commented on the play *Peach Blossom Fan*,

Li Xiangjun was taken into the palace by force. At the time her lover Hou Chaozong [Hou Fangyu] had fled. But she, a fragile woman, could represent the Donglin clique by rebuking such shameless followers of Wei Zhongxian [1568–1627] as Ruan Dacheng [1587–1646]. What terrific rebukes! Although they are Kong Shangren's lyrics, they touch the depths of my heart.[9]

The four poems in his colophon on Li Xiangjun's portrait likewise praise Li's righteous courage, contrasting her with politically unscrupulous men of Lin's own time. Lin Yutang, like Hou Fangyu, admired Li Xiangjun for her insistence on siding with the "correct" political party.

Lin Yutang's colophon also resonates with Hou Fangyu's biography of Li Xiangjun in prioritizing domestic factional conflicts over the threat of a powerful alien enemy. Li lived through the Ming-Qing transition, but instead of the conquering Manchus, her indignation was directed at the corrupt Chinese leaders of the anti-Qing movement in Nanjing in the mid-1640s. Throughout the 1930s China constantly suffered from Japanese aggression. But Lin Yutang's poignant poems are not concerned with Japanese invaders. Instead, they reproach the "peddlers and liars" who switched political affiliations at will. To Lin and Hou, the collapse of solidarity among the Chinese elite, who continued to compete for personal advantage during a crisis that threatened the very existence of the state, was more demoralizing than the atrocities committed by alien intruders.

During the time women actively participated in political movements and gained recognition in the political sphere. Lin Yutang was particularly impressed by Sun Yat-sen's (1866–1925) widow, Song Qingling (1893–1981), whom he designated "the top woman of China" for her advanced education and reformist zeal.[10] It is, therefore, not surprising that his colophon here emphasizes Li Xiangjun's political savvy and integrity.


丁丑九月問琴崔鵬繪

Artist's inscription and signature
(1 column in standard script)

Cui He, Wenqin, painted this in the ninth lunar month of the *dingchou* year [1817].

丁丑九月問琴崔鶴繪

Artist's seals
問琴 *Wenqin*
良辰美景奈何天 *Liangchen meijing naihe tian* ("Lovely moments and beautiful scenery do not last")
Two illegible seals

Colophons
(listed in the approximate order of their composition)

Colophon 1
Li Erhan 李二憨 (Shiyu Jushi 石漁居士, unidentified, early 19th century), 6 columns in running script, dated 1817 (upper left corner of the painting)

Vermilion dwellings line a slanting lane,
Where a scion of nobility first rides in his patrician carriage.
All along the Qing River [in Nanjing] are magnolia trees,
Which cannot compare with the peach and plum blossoms in the east wind.

Having transcribed the biography of Li Xiangjun, I recalled the poem that Hou Xueyuan [Hou Fangyu, 1618–1654] wrote for Li and recorded it with delight to show that the depth of their bond at the time was not fortuitous. In the ninth lunar month in the autumn of the *dingchou* year in the Jiaqing era [1817], Shiyu Jushi [Li Erhan] recorded this in his lodging in Yangcheng [Guangzhou]

夾道朱樓一逕斜,
王孫初御富平車。
青溪盡是辛夷樹,
不及東風桃李花。

余既書李香君傳, 復憶侯雪苑題贈李姬之句, 欣然錄之, 以見當日兩人契合之深非偶然也。嘉慶丁丑九秋石漁居士識於羊城寓處

Seals
二憨 *Erhan*
四明髯丐 *Siming ran'gai*
Two illegible seals

Colophon 2
Yang Xianrui (Yang Jimei) 楊顯瑞 (季眉) (early 20th century),.
4 columns in running script, undated (on the mounting, fourth colophon on the left)

[two quatrains in seven-character meter lamenting Li Xiangjun's tragic life and the past in general]

The lazy woodcutter on the ochre hillside by the river, Jimei [Yang Xianrui] inscribed this in the Huqing Study to the north of Mount Zichan.

白門新柳日初斜,
猶集昭陽舊暮鴉。
團扇歌翻渾不似,
卻將血淚灑桃花。

猶是江南錦繡春,
落花嘯鳥總傷神。
誰將家興亡感,
為借佳人一寫真。

家下落國字
谿上赭麓懶樵季眉氏題於紫蟾山北之壺青閣

Seals
楊顯瑞印 *Yang Xianrui yin*
季眉 *Jimei*

Colophon 3
Zhu Linxiang 竺麐祥 (*jinshi* degree, 1904), 25 columns in standard script, dated 1916 (on the mounting above the painting)

Biography of Courtesan Li

This copy of Li Xiangjun's portrait was acquired by my townsman, Mr. Li Erhan, from a Mr. Chen in Guangdong, and later went to . . . Mr. Yang. On top of it there used to be Erhan's transcription of the "Biography of Courtesan Li," which was eaten away by mice, so I wrote it for Mr. [Ji]mei as a replacement. In the first lunar month of autumn of the *bingchen* year [1916] Zhu Linxiang from Renhu [in Zhejiang] recorded

李姬傳
李姬者, 名香, 母曰貞麗。貞麗有俠氣, 嘗一夜博, 輸千金立盡。所交接者皆當世豪傑, 尤與陽羨陳貞慧善也。姬為其養女, 亦俠而慧, 略知書, 能辨別 [士] 大夫賢否。張學士溥、夏吏部允彝急稱之。少風調皎爽不群。十三歲, 從吳人周如松受歌, 玉茗堂四傳奇皆能盡其音節; 尤工《琵琶詞》, 然不輕發也。雪苑侯生, 己卯來金陵與相識。姬嘗邀侯為生為詩, 而自歌以償之。初, 皖人阮大鋮者, 以阿附魏忠賢論城旦, 屏居金陵, 為清議所斥。陽羨陳貞慧、貴池吳應箕 [實] 首其事, 持之力。大鋮不得已, 欲侯生為解之。乃假所善王將軍, 日載酒食與侯生游。姬曰: "王將軍貧, 非結客者, 公子盍叩之?" 侯生三問, 將 [軍] 乃屏人述大鋮意。姬私語侯生曰: "妾少從假母識陽羨君, [其] 人有高義, 聞吳君尤錚錚, 今皆與公子 [善], 奈何以阮公負至交乎! 且以公子之世望, 安事 [阮] 公? 公子讀萬卷 [書], 所見豈後於

Detail of plate 6: Cui He, *Portrait of Li Xiangjun.*

賤妾耶?" 侯生大呼 [稱] 善, 醉而卧, 王將軍者殊怏怏, 因辭生, 不復通。未幾, 侯生不第。姬置酒桃葉渡, 歌《琵琶詞》以送 [之, 曰]: "公子才名文藻, 雅不減中郎。中郎學不補行, 今《琵琶》所 [傳詞] 固妄, 然 [嘗] 昵董卓, 不可掩也。公子豪邁不羈, 又失意, 此去 [相見] 未可期, 願終自愛, 無忘妾所歌《琵琶詞》也! 妾亦不復歌矣。" [侯生] 去後, 而故開府田仰者, 以金三百鍰邀姬一见。姬固却之。開府 [慚] 且怒, 且有以中傷姬。姬歎曰: "田公寧异于阮公乎? 吾向之所贊於侯公子者謂何? 今乃利其金而赴之, 是妾買公子 [矣]!" 卒不往。

□□樓小影臨本, 吾甬李二憨先生得之粵中陳氏, 嗣歸□□楊氏。幀首舊有二憨所書李姬傳, 為鼠所飽, 爰為□眉先生補書之。丙辰孟秋仁湖竺麐祥識

Seal
竺麐祥 *Zhu Linxiang*

Colophon 4
Gao Zhenxiao 高振霄 (1877–1956, *jinshi* 1904), 3 columns in standard script, dated 1916 (on the mounting, second colophon on the right)

[a quatrain in seven-character meter linking Li Xiangjun to the fate of the state]

In the seventh lunar month, the autumn of the *bingchen* year [1916] Gao Zhenxiao inscribed

國步陵遲喚奈何,
美人猶自蹙雙蛾。
秦淮點點桃花淚,
孰與南都逝水多。

丙辰秋七月高振霄題

Seal
絳雲在靈 (?) *Jiangyun zailing*

Colophon 5
Chen Kangrui 陳康瑞 (*jinshi* 1890), 4 columns in standard script, dated 1917 (on the mounting, second colophon on the left)

[two seven-character-line quatrains lamenting Li Xiangjun's tragic life and the past in general]

On an autumn day in the *dingsi* year [1917] Jiechao Laoren [Chen Kangrui] inscribed

渡口桃花依舊紅,
繁華事散綺羅空。
惟餘家國興亡感,
併入佳人血淚中。

六朝金粉付東流,
玉樹歌殘恨未休。
知否秦淮樓上月,
十分圓滿照中州。

丁巳秋日睫巢老人題

Seals
睫巢 *Jiechao*
雪樵 *Xueqiao*
陳康瑞印 *Chen Kangrui yin*

Colophon 6
He Qimei 何其枚 (b. 1856), 4 columns in running script, dated 1917 (on the mounting, third colophon on the left)

[a seven-character-line quatrain comparing Li Xiangjun with Ban Jieyu (ca. 48–ca. 2 B.C.), a virtuous and literate imperial concubine, and Liu Rushi (1618–1664), another famous courtesan during the Ming-Qing transition]

Ten days before Mid-autumn Festival in the *dingsi* year [September 20, 1917], He Qimei, Juanweng, from Cixi [in Zhejiang] inscribed at the age of sixty-two

深坐顰眉為底愁,
婕妤團扇共悲秋。
柳夫人卻為誰死,
應與桃花淚並流。

丁巳中秋前十日慈谿何其枚倦翁題, 時年六十有二

Seals
Illegible
何氏四子 *He shi sizi*

Colophon 7
Hu Bingzao 胡炳藻 (1862–1942), 4 columns in standard script, dated 1917 (on the mounting, third colophon on the right)

[a seven-character-line poem reminiscing on Li Xiangjun]

In the eighth lunar month in the autumn of the *dingsi* year [1917], Zhiweng, Hu Bingzao inscribed

秦淮煙月數從頭,
舞館歌臺今在不。
流水聲中尋舊夢,
桃花隱約媚香樓。

丁巳秋八月蟄翁胡炳藻題

Seals
胡炳藻印 *Hu Bingzao yin*
橋南蟄翁 *Qiaonan Zhiweng*

Colophon 8
Hong Yunxiang 洪允祥 (1874–1933), 5 columns in running script, dated 1917 (on the mounting, top left)

[four seven-character-line quatrains reminiscing on Li Xiangjun and lamenting the fate of the state with multiple topical references]

Three days before the Double Ninth Day in the *dingsi* year [1917], Hong Yunxiang

南去雙棲柳如是,
北來一品顧橫波。
清流誤殺侯公子,
扇底桃花奈尒何。

江南華落入蕭晨,
一去金陵跋已陳。
壯悔堂前人好在,
也應千遍喚真真。

綺夢匆匆二百年,
秦淮恨水晚濺濺。
媚香樓底多? 俠,
肯唱烏闌燕子箋。

南朝影事夢模胡,
冉冉香魂一縷孤。
等是詩人腸斷處,
袖中攜得孝陵圖。

丁巳重陽前三日洪允祥

Seal
允祥 *Yunxiang*

Colophon 9
Feng Kai 馮开 (1874–1931), 5 columns in running script, dated 1917 (on the mounting, fourth colophon on the right)

[two seven-character-line quatrains on Li Xiangjun]

Mr. Yang Jimei [Yang Xianrui] asked me to inscribe the portrait of Li Xiangjun painted by Cui Wenqin [Cui He], which has long been in his collection. I responded with two quatrains. On the Double Ninth Day in the *dingsi* year [1917], Feng Kai

仿佛琵琶罷唱時,
媚香樓外柳如絲。
巷中人面渾依舊,
不道崔郎是畫師。

黔陽詞客已黃沙,
畫扇飄零付夢華。
認得君家舊明月,
分明月底有桃花。

楊君季眉以舊藏崔問琴所畫李香君小影屬題, 贈二絕以應。丁巳重陽日, 馮开

Seal
君木 *Junmu*

Colophon 10
Fan Gengzhi 范廣洽 (early 20th century), 6 columns in running-standard script, dated 1927 (on the mounting, top right)

[four seven-character-line quatrains celebrating the integrity of virtuous courtesans, who were superior to the men to whom they were attached]

Mr. Yang Jimei [Yang Xianrui] asked me to inscribe the portrait of Li Xiangjun that has long been in his collection. In the tenth month of the *dingmao* year [1927], Wenhu, Fan Gengzhi drafted

有女能為悅己容,
莫將飄泊怨東風。
桃花扇底興亡恨,
併入南朝落照中。

奄見解裘媚名流,
名節終為士類羞。
莫道青樓無特識,
人禽分在此關頭。

秦淮金粉久飄零,
顧柳同時負盛名。
擇木良禽非易事,
錢龔屈膝拜新廷。

妙絕丹青筆一枝,
媚香樓上寫瑤姿。
眉間含有滄桑感,
三百年來再見之。

楊君季眉以舊藏李香君小影屬題。丁卯十月文虎(?)范廣洽初稿(?)

Seal
文父 *Wenfu*

Colophon 11
Lucun 菉村 (early 20th century), 6 columns in running script, dated winter, the *dingmao* year [1927] (on the mounting, bottom right)

[four seven-character-line quatrains comparing Li Xiangjun with Chen Yuanyuan (1624–1681), another famous courtesan of the Ming-Qing transition era, and lamenting her tragic fate]

In the winter of the *dingmao* year [1927], the Recluse of the Qi Garden, Lucun, inscribed the portrait of Li Xiangjun, which has long been in Mr. Yang Jimei's [Yang Xianrui] collection, with four quatrains

箇兒姿藝譟江頭,
藉甚花叢第一流。
別有傷心成孤墳,
殘山賸水總含秋。

太息衣冠似沐猴,
欲將香餌借青樓。
燕磯新譜難邀賞,
不及桃花扇底愁。

並世圓圓珠暗投,
未忘故主蓄陰謀。
飄零身世都泯跡,
肯抱孤芳溷濁流。

煙花伴侶擬鸞儔,
驀地風波起黨鉤。
縱有丹青傳阿堵,
難將恨緒訴千秋。

丁卯冬淇園小隱菉村君季眉舊藏李香君小

Seal
菉村 *Lucun*

Colophon 12
Lin Yutang 林語堂 (1895–1976), 24 columns in running script, undated [after May 1934] (on the mounting below the painting)

Xiangjun was a woman,
Whose blood dyed a fan with peach blossoms.
Her righteous courage shines through history,
Subjecting men to shame.

Xiangjun was a woman,
Whose personality was that of an untamed spirit.
Hung on the wall of my study,
[Her portrait] shows me what accomplishments a person is capable of.

Nowadays among the men of the world,
Who still remains untamed?
Everyone changes his allegiance between sunrise and sunset.
What kind of attitude is this?

In our present world,
There are only peddlers and liars.
I miss the ancient beauty,
Who would not stir chaos among us.

In May, the twenty-third year of the Republic [1934], I purchased this portrait from Yang Jimei [Yang Xianrui] through a friend. When I hung it in my Selective Disengagement Studio, the whole room [brightened up], its former air of callow inanity gone forever. I felt intoxicated all day long. I had been trying to acquire this painting for a long time. To own it now is the greatest joy of my life. Lin Yutang

香君一個娘子,
血染桃花扇子。
氣義照耀千古,
羞殺須眉男子。

香君一個娘子,
性格是個蠻子。
懸在齋中壁上,
教我知所觀止。

如今天下男子,
誰復是個蠻子。
大家朝秦暮楚,
成個什麼樣子。

當今這個天下,
都是販子騙子。
我思古代美人,
不至出甚亂子。

民國廿三年五月托友由楊季眉處購得是像, 懸之有不為齋, 全室珠光寶氣, 不復有童騃氣, 終日痴昏。吾求此畫甚久, 今得之一生第一快事也。林語堂

Seal
林語堂印 *Lin Yutang yin*

Notes

1 There are different accounts of her attempted suicide. She is also said to have smashed her head against a wall or jumped off the balcony of her chamber.
2 See Tian Jiaqing 1993, p. 32.
3 For a summary history of the creation of this scroll, see colophon no. 3.
4 See, for instance, Gai Qi's undated *Xiaochuang diandai tu*, in He Yanzhe 1998, pls. 12–14.
5 Cahill 1996, p. 59.
6 Zhu also notes that Li's biography was originally transcribed by Li Erhan in 1817 right before he inscribed the painting. It was badly damaged by mice in subsequent years. In 1916 Zhu Linxiang made the current transcription as a replacement at the request of Yang Xianrui, the owner of the painting at the time.
7 The one exception is written by Fan Gengzhi. See the fourth poem in colophon no. 10.
8 Lin Taiyi 1990, pp. 218–19.
9 Ibid., p. 218.
10 See Lin Yutang 1936b (*Yi jing* 19), p. 23.

7

徐悲鴻
Xu Beihong (1895–1953)

Seventeen Letters
十七帖
Shiqi tie

Datable to 1938–48. Handscroll, ink on paper, 12¾ × 365⅜ in. (32.3 × 928 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.12)

This extraordinary handscroll, more than thirty feet in length, consists of seventeen letters written by Xu Beihong between 1938 and 1948.[1] The first fifteen were written to Lin Yutang, and the last two to Lin's daughter Taiyi. The letters vary greatly in length. The longest contains more than six hundred characters; the shortest has fewer than a hundred. They remained separate sheets until the 1980s, when Lin Taiyi had them remounted chronologically as a handscroll and invited the eminent calligrapher Chin Hsiao-yi (Qin Xiaoyi), former director of the National Palace Museum, Taipei, to compose a frontispiece. Because few of Xu Beihong's letters survive, this group preserves an extraordinary record of his handwriting over a ten-year period. His calligraphy exhibits a distinct style that is angular and tense with no concern for charm. Despite occasional additions of notes between lines, the integrity of the column is well maintained throughout each letter, no matter how long or dense it is. The overall evenness of the writing reflects Xu's rigorous self-discipline, an attribute often commented on by his biographers.

More significantly, these letters are precious primary documents concerning early attempts at cultural exchange between China and the United States. Written by one of the most important Chinese artists of the twentieth century to one of the era's best-known authors, the letters reveal not only the evolving relationship between these two cultural personages, but also their patriotic endeavors to organize a touring exhibition of contemporary Chinese art in America to gain support for China in its fight against the Japanese during World War II.

Xu Beihong became a leading figure in the Chinese art world immediately after his return from Europe in September 1927. Before the start of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, he spent most of his time teaching at the Central University in Nanjing. Between 1933 and 1934, however, he accompanied a number of contemporary Chinese artworks to major museums in Europe as part of a touring exhibition that he organized. During this same period Lin Yutang established himself as a prominent writer and scholar in Shanghai. Both men were deeply concerned with the future of Chinese culture and were actively involved in shaping its course, but they were not well acquainted. It was a chaotic time, when conflicts between Nationalists and Communists escalated and the political stances of the educated elite were by no means clear-cut. Most intellectuals, including Lin Yutang and Xu Beihong had friends in both camps. Xu became increasingly sympathetic to the Communist viewpoint, particularly after the Nationalists' policy of nonresistance led to the loss of Manchuria to Japan in 1931. Lin, on the other hand, had a traumatic experience with the Communists through the "Civic Liberty Union of China" (1932–33), and his writings were repeatedly attacked by leftists in the mid-1930s.[2] The sociopolitical disturbances contributed significantly to Lin's decision to move to New York in August 1936.

Xu Beihong's first letter to Lin Yutang is dated September 15, [1938], a year after the start of the Sino-Japanese War. Xu notes that they had met but that Lin was not familiar with his work.[3] Xu had amassed some six hundred artworks by contemporary Chinese

artists and was about to hold exhibitions in Hong Kong, Singapore, India, and Malaysia to raise relief funds for the war. He wrote to Lin Yutang inquiring about the possibility of holding exhibitions in the United States for the same purpose. He flaunted his credentials by relating the successful exhibitions that he had held in Europe and Russia and his imminent trip to India at the invitation of the Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941).

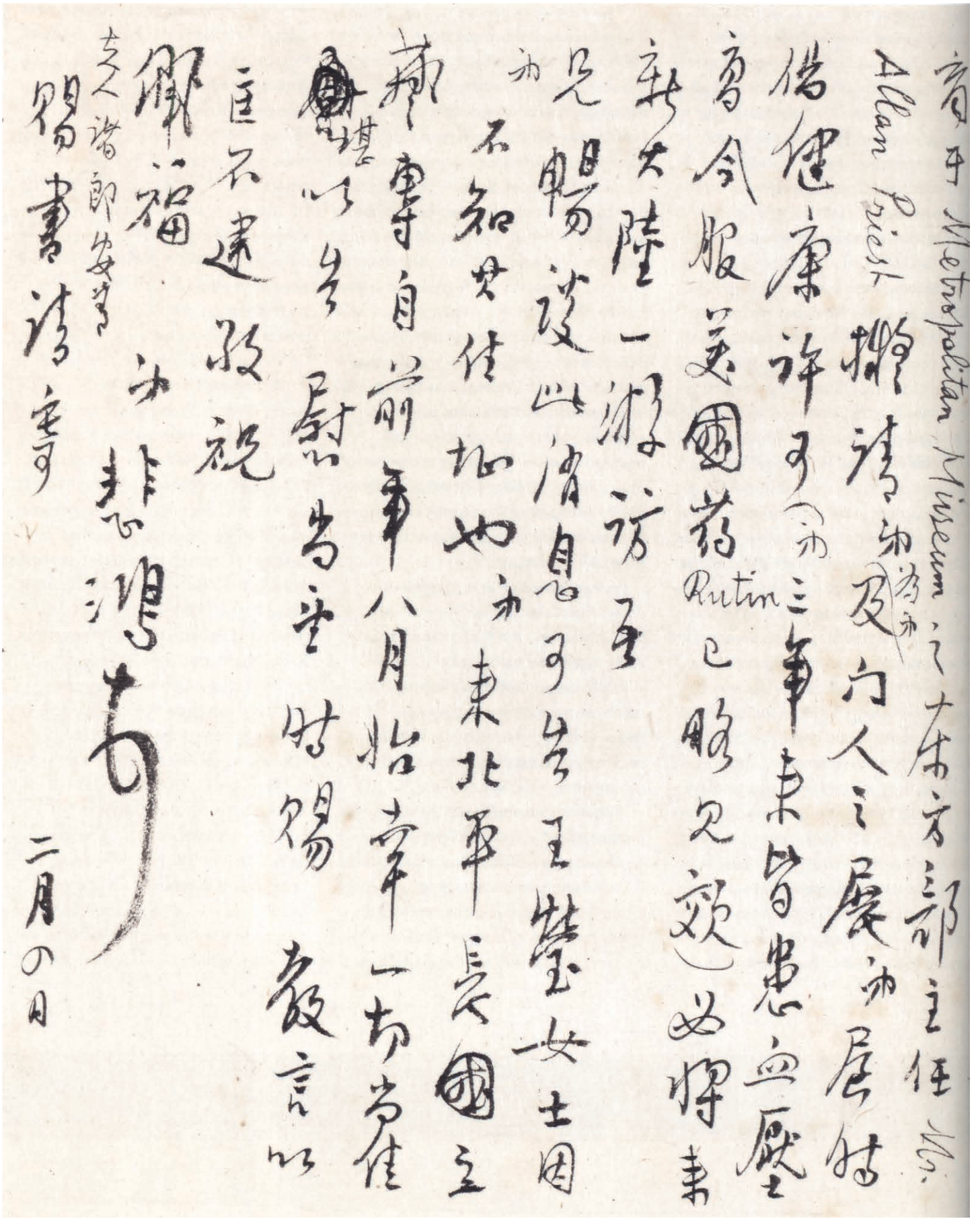
Xu Beihong may have come up with this ambitious plan with Lin Yutang in mind. In 1938 Lin's international reputation was firmly established. His new book, *The Importance of Living*, had been chosen by the Book-of-the-Month Club for December 1937 and remained number one on the best-seller list of *The New York Times* for fifty-two weeks. More importantly, Lin was an outspoken critic of Japanese militarism. His article, "Can China Stop Japan in Her Asiatic March?," published in the August 29, 1937, issue of *The New York Times Magazine* and enthusiastically lauded by Xu at the beginning of his first letter to Lin, exerted a significant impact on international views of the Sino-Japanese War.[4] By 1938 Lin's influence and connections had made him China's unofficial cultural ambassador. Without his help, Xu's plan would have had little chance of success.

Xu Beihong's second letter was written two and a half years later, on March 14, 1941. During the intervening period he had finished a one-year sojourn in India and had exhibited works in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, and Ipoh (in present-day Malaysia) to raise war-relief funds. His last exhibition before returning to China was scheduled for that spring in Penang. He told Lin Yutang of the impressive funds he had raised and the five hundred artworks he still had in hand, and asked about the viability of holding exhibitions in America shortly after the Penang show. Lin's response must have been positive, for in the next nine letters Xu chronicles his preparations for a trip to the U.S. and requests Lin's assistance in the arrangements for an official invitation, two entry visas, exhibition publicity, and help with clearing customs (Letters 3–11). Unlike his former experiences in Europe and South Asia, Xu had never been to America and did not speak English, which worried him greatly.[5] Thanks to his herculean efforts, which he notes had consumed seven and a half kilograms (15 pounds) of his body weight, plans were finalized for him to leave Singapore for San Francisco on December 6, 1941.[6] Unfortunately, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor the next day caused the entire project to be aborted.

Xu's second letter also suggested that Lin Yutang involve his close friends Pearl Buck (1892–1973) and her husband Richard Walsh in planning the proposed exhibitions in America. It was apparently through Lin's connection that Walsh's magazine, *Asia*, introduced Xu to American audiences by publishing several of his paintings in its July 1941 issue, as mentioned in Xu's Letters 4 and 9.

Two more letters (12 and 13) were written in 1942. In the one dated November 5 Xu Beihong states that he had arranged for five of his works to be brought to Lin Yutang through *Asia* magazine and that he hoped to visit the United States after the war. In 1943 an exhibition of contemporary Chinese art organized by Alan Priest, curator of Far Eastern Art, was held at the Metropolitan Museum from January 15 to March 14. Although the Museum had organized a special exhibition of Chinese painting from its own collection as early as 1914,[7] all forty-three works in the 1943 show came from private New York City collectors, including Lin Yutang. Lin wrote an introduction to the exhibition catalogue and lent three paintings and one calligraphy by Xu Beihong, which were among the five works that Xu had presented to Lin and his daughter Taiyi the previous year.[8] All four are now part of the Lin Yutang Family Collection (cat. nos. 8–11).

Xu Beihong's last two letters to Lin Yutang (14 and 15) and his second letter to Lin Taiyi (17) reflect a distinct cooling in the relationship. Xu's rather brief letter of November 16, 1947, indicates that they had last met in Chongqing (in Sichuan Province) more than four years earlier and had since been out of contact. Xu resumed correspondence at this time simply because his friend Wang Yachen (1894–1983), a well-known painter and art educator, was bringing 105 artworks, including eight by Xu Beihong, to America for a Chinese government–sponsored exhibition of contemporary Chinese painting at the Metropolitan Museum, which took place from October 8 to November 21, 1948. He hoped that Lin Yutang could offer Wang support. In Xu Beihong's last letter to Lin (15), written on February 4, 1948, he once more solicited Lin's help to promote the upcoming exhibition, and he also revealed that he was planning to visit America that winter to meet with Alan Priest to discuss an exhibition of



Detail of plate 7: Xu Beihong,
Seventeen Letters (Letter 15).

his works and those of his students at the Metropolitan Museum. He may have been inspired by an exhibition organized by Priest of the works of Gao Qifeng (Kao Weng, 1889–1933) and his disciple Zhang Kunyi (Chang K'un-i, 1895–1969) that took place at the Metropolitan in 1944.[9] In light of Xu Beihong's earlier correspondence with Lin Yutang to organize a touring exhibition in America in 1941, it is noteworthy that Xu did not seek to involve Lin in this plan. He wrote to Lin only after his friend Xie Shoukang (1897–1973) had made the initial contact with Alan Priest.[10] Nor did he ask Lin to put in a word on his behalf, even though Lin must have been well acquainted with Priest since Priest had invited him to write forewords to both the 1943 and 1948 exhibition catalogues.

A few months later, on October 22, 1948, Xu Beihong wrote to Lin Taiyi (Letter 17), urging her to remind her father of a favor that Xu had requested only a week before (this letter is not among those preserved here).[11] Xu's impatience for Lin Yutang's response and his appeal to Lin Taiyi to mediate betrays his doubts about Lin's willingness to help.

Lin Yutang and Xu Beihong, different in their political stance from early on, were brought together by the common cause of the war. When that cause no longer existed, they inevitably grew apart. Lin's conflict with the Communists escalated through the 1940s, while Xu grew ever closer to them. Their former familiarity turned into strained politeness. In the end Xu Beihong did not travel to America and the exhibition he mentioned in his last letter to Lin never took place. As head of the highest art institution in Communist China after 1949, he would not have been allowed to hold a high-profile exhibition in the United States, which supported Chiang Kai-shek's regime in Taiwan. Furthermore, with diplomatic ties severed, it was impossible to organize an exhibition as Xu Beihong had conceived it. The political turmoil in China during the first half of the twentieth century facilitated Xu's rise as an artist and educator, but he also fell victim to its consequences.

Notes

1 Letter 5 does not have the name of the addressee or Xu's signature. It seems to be a postscript to a letter that no longer exists. The suggested date of each letter, which appears in brackets with a transcription, comes from a comparison of the letters' content with the published chronologies for Xu and Lin.

2 Qin Xianci 1986–87 (*Wen Xun* 26), pp. 204–6, 208, (*Wen Xun* 27), pp. 212–13. For a detailed study of this organization, see Zhang Yaojie 2003.

3 Lin Yutang was at the time living in Paris. The Lin family moved to France in February 1938 and returned to New York in October out of concern over the impending war in Europe.

4 Lin Yutang's article was translated into Chinese and published in *Xifeng* 13 (November 1, 1937).

5 Xu arranged to have Dr. Zheng Zhenwen, a mineralogist who spoke English, to accompany him to America, but still asked Lin Yutang for local help in communication.

6 See Xu's last letter to Lin in 1941, dated November 17 (Letter 11).

7 See the exhibition catalogue by John C. Ferguson entitled *Special Exhibition of Chinese Paintings from the Collection of the Museum* (New York, 1914).

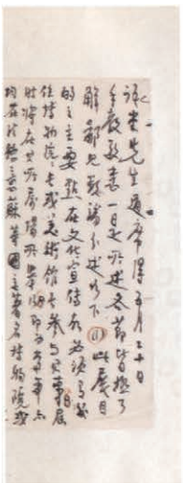
8 The 1943 exhibition later traveled to the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, but Lin Yutang withdrew his four loans.

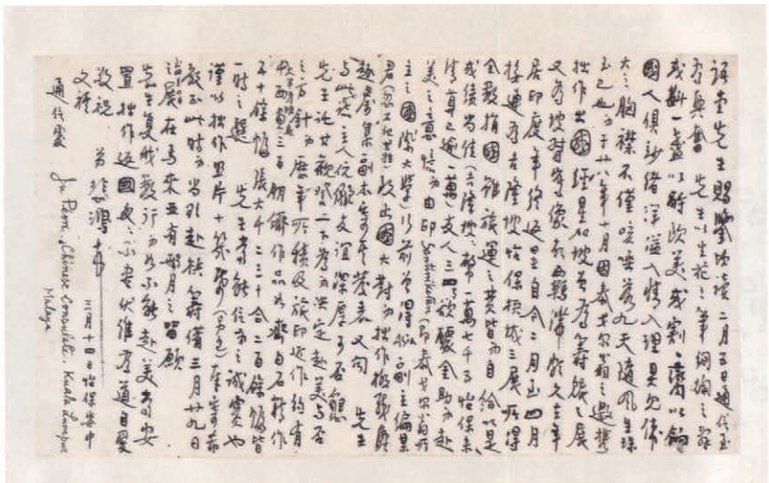
9 The exhibition, held from March 21 to April 23, included about sixty works, most of which were brought to America by Zhang Kunyi in 1939 during the Sino-Japanese War.

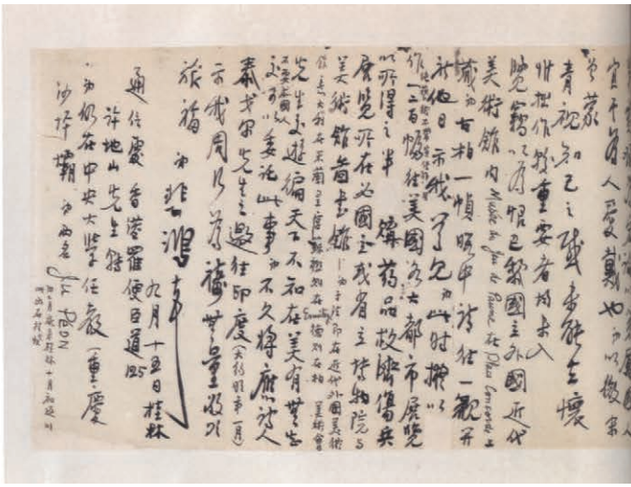
10 Xie Shoukang was a prominent figure in education and politics. He taught at the Central University in Nanjing around the same time as Xu in the late 1920s. He later served as Chinese ambassador to the Vatican from 1943 to 1946 and again from 1954 to 1966.

11 Lin Yutang and his wife moved to France in the summer of 1948. Lin Taiyi joined them later that year.

Letter 2







Frontispiece
Chin Hsiao-yi (1921–2007),
秦孝儀 (字:心波), 14 columns
in standard script (1987)

雪泥[12]
手卷為徐悲鴻先生與林語堂先生手扎之綴集。蓋徐先生於對日戰爭之頃, 望以其自作畫運美展出, 以所得強半購美藥物救濟戰時傷患官兵, 因懇林先生在美為之經營呼應。扎中苦心細節尚概可想見二先生憂國憫人之純忱。今二先生往矣, 雖手墨如新, 顧鴻飛渺然。因為篆雪泥於端, 用寄感慕云尒。

丁卯新秋之朔秦孝儀心波

Writer's seals
夏璋商璧周圭漢琮與世同賞
Xia zhang Shang bi Zhou gui Han cong yu shi tongshang
秦孝儀 *Chin Hsiao-yi*
心波 *Xinbo*

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Letter 1
September 15 [1938]

語堂先生賜鑒。上月得大文日本必敗論 (各地大報皆轉載), 其力量超越最精銳之機械化十師, 前方士氣為之震, 後方信念用益堅。若弟之懽忭鼓舞者盡人而然。深慶先生對外能以大著多種昭示世界, 既已不踶而走, 危時又根據事實發為宏論以策勵國人, 宜其為人愛戴也。弟以微末曾蒙青視, 知己之感未能去懷。惟拙作較重要者均未入覽, 竊以為恨。巴黎國立外國近代美術館內 Musée du Jeu de Paume 在 Place Concorde 上藏弟古柏一幀, 暇中請往一觀, 并祈他日示我尊見。弟此時擬以□作一二百幅一純藝術不帶宣傳作用一往美國各大都市展覽, 以所得之半□購藥品救濟傷兵。展覽所在必國立或省立博物院與美術館圖書館一弟于法即在近代外國美術館, 意大利在米蘭皇宮, 蘇聯則在 Ermitage [*sic*], 德則在柏□美術會一先生交遊徧天下, 不知在美有無知交一不要本國人一可以委託此事。弟不久將應詩人泰戈爾先生之邀往印度 (大約明年一月)。示我周行, 為禱無量, 敬頌旅福

弟悲鴻頓　九月十五日桂林

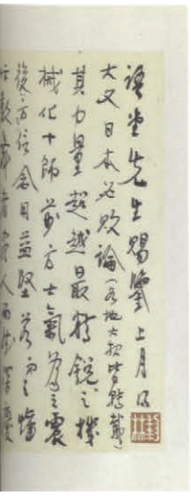
通訊處香港羅便臣道 125 許地山先生轉
弟仍在中央大學任教 (重慶沙坪壩 弟兩名 Ju Péon
弟七月底來桂林, 十月初返川, 此函在桂發

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

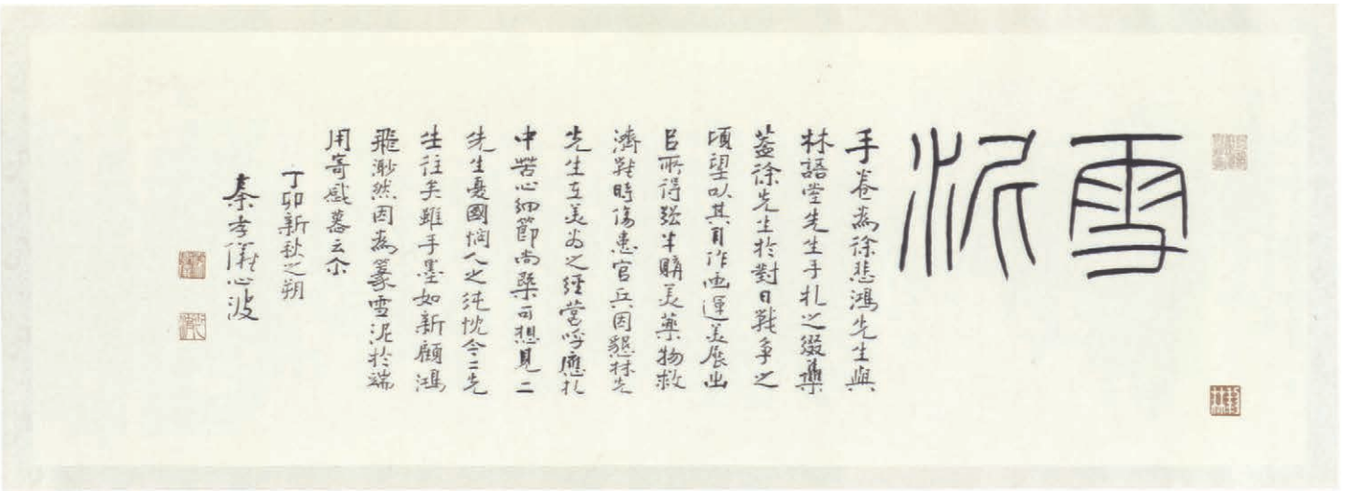
Letter 2
March 14 [1941]

語堂先生賜鑒。頃讀二月五日通信, 至為興奮。先生以生花之筆絢爛之辭, 或斟一盞以酹歐美, 或割一臠以餉國人, 俱紓緒洋溢入情入理, 具見偉大之胸襟, 不僅咳唾落九天隨風生珠玉已也。弟于廿八年十月因泰戈爾翁之邀, 攜拙作出國, 經星加坡曾為籌賑之展, 又為坡督寫像, 故羈滯頗久。去年居印度, 年終返星。自今二月至四月接連為吉隆坡怡保檳城三展, 所得全數捐國, 雖旅運之費皆弟自給, 以是成績尚佳 (吉隆坡坡幣一萬七千五, 怡保未清算, 已逾一萬)。友人三四有欲醵金助弟赴美之意。憶弟由印 Santiniketan (即泰戈爾翁所主之國際大學), 行前曾得 Asia 副主編某君 (忽不記其姓) 致函國大, 對弟拙作極感興趣, 屬集副本寄其發表。又聞先生與此誌主人伉儷友誼深厚, 可否請先生託其觀察一下, 為弟決定赴美與否之方針。弟歷年所積及旅印近作約有中西畫三

Letter 1



Frontispiece



百分—大半為班底—朋儕作品為齊白石精作五十餘幅，張大千二三十，合二百餘幅，皆一時之選。先生當能信弟之誠實也。謹以拙作照片十幾紙（另包）奉寄希教正。此時弟尚欲赴檳籌備三月廿九日至四月十一日之展，在馬來亞有兩月之留，願先生復我數行。弟如不能赴美，當安置拙作返國。匆匆不盡，伏維為道自愛，敬祝文祺

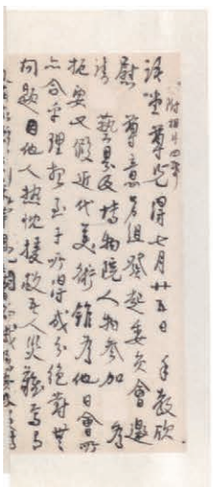
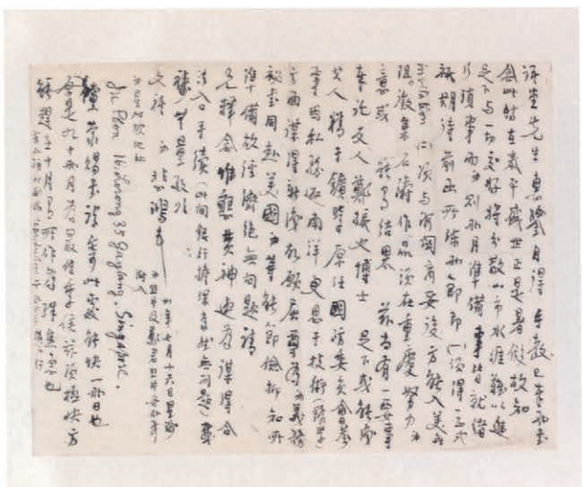
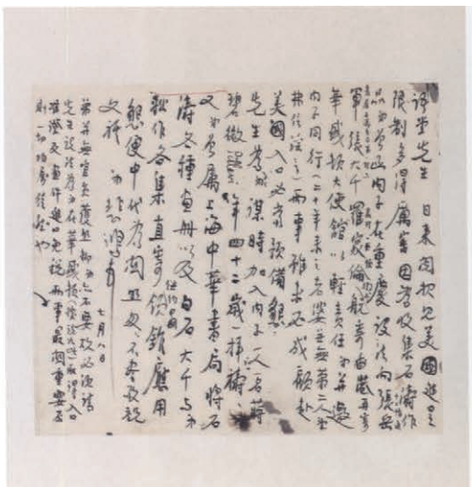
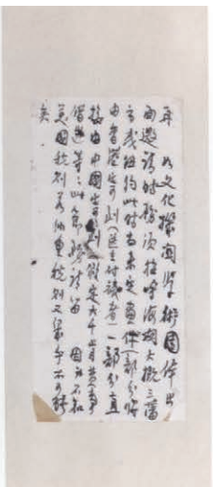
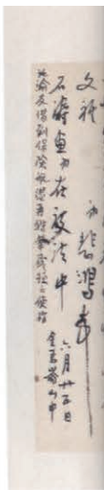
弟悲鴻頓　三月十四日怡保客中

通信處 Ju Péon. Chinese Consulate. Kuala Lumpur, Malaya

Note

12 This title, *Snowy Field*, as Chin Hsiao-yi explains, was inspired by Xu's first name, "Beihong," which means "sad wild goose." It alludes to Su Shi's famous poem to his brother, "Reminiscence of Minchi in the Rhyme of Ziyou's Poem" (He Ziyou Minchi huaijiu), in which Su likens man's vagrant and transient existence to "geese tracks in a snowy field" (xue ni hong zhao 雪泥鴻爪).

Letter 7 Letter 6 Letter 5

Letter 3
May 14 [1941]

語堂先生道席。得五月二十日手教敬悉一是，所述各節皆極了解，鄙見數端分述如下。(1) 此展目的之主要點在文化宣傳，故必須有幾位博物院院長或美術館長參與其事，屆時將在其所屬場所舉行。即弟當年亦均在法德意蘇等國立著名博物院或王宮內舉行也。(2) 弟個人川資等用費殆無問題，惟須與當地政府商准外匯，或者可以辦到。(3) 弟必須有一堂皇之團體邀請，則此間出口美國入口皆可省麻煩。此節弟個人認為重要。(4) 弟法文能說能看，英文方在初學，僅能免強看報，并不能說，是件困難事。弟如成行，必告行程等等，要人接船，非為場面 (弟不愛這一套)，實在必需，因弟所攜之物必有二十大箱。弟當年曾收集些六朝及唐代俑及陶器，皆攜出。既遠行，亦不便寄存此間。(4) 賣品所入當然大部捐出。抑弟個人所願貢獻于國家者當不止此。(5) 白石精品弟有大小六十餘幅，弟尚得其自敘頗有趣，彼與弟之通信亦五六十封。惟石濤則成問題，弟當函告大千，但不能必也。因□戰時交通既不便，而此類品物早已置□安全所在，移動為難，此事弟極贊成。惟石濤最大傑作藏羅家倫及張群處，弟亦將設法。承足下允與助力，不勝感荷。因足下不惟世界文壇權威，抑在弟個人心目中以為識洋文之中國人中，從未有認識藝術如足下者。至於不識洋文之中國人之了解藝術或亦有直覺當于雅趣之人，實亦甚少真知，是以弟之必有賴於先生者也。援華聯合會電已收得，函尚未到，想大約如先生所示，請即以弟意告之。弟擬在十月前到美，懇先生詳為計劃。感盼不盡，敬祝文祺

弟悲鴻頓　　五月十四日檳城

通信處 Ju Péon c/o Chinese Consulate. Kuala Lumpur, Malaya.

再者張書旂兄在弟與先生接洽畫展之後，由政府派赴美國，彼長于花鳥。中國藝壇狀況先生知之。惟恐先生友人中詢及此事，則頗微妙，不可令有衝突。弟甘緩于行動也，但赴美則不能緩，懼行不得也。

弟悲鴻又及

Letter 4
June 25 [1941]

語堂先生賜鑒。日前曾奉一書，度已入覽。弟擬請准出口後，將畫件先運美，俾得較大之自由，因無已可乘飛機也。弟此時思乘八月二十日由港開美之舟，目下在戰爭之際，離此赴美有許多手續須辦，即美領簽字，亦須美方有證件方可也，統祈為力。弟必俟賜

書後乃作最後決定。弟所期待者兩事 (1) 必須有 invitation。(2) 須謀得入口海關之便利。二缺一不可。至於個人費用，弟已有相當準備。弟向持樸素生活，且所志在籌賑，國難又嚴重如此，既非外交人員，不辱國即可。弟所攜物，大概畫件十箱，古物三箱，衣服兩箱，印一箱，書籍兩箱，用具 (文房顏色等等) 兩箱，不過二十箱。尚有一點請明示者，即弟既來美，決不止一處展覽。自西徂東，抑自東徂西，因物多亦須做一經濟打算也。七月分 Asia 雜誌請託該誌以十冊寄吉隆坡領館，并為弟留十冊。實費精神。惶愧。敬祝文祺

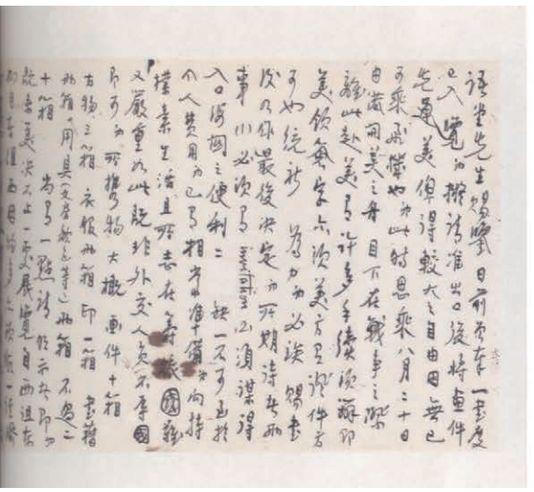
弟悲鴻頓，六月廿五日金馬崙山中

石濤畫弟在設法中，託渝友借到保險航港，再轉華盛頓大使館。

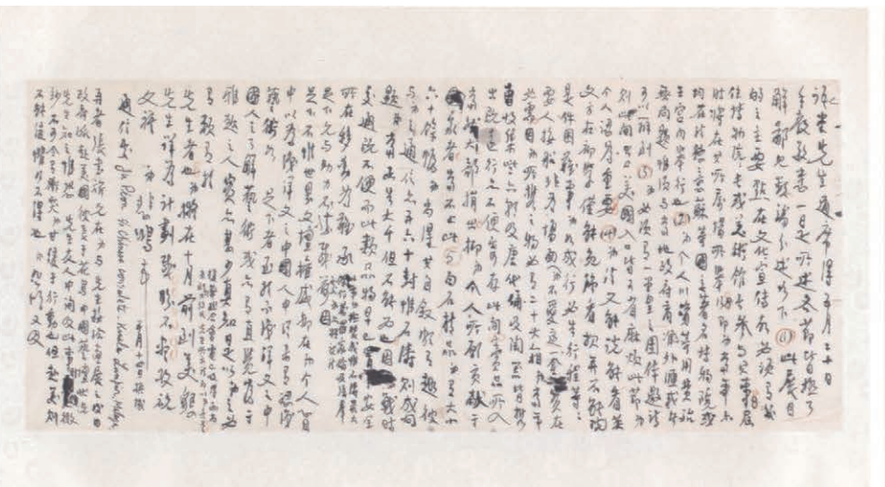
Letter 5 (actually a note)
[probably attached to Letter 4]

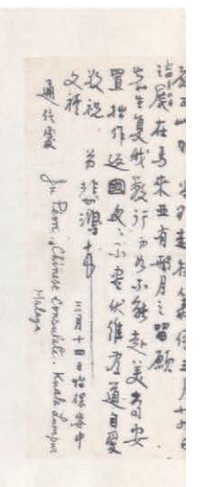
再□如文化機關學術團體出面邀請時，務須招呼海關。大概三藩市或紐約此時尚未定。畫件一部分將由香港寄到 (送去付裱者)，一部分直接由中國寄到 (假定大千肯費事借出)。等等此節務請留。因弟不知美國稅則，若納重稅，則又幾乎不可能矣。

Letter 4



Letter 3





Letter 6
July 8 [1941]

語堂先生，日來閱報見美國進口之限制多得厲害。因為收集石濤作品，弟曾函內子在重慶設法向張岳軍（十二幅通景屏，石濤生平第一精品）、張大千、羅家倫（最精一巨幀）徵求，航寄香港，再寄華盛頓大使館，以輕責任。弟并邀內子同行（二十年來之老婆，並無第二人，望弗信謠言）。兩事雖未必成，顧赴美國入口必當預備，懇先生為弟謀時，加入內子一人（名蔣碧微 Pillevi，年四十二歲），拜禱。又弟曾屬上海中華書局將石濤各種畫冊以及白石、大千與弟拙作各集直寄紐約中國領館應用，懇便中代為關照。匆匆不盡。敬祝文祺

弟悲鴻頓，七月八日

弟并無官員護照，抑弟亦不要，故必須請先生設法，為弟在華盛頓（據說如此）取得入口准證及畫件進口免稅，兩事最關重要，否則一切均屬徒然也。

Letter 7
July 16 [1941]

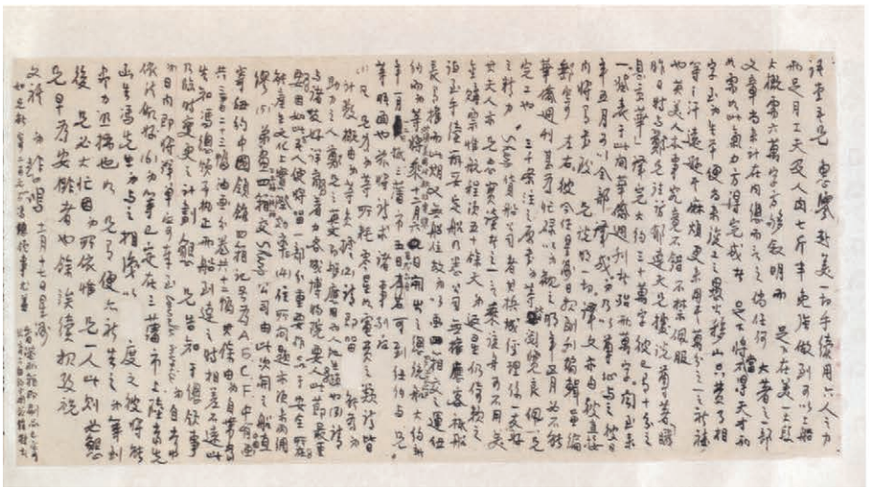
語堂先生惠鑒。自得手教已奉兩書。念此時在泰平盛世正是暑假，故知足下與一切交好將分散山市水涯，難以進行瑣事。而弟則兩月準備，事皆就緒，祇期待前函所陳兩節，即（一）須得一正式invitation，（二）須與海關商妥後，方能入美無阻。徵集石濤作品須在重慶努力，弟意或能有結果。茲尚有一要事奉託。友人鄭振文博士足下或能識，其人精于礦學，原任國防委員會參事，因私務返南洋，更思于技術（礦學）方面謀得新識，故願屈尊為弟義務秘書，同赴美國。弟等能節儉，抑知所準備，故經濟絕無問題，請兄釋念。惟懇請賁神，速為謀得合法入口手續（此間銀行擔保當然無問題）。感禱無量。敬頌文祺

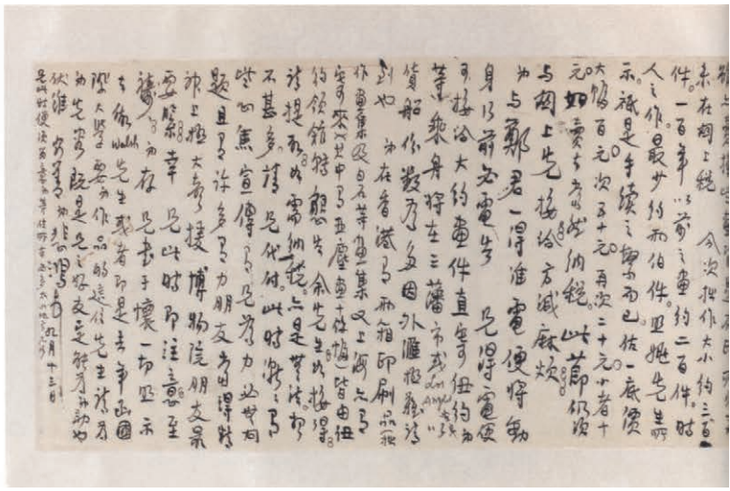
弟悲鴻頓，卅年七月十六日星洲

弟照片及鄭君照片各兩紙附入。弟星加坡地址 Ju Péon 16, Lorong 35 Gaylang, Singapore

儻蒙賜書請寄此處，能快一兩日也。原是九十兩月為最佳季候，茲須極快方能趕在十月有所作為，殊焦急也。有兩箱印刷品 reproductions of pictures 隨弟行。

Letter 11





Letter 8
August 14 [1941]

附相片四紙。語堂尊兄，得七月廿五日手教欣慰。尊意另組發起委員會，邀請□藝界及博物院人物參加，□為扼要。又假近代美術館為他日會所，亦合乎理想。至于所得成分絕對無問題，因他人熱忱援救吾人災難，焉有反因以為利者。兄固知我，如談及時，請告諸友不必考慮如何辦法，弟盡能同意也。弟已籌備就緒，惟以最急問題詳為兄告，計書到時暑假將盡，懇急為進行。(1) 聞美領館此時無權簽照允許人往赴美國，而英國方面以外匯故，亦不許非美國人往美國，故必須由發起機關委託一熱心而精明之人，為弟與鄭振文先生 (前函已詳告) 在紐約購好由星加坡或香港赴美頭等船票兩張，電告星加坡 American Express，其當然包括入口簽照等等一切在此所不能詳知之各種合法手續。(2) 同時畫件入口必不容緩，請速告紐約于總領事如何設法。此兩點為最主要。再者大千于兩月前去燉煌，門人孫君同行，故石濤作品展覽祇能從緩。Asia 寄來稿費卅元，可惜尚未見到本誌，請代購十冊寄星加坡中華書局或 Kuala Lumpur 中國領館，前曾請求，未知寄出否。再者隆孫副領事曾為弟函胡一弟函兄談此事同時一 (是彼盛意，並非鄙懷)，已復書言不能幫忙，所以奉告，恐兄或其他熱心好友又去碰一無聊的釘子。敬祝旅福

弟悲鴻頓

弟有一無上之寶可抵石濤三十幅，此次來檳，親迎相見再詳述一切。八月十四日檳城

Péon 16 Lorong 35 Gaylang, Singapore

Letter 9
August 22 [1941]

語堂尊兄，頃晤檳城美領，據言近赴美必須由華盛頓國務院決定，故彼屬請先生進行。因與 Form B 一紙，令詳填各項，告以尚有 Form D 一種，須在美國填寫，大概係擔保之類。茲將弟與鄭兄詳歷及照片各兩紙航寄，懇速託人代辦，辦好請國務院電□城美領館。□費請代弟墊付至禱。(前請電 American Express 者取消。) 則□等九月底或可成行，愈速愈好。

鄭先生係弟至友，彼語言文字方便，且在此已為弟種種計劃，肯同行作伴實弟之深幸。倘彼不行，弟極為難，故必懇兄代辦其入境手續。鄭兄府上為馬來亞酒商之王一東亞酒廠鄭綿發酒廠主人一其人品尤高潔純正，故願□以信弟者信鄭君也。

此間有一船公司經理與弟友好，近蒙其設法購票可無問題。前函託購票可以作罷。請柬日內想能收到。

此時第一要事，乃請領館交涉海關畫件入口。七月份 Asia 此間買不到，請電該誌至少為留十冊。拜感不盡，敬頌旅福

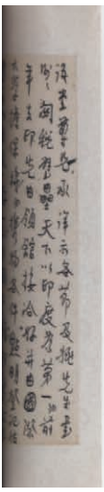
弟悲鴻頓，八月廿二日檳城

Letter 10
September 13 [1941]

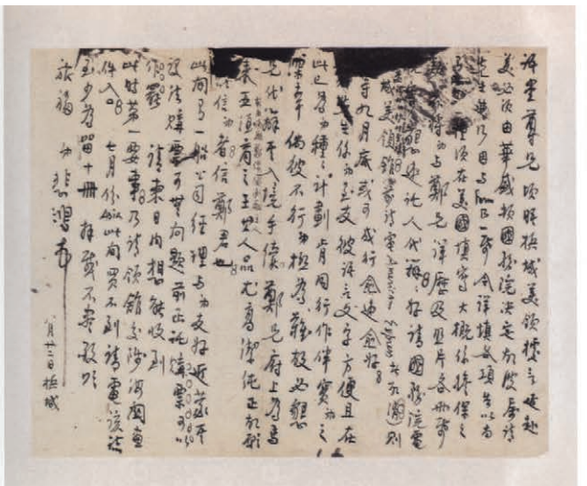
語堂尊兄，承詳示各節及姚先生書例，謝謝。關稅壁壘天下以印度為第一。弟前年去印，先由領館接洽好，并由國際大學擔保，將弟攜物各件點明登記估價 (由弟自報)，存一 list 于關上，離印度時照樣點過。如缺少一件 (不論任何理由) 須照估價納稅百分之五十。弟去年一年雖亦賣掉些畫，皆是在印所寫，故未在關上稅。今次拙作大小約三百件，一百年以前之畫約二百件，時人之作最少約兩伯件。照姚先生所示，祇是手續之繁而已。估一底價大幅百元，次五十元，再次二十元，小者十元。如賣去當然納稅。此節仍須與關上先接洽，方減麻煩。

弟與鄭君一得准電便將動身，行前必電告兄，得電便可接洽。大約畫件直寄紐約，弟等乘舟將在三藩市或 Los Angeles 登岸。以貨船份數為多，因外匯極難請到也。弟在香港有兩箱印刷品 (拙作畫集及白石等畫集，又上海亦有寄來) (其中

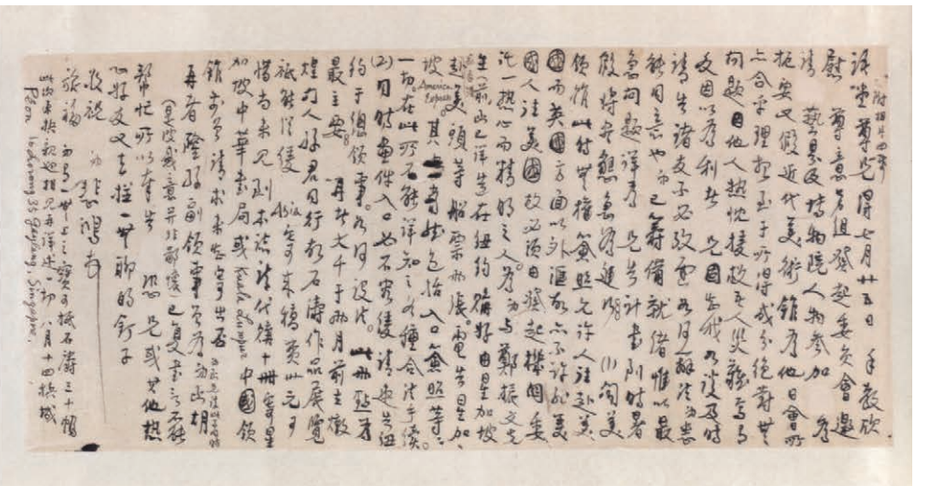
Letter10



Letter 9



Letter 8



有亞塵畫十餘幅），皆由紐約領館轉，懇告余先生如接得請提取。如需納稅，亦是無法，想不甚多，請兄代付。此時漸漸有些心焦。宣傳有兄為力，必無問題，且有許多有力朋友，當得精神上極大聲援。博物院朋友最要緊，幸兄此時即注意，至禱。弟存兄書于懷，一切照示去做。Walsh 先生或者即是去年函國際大學要弟作品的這位先生，請為弟先容。既是兄之好友，定能為弟助也。伏維安養

弟悲鴻頓，九月十三日

兄此時便須留意弟等住所，東西多，太小地方不行。

Letter 11

November 17 [1941]

語堂吾兄惠鑒，赴美一切手續用六人之力、兩足月工夫、及人肉七斤半，免強做到可以上船。大概需六萬字方夠敘明。而足下在美一大段文章尚未計在內。總而言之，倘任何大著之一部如需如此氣力方得完成者，足下將當不得天才兩字。至弟生平便尚未竣工之愚公移山，只費了相等之汗，遠遜其麻煩，更未用千萬分之一之祈禱也。英美人本事究竟不錯，不禁佩服。

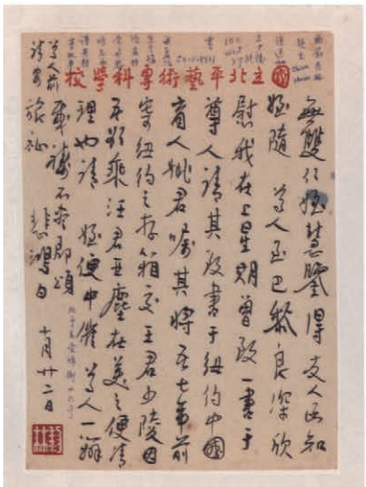
昨日特與鄭兄往訪郁達夫兄。據說尊著《瞬息京華》譯完大約三十萬字，彼已有十分之一，發表于此間華僑週刊者殆兩萬字。聞至來年五月可以全部譯成。弟乃以尊址與之，彼日內將有書致兄說明一切，譯文亦由彼直接郵寄左右。彼今任星洲日報副刊編輯，兼編華僑週刊，甚為忙碌。以弟觀之，明年五月必不能完工也。三千條注之原書弟等皆閱覽，良佩兄之精力。Sharp 貨船公司者，其檳城經理係一友好，其夫人亦兄忠實讀者之一，言乘該舟可以不用美金購票，惟航程須五十餘天。弟返星仍倚賴之。詎至手續辦妥定船，乃悉公司無權應客，祇船長有權，而此期又無船位，故弟以畫四箱交之運紐約一必須美國付款故電懇一而弟等將乘十二月六日開出之總統船 Pres. Harison，大約新年一月一二日抵三藩市，五日或六日可到紐約與兄等晤面也。茲將請求諸事列后：

(1) 凡兄為弟等所耗零星如電費之類，請皆計數，概由弟等負擔。(2) 請即留□能為弟助力之人。鄭兄之英文即夠應用，而人地生疏也。(3) 請與諸友好詳商著力各城博物院要人，此節最重要。因如此吾人便將留一部分重要作品于安全所在，能產生文化上實際效率。(4) 住所問題亦須未雨綢繆。(5) 弟留畫四箱一三木箱一鐵箱一交 Sharp 公司由此次開之船直寄紐約中國領館，四箱記號為 A, B, C, F。中有中國畫共三百二十三幅，油畫分卷共十二幅，其餘由弟自帶，當告知馮總領事執正。兩船到達之時相差不遠，此乃臨時變更之計劃，懇兄告知于總領事，弟日內即將詳單寄奉至 Consular invoice 弟自當依法做好。(6) 弟等已定在三藩市上陸，當先函告馮先生。弟與之相識，以□度之，彼將能盡力照拂也。如兄有便，亦祈告之。弟等到後，兄必大忙。因弟所依惟兄一人。此則必懇兄早為安排者也，餘俟續報。敬祝文祺

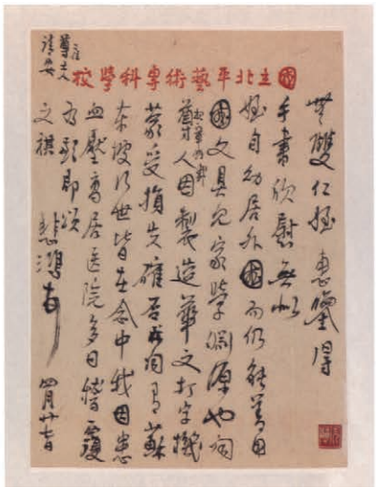
弟悲鴻十一月十七日星洲

如兄能寄二百元與馮總領事尤善。香港兩箱印刷品已寄出，寄與紐約中國領館轉者。

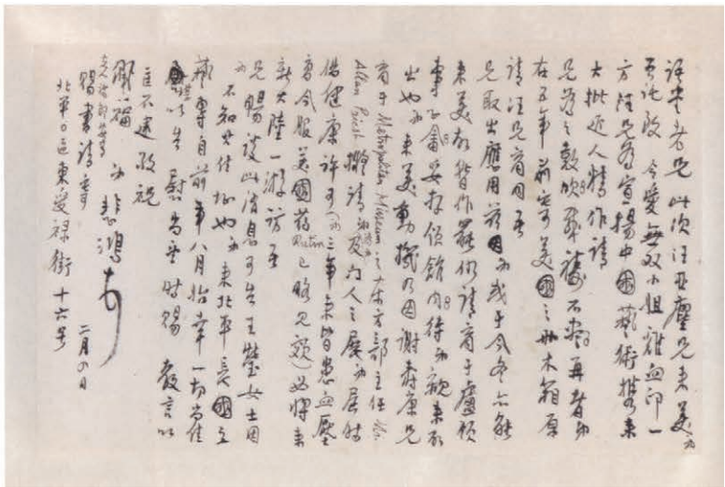
Letter 17



Letter 16



Letter 15



Letter 12
September 6 [1942?][13]

語堂尊兄惠鑒。日前曾奉一書，懇為弟取出存美之一千五百美金。茲已函鄭君將支票取來，弟可能在國內應用，前託請即作罷。有南洋韓槐準兄欲求兄法書，能允之否？敬請儷安，夫人萬福

弟悲鴻頓，九月六日

東總布胡同十號 (written in pencil, probably by Lin Yutang)

Letter 13
November 5 [1942]

語堂尊兄，不奉明教幾及一年，頃得王女士書，欣知闔府清吉，實慰遠懷。九一八重慶曾舉行一聯合國藝展，由門人多人及一部分官員主持。弟亦有五作陳列。有一白君一譯意美國人一極感覺興趣，遂建議運美展覽，畫交威尒基先生帶往，皆選戰事攸關題材，以是重要作家皆未出品。弟曾欲託帶拙作五幅與兄，彼言不負責，（因託交 Asia），該五幅已裱成匡，無上下支木，甚輕，以備贈兄友人者。茲已不能帶，因非大批，慮壓匾也。弟之畫冊請留五十冊，又八十七神仙卷二十冊。倘有便人請攜弟五六七八冊，因自己反無之也。鄭兄款轉讓于人，曾有信告兄，乞來函一提以作證明，并非取用。戰後倘可能，弟必來美。近為中英庚款董事會辦一美術研究所。敬請儷安，夫人群公子萬福

弟悲鴻，重慶沙坪壩中央大學，十一月五日

Letter 14
November 16 [1947]

語堂老兄惠鑒。一別又逾四年，去年報載兄發明之打字機成功，深以為賀。至友名畫家汪亞塵兄此次赴美考察，并將舉行中國近代名畫展覽一汪兄收藏甚富一懇兄多予指導，感同身受。又弟在太平洋戰前寄美之兩箱，亦懇為取用。拜禱不盡。敬請儷安，夫人萬福

弟悲鴻頓，十一月十六日

當年曾備雞血小印一方冊頁一本，擬贈令愛無雙小姐，兄行匆匆未及交。今託亞兄攜上小印冊頁，竟覓不到，俟下次補寄。

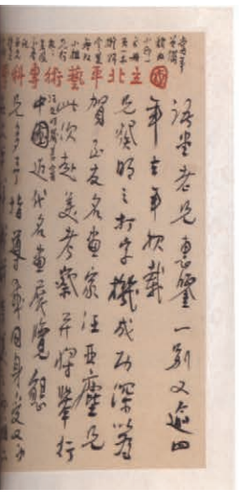
Letter 15
February 4 [1948]

語堂老兄，此次汪亞塵兄來美，弟曾託致令愛無雙小姐雞血印一方。汪兄為宣揚中國藝術，攜來大批近人精作，請兄為之鼓吹，感禱不盡。再者，弟在五年前寄美國之兩木箱，原請汪兄商同吾兄取出應用，茲因弟或于今冬亦能來美，故暫作罷。仍請商于盧領事正奄妥存領館內，待弟親來取出也。弟來美動機，乃因謝壽康兄商于 Metropolitan Museum 之東方部主任 Mr. Allan [*sic*] Priest 擬請弟為弟及門人之展。弟屆時倘健康許可（弟三年來皆患血壓高，今服美國藥 Rutin 已略見效），必將來新大陸一游，訪吾兄暢談。此消息可告王瑩女士，因弟不知其住址也。弟來北平長國立藝專，自前年八月始，幸一切尚佳，堪以告慰。尚望時賜教言，以匡不逮。敬祝儷福，夫人諸郎安篤

弟悲鴻頓，二月四日

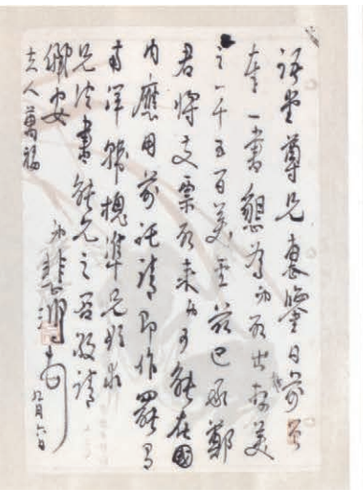
賜書請寄
北平0區東受祿街十六號

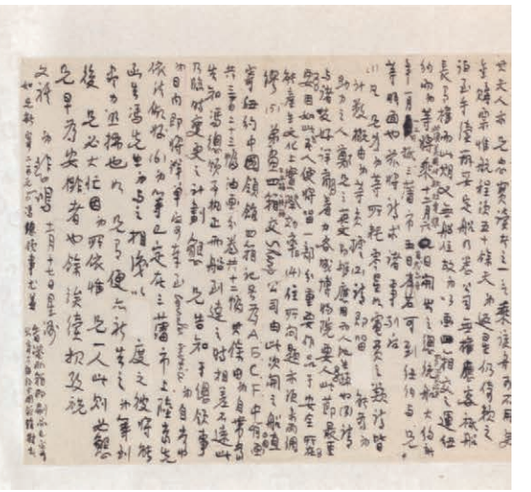
Letter 14



Letter 13

Letter 12





Letter 16
April 27 [1948]

無雙仁姪惠鑒。得手書欣慰無似。姪自幼居外國，而仍能善用國文，具見家學淵源也。聞尊人一報章所載一因製造華文打字機蒙受損失，確否。并聞有蘇東坡行世，皆在念中。我因患血壓高，居醫院多日，稽覆為歉。即頌文祺

二位尊大人請安
悲鴻頓，四月廿七日

Collectors' seal
無雙 *Wushuang* [Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Letter 17
October 22 [1948]

無雙仁姪慧鑒。得友人函，知姪隨尊人至巴黎，良深欣慰。我在上星期曾致一書于尊人，請其致書于紐約中國商人姚君，囑其將吾七年前寄紐約之存箱交王君少陵，因吾欲乘汪君亞塵在美之便清理也。請姪便中催尊人一辦，感禱不盡。即頌旅祉

尊人前請安
悲鴻白，十月廿二日

[a short paragraph written in blue ink with a pen on top of Xu Beihong's letter is not signed; probably written by Lin Yutang]

兩箱畫冊現在 China House。請通知王少陵 100 West 57 St., 電 C6-5-8931，與孟治先生接洽，並將余與悲鴻兄函請其轉寄北平，北平東受祿街十六號。

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Note

13 The address written in pencil, probably by Lin Yutang, is that of the National Academy of Art of Beiping. Xu Beihong was appointed its director in August 1946, and remained in the post until his death in 1953. There is a possibility that this letter was written in 1946. The two seals on the letter are part of the printed decorative design on the stationery. The one at the lower right corner reads "manufactured by the Rongbao Studio" (*Rongbao zao* 榮寶造). The other, near the left edge of the letter, is a seal of Qi Baishi (*Lao Qi* 老齊), whose painting of frogs was reproduced on the stationery as a decorative design.

8

徐悲鴻
Xu Beihong (1895–1953)

Heavenly Horse
天馬圖
Tianma tu

Dated 1942. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 26⅜ × 11 in. (67 × 28 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.15)

Xu Beihong was the most influential figure in advocating the revitalization of Chinese painting through an integration of Western-style realism and Chinese brush techniques. This painting of a horse, a subject for which Xu is particularly well known, exemplifies his fusion of East and West. Xu's swift rendition, using sharp contrasts of pale and dark ink washes intensified by patches of blank white paper, embodies the spirit of a traditional "ink play." The horse's naturalistic pose is deftly captured in simple but effective brushwork. The chiaroscuro modeling of its form is more subjective than scientific, but the horse's accurate anatomy and the convincing foreshortening of its body reflect Xu's solid grounding in Western academic art. The hauteur of the unleashed, unmounted animal is essentially Western in character. Its billowing mane and tail, rendered with loose, scratchy strokes, draw on Western representational techniques rather than Chinese calligraphic training. The fact that they are blown unnaturally in opposite directions, however, attests to the artist's ultimately subjective (Chinese) approach.

Although Xu Beihong's almost exclusive reliance on saturated, graded ink washes may be traced back to the Chan (Zen, in Japanese) painting of the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279), his immediate inspiration may have been Xu Wei (1521–1593) and Bada Shanren (1626–1705). He admired these two artists for their bold departure from established rules and regarded Xu Wei, in particular, as the patriarch of modern Chinese painting.[1] Xu Beihong, however, was the first artist to take the horse as the subject of "ink plays."

As the earlier masters of "ink play" distilled natural images into abbreviated brush idioms of striking immediacy, so too did Xu Beihong. There are, however, pitfalls in representing animals to which Xu Wei's or Bada Shanren's free forms of flowers and rocks are not subject. A horse consists of standard parts in measured proportion that allows much less deviation from nature. Xu's seemingly spontaneous portrayals of horses, as several scholars have pointed out, are actually executed through an internalized formula. Each image is often a composite of schematized parts.[2]

The horse is a highly symbolic image in China, where it has long been understood as an embodiment of imperial power and martial valor.[3] While Xu Beihong's early interest in horses may have been purely aesthetic, this imagery acquired more complex associations later in his life. Following the heightened aggression of the Japanese military in China in 1930, Xu Beihong's horse paintings began to assume political overtones as revealed by their accompanying inscriptions, which express increasingly patriotic sentiments. The inscription to his *Running Horse* of 1936, for instance, ends with the defiant line, "I refuse to carry those self-conceited peace-makers," referring to the Nationalist Party leaders whose policy of nonresistance to Japanese aggression led to the loss of Manchuria.[4]

Xu Beihong inscribed the present painting in 1942 with a poem by Du Fu (712–770) describing the aging war horses in Nanshi (in Gansu Province). Having once galloped across the battlefield, in their old age these purebreds had been put to pasture despite their continued "longing to fight." The heroic verve and sense of frustration expressed by Du Fu in the poem was undoubtedly shared by Xu in 1942 when, in spite of his own illness, he struggled to remain engaged in the national cause.

Artist's inscription and signature
(17 columns in running script)

Nanshi [in Gansu Province] is a
congenial habitat for heavenly
horses;
Tens of thousands of them are
always stalwart.
Floating clouds expand across the
vast frontier;
Autumn grasses grow tall over
the mountains.
I have heard that the pure bloodline
of dragon-horses
Lives on in the aging Sushuang.[5]
Neighing sadly longing to fight,
It stands tall facing the sky.

For the kind youngster Wushuang [Lin Taiyi] to keep. In the autumn of the *renwu* year [1942] Beihong wrote the poems by old Du [Fu]

南使宜天馬,
由來萬匹強。
浮雲連陣沒,
秋草遍山長。
聞說真龍種,
仍殘老驌驦。
哀鳴思戰鬥,
迥立向蒼蒼。

無雙仁姪惠存。壬午之秋悲鴻
寫老杜詩

Artist's seal
悲 *Bei*

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Exhibition
An Exhibition of Modern Chinese Paintings, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, January 15–March 14, 1943

Notes
1 Xu Beihong 1933–35, p. 241; Chen Chuanxi 2003, p. 165.
2 For instance, see Ledderose 2000, p. 206. This process sometimes results in nearly identical images. See, for example, a horse painting done in 1943 in Xu Beihong 2001, vol. 3, p. 156.
3 See Harrist 1997.
4 Cited in Liu Ruli 1986, pp. 20–21.
5 Sushuang is a generic name for great horses.

9

徐悲鴻
Xu Beihong (1895–1953)

Flying Magpie
柳鵲圖
Liu que tu

Dated 1942. Hanging scroll,
ink and color on paper,
36¼ × 11¾ in. (92 × 30 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection,
Partial and Promised Gift of
Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller,
and Larry C. Lai in memory
of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.14)

This painting captures a magpie in mid-flight —its spreading wings and half-extended feet suggest that it has just taken off or is about to land. The delicate whips of a willow form a minimal backdrop. Their arcing lines imply a breeze behind the bird's forward motion. Although the austere simplicity of this composition is characteristic of the literati tradition of Chinese painting, the rendering of the magpie's plumage is free of the calligraphic brush idioms of traditional scholar-painters. Rather, the bird's naturalism betrays Xu's mastery of Western representational skills.

Like his horse images, magpies in Xu Beihong's paintings often appear in near-identical poses against a similar background. Here the pose and distribution of dark and light ink washes of the bird and the treatment of the willow branches compare closely with those in a painting done four years later in 1946.[1]

Xu frequently resorted to formulaic repetitions of the same theme to keep up with the constant demand for his work and to build social connections. When asked why he did not focus more attention on his creative endeavors, he replied, "If I don't socialize with wealthy people, how can I send promising students abroad?"[2] Indeed, he sent this painting and his *Plum, Bamboo, and Rock* (cat. no. 10) to Lin Yutang in late 1942 without dedications. In his letter to Lin, dated November 5, 1942, he stated that they were meant for Lin to give to his friends in the United States as gestures of goodwill (see cat. no. 7, Letter 13). In an earlier letter to Lin Yutang, dated March 14, 1941, Xu states that he personally paid for the traveling exhibitions he had organized for the war effort (see cat. no. 7, Letter 2). Clearly, a major source of revenue for this endeavor was the sale of his own paintings. Xu's works sold very well, and he produced them in great quantity, often prompted by financial necessity.[3] To paint well within a limited time, he had to draw on set images which he had perfected through years of practice.

Artist's inscription and signature
(1 column in running script)

In the *renwu* year [1942], painted by Beihong

壬午悲鴻寫

Artist's seal
東海王孫 *Donghai wangsun*

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Exhibition
An Exhibition of Modern Chinese Paintings, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, January 15–March 14, 1943

Notes
1 See Xu Beihong 2001, vol. 3, p. 71.
2 Liu Ruli 1986, p. 19.
3 For instance, Xu "painted day and night" to ransom a painting stolen from him in 1942, *The Eighty-seven Immortals*, by sending scores of his works to its current owner as partial payment. See Liao Jingwen 2001, p. 239.

10

徐悲鴻
Xu Beihong (1895–1953)

Plum, Bamboo, and Rock
梅竹石圖
Mei zhu shi tu

Dated 1942. Hanging scroll,
ink and color on paper,
36 × 12 in. (91.5 × 30.5 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection,
Partial and Promised Gift of
Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller,
and Larry C. Lai in memory
of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.13)

This painting, dominated by the craggy form of a blossoming plum tree, testifies to Xu's aspiration to revitalize the traditional repertory of Chinese painting with a new experimental eclecticism. The lower half of the trunk is delineated in dry, raspy contour strokes, while its upper half and the branches are drawn with solid lines of dark, graded ink. In contrast to the bold, freely brushed tree, the bamboo is meticulously outlined, then filled with colored wash in the refined, descriptive style of Song dynasty (960–1279) court painting, which Xu admired. On the other hand, an ochre rock, which adds a complementary color and serves to anchor the entire composition, is virtually flat within its rough, random outlines, while the patches of ink wash that texture the adjacent lower tree trunk arbitrarily extend beyond its contours. Such perfunctory modes of execution were often criticized by Xu as mannerisms afflicting the literati painting tradition since the late Ming dynasty (1368–1644). But in this case Xu's incongruous mix of brush methods enhances the painting's appeal by shattering conventional expectations and stimulating a search for justification.

The plum blossoms, rendered as daubs of white pigment with blue cores, represent an audacious departure from their traditional rendering in either ink outlines or pale color washes. The blue, surprising at first glance, realistically renders the shadows of intensely white objects; aesthetically it echoes the blue-green bamboo. The white blossoms, indistinct against the blank paper, faithfully capture the optical impression of white plum blossoms in a bleak wintry landscape.

Artist's inscription and signature
(5 columns in running script)

With its shadow it rests in the
empty mountain;
How swiftly the year has moved
toward an end!
The bright moon is chilly
throughout the night;
The subtle fragrance lingers in
the vastness.

In the late autumn of the thirty-
first year [of the Republic] [1942],
Beihong

含影息空山,
歲暮一何速。
明月澈夜寒,
微香盪寥廓。

卅一年秋晚悲鴻

Artist's seals
徐 *Xu*
悲鴻 *Beihong*
One unidentified seal

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Exhibition
An Exhibition of Modern Chinese Paintings, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, January 15–March 14, 1943

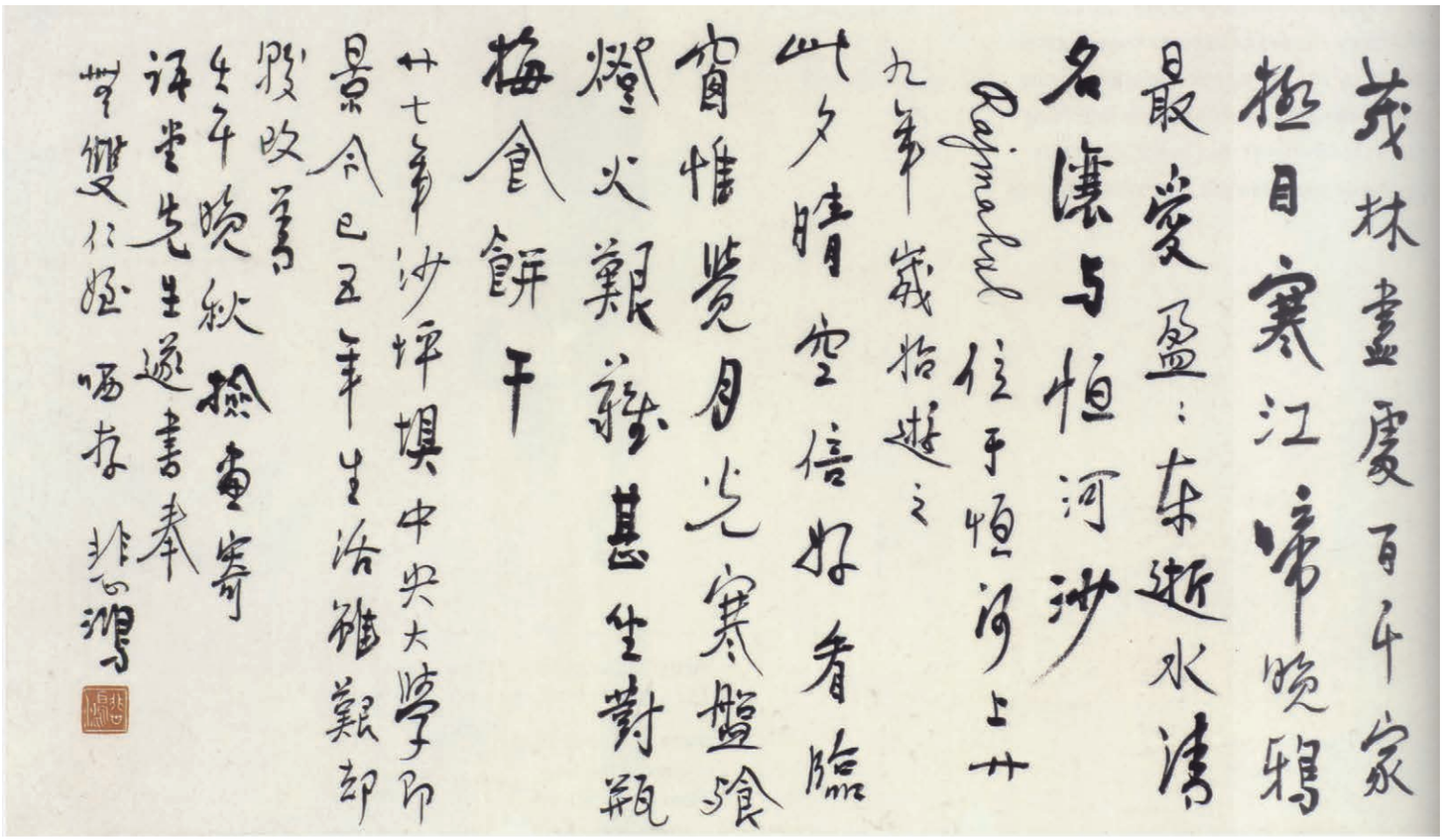
11

徐悲鴻
Xu Beihong (1895–1953)

Two Poems
行書二詩
Xingshu er shi

Dated 1942. Album leaf,
ink on paper, 10⅝ × 18½ in.
(27 × 47 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection,
Partial and Promised Gift of
Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller,
and Larry C. Lai in memory
of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.16)



Here Xu Beihong transcribes two of his own poems in his distinctive running script for Lin Yutang's daughter, Taiyi. At the time, he was living in Chongqing in Sichuan Province, the temporary capital of the Nationalist government during the Sino-Japanese War. He had just returned from a four-year trip to Hong Kong, Singapore, India, and Malaysia, where he had exhibited his art and raised funds for the war effort. The first poem recalls the scenery along the Ganges River in India that he visited in 1940. The second poem describes the hardships of living in Chongqing in 1938, particularly due to the shortage of food. Shortly after composing this poem he took leave of his teaching job at the Central University and went abroad.

Xu Beihong modeled his calligraphy on the "singular yet correct" (*qi er zheng* 奇而正) writing styles of the eras prior to the formalization of rules and methods during the Tang dynasty (618–907).[1] In tune with his time, he was most inspired by the anonymous stele writings of the Six Dynasties (222–589), which he succeeded in integrating into his running script. He wrote with brushes made with long goat hair, which is soft yet resilient and which absorbs ink in abundance but releases it slowly, creating full, solid brush lines.[2] The long tip of such brushes facilitates dexterous execution, enabling the writer to fully convey the raw vitality and free spirit of stele writing.[3] This piece embodies the paradoxical aesthetic of sophisticated awkwardness. Xu's characters tend to be tall with a feeling of blockiness, which counteracts the vertical flow that is typical of conventional running-script calligraphy. Sinewy angularity underlies round brushwork. The component strokes of each character are composed in such a way as to convey a sense of weightiness and of precarious balance, while the central axis of characters occasionally tilts to one side, adding a certain gestural charm.

Xu considered calligraphy to be a pictorial art that was pictographic in the beginning and then became more abstract. Comparing calligraphy to music, he observed: "The dots, lines, and turns are no different from melodious musical notes."[4] His own writing clearly embodies this notion. Whether plump or spiky, dark or pale, the brush lines fluctuate with rhythmic energy while individual characters alternate between large and small in a well-measured cadence.

Artist's inscription and signature
(16 columns in running script)

Toward the edge of a lush forest
are hundreds of dwellings.
Stretching my eyes across the chilly
river, I hear evening crows cry.
How I love the brimming waters
bounding eastward,
Which give up their purity for the
sands of the Ganges.

The Rajmahal palace was built on the Ganges River. I first visited it in the twenty-ninth year of the Republic [1940].

The clear sky is especially lovely
tonight.
Leaning against the window, I feel
only the chill of moonlight.
Dining by lamplight, life is so difficult,
Facing a vase of plum blossoms, I eat
my dried biscuits.

This was a sketch of my life at the Central University at Shapingju [Shapingba, in Chongqing] in the twenty-seventh year of the Republic [1938]. It has been almost five years since then. Although life is hard, it has improved a little.

In the late autumn of the *renwu* year [1942] I picked some paintings to send to Mr. [Lin] Yutang, then wrote this for Wushuang [Lin Taiyi] to keep for amusement. Beihong

茂林盡處百千家,
極目寒江啼晚鴉。
最愛盈盈東逝水,
清名讓與恒河沙。

Rajmahal 位于恒河上, 廿九年
歲始遊之。

此夕晴空倍好看,
臨窗惟覺月光寒。
盤飧燈火艱難甚,
坐對瓶梅食餅干。
廿七年沙坪埧中央大學即景, 今
已五年, 生活雖艱, 卻較改善。

壬午晚秋撿畫寄語堂先生, 遂書
奉無雙仁姪哂存。悲鴻

Artist's seal
悲鴻 *Beihong*

Exhibition
An Exhibition of Modern Chinese Paintings, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, January 15–March 14, 1943

Notes
1 Ye Zhemin 1986, p. 345.
2 Huang Yanghui 1986, p. 341.
3 On the relation between brushes made with long goat hair and the rise of stele writing in the nineteenth century, see Liu Heng 1999, pp. 238–42.
4 See Xu Beihong's colophon to a rare Six Dynasties rubbing, "Jiyuqiao zi," in his collection, quoted in Ye Zhemin 1986, p. 343.

12

余靜芝
Yu Jingzhi (1890–after 1967)

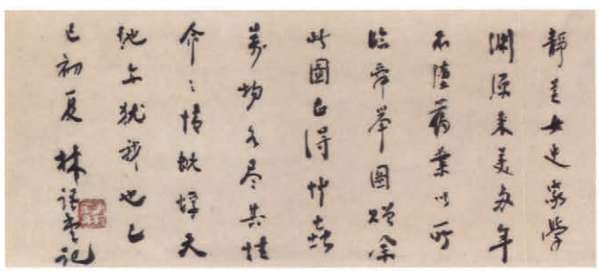
Early Autumn after Qian Xuan
倣錢選早秋圖
Fang Qian Xuan Zaoqiu tu

Dated 1938. Handscroll,
ink on paper, 11 × 98 in.
(27.9 × 248.9 cm)

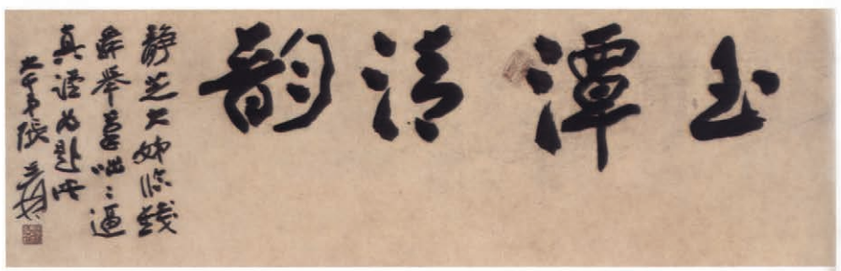
The Lin Yutang Family Collection,
Gift of Hsiang Ju Lin in memory
of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.510.3)

Yu Jingzhi (known as Ching-chih Yee in the West) is one of the best known female artists to practice traditional Chinese painting in the first half of the twentieth century. A descendant of a family of artists from Anhui, Yu was born and grew up in Hangzhou, where she became familiar with the highly descriptive local tradition of academic painting based on the court art of the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279).[1] In his preface to her collected works Lin Yutang remarked on Yu's lack of Western influence—despite her long residence in America—and emphasized her affiliation with the academic school of painting, which valued descriptive beauty and fine brushwork.[2] A second preface by the artist-collector Zhang Daqian (1899–1983) identifies Yu's stylistic models in the painting of insects and plants as Ma Quan (act. 17th–18th century) and Yun Bing (act. 17th–18th century), female artists known for their refined painting technique.[3]

In addition to her creative activities, Yu taught at the Shanghai Art College for five years around 1930, where she was the only female professor in Chinese painting. She



Colophon



Frontispiece

was also the founder and a director of the Chinese Women's Art Society in Shanghai. In the summer of 1936 Yu Jingzhi was invited to exhibit and demonstrate her art at international exhibitions held in Vancouver and Dallas. She settled in New York shortly afterwards, teaching Chinese painting both privately and in local organizations. She participated in the exhibitions of modern Chinese art at the Metropolitan Museum in 1943 and 1948.[4] She also held several one-person shows in New York, Boston, and Chicago through the 1960s.

This work exemplifies Yu Jingzhi's exquisite descriptive style. It is a meticulous monochrome copy of *Early Autumn*, a handscroll in the Detroit Institute of Arts that bears a signature of the early Yuan (1279–1368) master Qian Xuan (ca. 1235–before 1307).[5] Depicting an autumnal lotus pond abuzz with lively inhabitants, the painting juxtaposes life and decay to convey the transient nature of all living things. The warm hazy atmosphere is characteristic of early autumn.[6] The brimming vitality of the creatures, as Lin Yutang notes in his colophon, is even more precious for its ephemerality. In the midst of peace and harmony is "a scrambling frog obviously bent on getting himself a dragonfly sandwich for tea."[7] Apart from the natural cycle of life, death can strike anytime.

Yu Jingzhi's copy is so faithful that it could not have been made from memory. The original, however, is painted with vibrant colors, whereas Yu's copy is in monochrome. Yu's omission of color suggests that she may have based her work on a black-and-white reproduction of the original instead of copying directly from it.

Artist's inscription and signature
(1 column in standard script)

Yu Jingzhi painted in the winter of the *wuyin* year [1938]

戊寅冬月余靜芝寫

Artist's seals
余真 *Yu Zhen*
靜芝 *Jingzhi*

Frontispiece
Zhang Daqian 張大千 (1899–1983)
(4 large characters followed by 4 columns all in running script)

Pure harmony on the Jade Pond

My "elder sister" Ms. [Yu] Jingzhi's copy of Qian Shunju's [Qian Xuan, ca. 1235–before 1307] painting is so close to the original. I inscribed it respectfully, your junior, Daqian, Zhang Yuan

玉潭清韻

靜芝大姊臨錢舜舉筆，咄咄逼真，謹為題此。大千弟張爰

Frontispiece writer's seal
張大千常年大吉又日利
Zhang Daqian changnian daji you rili

Colophon
Lin Yutang 林語堂 (1895–1976)
9 columns in running script, dated 1965

[Yu] Jingzhi, a female scholar and artist, is descended from a highly cultured family. Though living in the United States for many years, she has never abandoned her former practice. She gave me her copy of Shunju's [Qian Xuan's] painting. It truly captures the feeling that insects, plants, and other myriad creatures all live their lives to the full, even though they are ephemerae between heaven and earth just like me.

In the early summer of the *yisi* year [1965], Lin Yutang inscribed.

靜芝女史家學淵源，來美多年不墮舊業，以所臨舜舉圖贈余。此圖正得草蟲萬物各盡其性命之情，蚍蜉天地上猶我也。

乙巳初夏林語堂記

Colophon writer's seal
有不為齋 *Youbuwei Zhai*

Notes

1 For Yu's biography, see Yu Jingzhi 1967, vol. 3, p. 7.
2 Ibid., p. 4.
3 Ibid., p. 1.
4 See *An Exhibition of Modern Chinese Paintings* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1943), n.p. When the exhibition traveled to the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, she contributed two additional works. For the 1948 exhibition, see *Contemporary Chinese Paintings* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1948), pl. IX.
5 See March 1929. It is controversial whether this painting is from Qian Xuan's hand.
6 Edwards 1953, p. 73.
7 Priest 1952, p. 178.

13

張大千
Zhang Daqian (1899–1983)

Mountain Vegetables
山廚清供圖
Shanchu qinggong tu

Dated 1965. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 33⅞ × 37¼ in. (86 × 94.5 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.21)

This painting and the following one (cat. no. 14) both feature Chinese cabbage and mustard greens. This one also includes leafy spinach and mushrooms while the other displays bright red radishes. With their assortments of humble vegetables randomly arrayed as if freshly harvested and laid out on a kitchen table, the paintings convey the simple pleasures of home cooking, for which Zhang Daqian was well known.

The paintings strike a subtle balance between spontaneity and thoughtful structure. The outlined white stalks of the mustard greens contrast with the diffuse ink washes in various colors used to describe the mustard leaves and the other vegetables. The shapes and positioning of the vegetables reveal formal concerns that belie the apparent playfulness of these arrangements. Zhang's flower and vegetable paintings grow directly out of the tradition established by Shen Zhou (1427–1509) and Xu Wei (1521–1593) that features freely applied ink washes and color without the use of outlines. The pronounced decorative charm of Zhang's works also suggests that he was influenced by Yun Shouping (1633–1690).[1]

Zhang Daqian often painted different combinations of vegetables, but these two paintings stand out for their heavy reliance on flowing ink washes that range from pitch black to pale gray. There are no traces of the brush in the rendering of the vegetables' lush leaves. Zhang Daqian painted *Mountain Vegetables* in July 1965, after returning from New York City to his Garden of Eight Virtues (Bade Yuan) in São Paulo, Brazil, and before leaving for Europe in the same month. The undated *Radishes and Mustard Greens* must be from the same period. They represent the fruition of Zhang's enthusiastic experiments with a new technique of "splashed ink." Although they vividly recall the spontaneous compositions of Qi Baishi (see cat. nos. 25–27), Qi always painted with a brush and never attempted the kind of radical technical innovation that Zhang mastered in these works.

Artist's inscription and signature
(5 columns in seal script)

Pure offerings from a mountain kitchen

Painted in the summer of the *yisi* year [1965] for Mr. [Lin] Yutang's instruction. Daqian, your junior, Zhang Yuan, from the Dafeng Tang (Great Wind Hall)

山廚清供

乙巳之夏寫似語堂先生法教。
大千弟張爰大風堂下

Artist's seal
大千唯印大年 *Daqian wei yin danian*
己亥己巳戊寅辛酉 *Jihai jisi wuyin xinyou*

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Note
1 On Yun Shouping's possible influence on Zhang Daqian, see Fu 1991, pp. 60–61.

14

張大千
Zhang Daqian (1899–1983)

Radishes and Mustard Greens
蕪菁芥菜圖
Wujing jiecai tu

Ca. 1965. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 34¼ × 17⅜ in. (87 × 44 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection
Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.24)

In his inscription to this painting Zhang Daqian pays homage to Lin Yutang's admiration both for humor and for Su Shi by quoting a humorous line about radishes and mustard greens from Su Shi's poem "On Eating Light" (*Bo yinshi shi* 薄飲食詩). Su Shi was trying to eliminate meat from his diet in observance of the Buddhist decree not to kill. One can eat radishes and mustard greens without guilt because they continue to propagate after being harvested. Although Zhang Daqian became a vegetarian in the last few years of his life, he was still an unabashed meat-eater when he painted this scroll.

Artist's inscription and signature
(10 columns in cursive script)

Radishes give birth to sons and mustard greens have grandsons. This line is from old Po [Su Shi, 1037–1101]. Painted for [Lin] Yutang, my senior, for his amusement and correction.

Daqian, your junior, Yuan, respectfully sending this from the Garden of Eight Virtues (Bade Yuan) in São Paolo

蘿蔔生兒芥有孫。坡翁句也。
寫博語堂吾兄哂正。

大千弟爰三巴八德園寄呈

Artist's seals
張爰大千父 *Zhang Yuan Daqian fu*
大風堂 *Dafeng Tang*
昵燕 *Ni yan*
家在西南常作東南別 *jia zai xinan changzuo dongnan bie* ("Born in the southwest, I often stay in the southeast.")

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

15

張大千
Zhang Daqian (1899–1983)

Mushrooms
野菇圖
Yegu tu

Dated 1965. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 33⅞ × 17⅜ in. (86 × 44 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection
Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.22)

This delightful scroll is one of several paintings that Zhang Daqian painted for Lin Yutang in the summer of 1965. It depicts a group of mushrooms of varying sizes and shapes. The sharp blades of grass around them indicate that they are growing in the wild. Freely applied ink washes, tinged with turquoise blue, evoke the moist lushness of the mossy ground. The mushrooms are mostly depicted in profile or from below. Zhang's humble vantage point elevates this mundane subject to something worthy of aesthetic appreciation. Painted with great immediacy in abbreviated brushwork and rich ink, the tilting and leaning mushrooms create a lively syncopated rhythm. Zhang's choice of this everyday subject and his economy of means recall similar works by Shen Zhou (1427–1509), Xu Wei (1521–1593), Shitao (1642–1707), and Qi Baishi (see cat. nos. 25–27).

Like these masters, Zhang Daqian's "ink play" engages the viewer with its spontaneity. It also reveals something very personal. Zhang was a most discriminating connoisseur of Chinese cuisine and a chef of the first rank. One of the ingredients that he valued most was mushrooms, as confirmed by his inscription, where he shows off his knowledge of their regional variety. Most were unattainable after he left China in 1949, but for the banquets celebrating his mother's 104th and 105th birthdays in 1964 and 1965, three dishes were made with *koumo*.[1] At the time, Zhang was living in Brazil, so one can only imagine how he managed to acquire this exotic delicacy.

Artist's inscriptions and signature
(14 columns in cursive script)

In Nanzhao [in Yunnan Province]
there are *jizong*; in the north
there are *koumo*.[2]
Those from my homeland are
so rich in flavor.
Lately my hunger for them is
insatiable,
But what can I do except build
my dreams with *songrong*
[*matsutake* mushrooms]?

The *jizong* from southern Yunnan
and [*koumo*] from Zhangjiakou [in
Hebei Province] are two of the best
ingredients for cooking. Others,
such as the *sanpa* of Sichuan, the
majun of Hunan, the *lanhua* of West
River [in Guangdong and Guangxi
Provinces], and the *songhua* of
Gaolan [Lanzhou, Gansu Province],
are also top choices. None of them
can be acquired now. Only the
songrong mushrooms from Japan can
barely match them. In the summer
of the *yisi* year [1965], Yuan

The character *mo* [of *koumo*] is not
in the dictionary. [I used it] to make
the line rhyme. It makes one laugh so
I have inscribed this a second time.

南詔雞蒻北口蘑,
故山風味儘堪多。
新來口腹為災怪,
奈汝松茸繫夢何。

滇南雞蒻、張家口蘑菇為山廚雙絕。它如蜀中傘杷、湖南麻菌、西江蘭花、皋蘭松花皆一時之選,今俱不可得矣。惟日本松茸差堪繼矣。乙巳夏,爰

蘑字字書所無,趁韻而已,可發笑。又識。

Artist's seals
張爰長壽 *Zhang Yuan changshou*
大千富昌大吉 *Daqian fuchang daji*
法匠 *Fajiang*
季爰 *Jiyuan*

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Notes
1 Xu Qitai 2003, p. 189.
2 *Jizong* and *koumo* are different kinds of mushrooms.

16

張大千
Zhang Daqian (1899–1983)

Crabapple Blossoms
垂絲海棠圖
Chuisi haitang tu

Dated 1965. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 36¼ × 15⅜ in. (92 × 39 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.23)

Zhang Daqian painted this pendant bough of blossoms in the fall of 1965 while being treated for gallstones in New York.[1] The clusters of tiny pink flowers on delicate filaments and ovoid leaves identify the tree as a *chuisi haitang* (literally "crabapple with drooping filaments"), or a Hall crabapple, a species indigenous to China. This flower, a favorite of Zhang Daqian's, was planted in his Taipei garden in the late 1970s and early 1980s.[2] While living in São Paulo, Brazil, from 1954 to 1969, Zhang built a grand Chinese-style garden with flowers and trees of pure East Asian origin. Hall crabapple was very likely there too, which explains the high degree of naturalism in the floral image.

The fluid brushwork and moist color washes of this painting reveal how thoroughly Zhang Daqian had mastered the style of Chen Chun (1483–1544), whom he considered the best flower painter of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644).[3] The representation of the branches and leaves, on the other hand, shows an ingenious adaptation of a technique in depicting flowers developed by Shitao (1642–1707). Zhang described this method as follows: "[Shitao] first applied ink [brushstrokes] and ink washes; then light, suffuse color [washes] were laid on top."[4] Here, Zhang first drew the bough in dark ink. After it was completely dry, he applied a second layer of lighter ink to its upper part to make it volumetric. Finally, he added daubs of blue-green to suggest leaf buds or lichen. Leaves were rendered in the same manner. There is no bleeding between dark and light ink or between ink and color. The result is a vibrant, shimmering effect that makes the bough appear to quiver in the wind.

Artist's inscription and signature
(3 columns in cursive script)

Newly recovered from a minor illness after the Double Ninth Festival [October 3] in the *yisi* year [1965], I played with brush and ink to amuse myself. [Lin] Yutang asked me to inscribe it for his son-in-law. I look forward to Mr. Fangbai's [Richard Lai] instruction. Daqian, Zhang Yuan

乙巳重九後小病新愈，弄筆為快。語堂道兄囑題以奉貽令坦。方白先生即請法教。大千張爰

Artist's seals
張爰之印 *Zhang Yuan zhi yin*
大千居士 *Daqian jushi*

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Notes
1 Li Yongqiao 1987, pp. 362–64.
2 See Zhang Daqian's inscription to his *Illustrated Menu*, dated 1981, published in Fu 1991, pp. 290–91.
3 Ibid., pp. 59–60.
4 Quoted in ibid., p. 60.

17

張大千
Zhang Daqian (1899–1983)

Lotus
墨荷圖
Mohe tu

Dated 1965 [by seal]. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 50¾ × 13⅜ in. (129 × 34 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.25)

Throughout his career Zhang Daqian explored different ways of depicting lotus, from meticulous descriptions in brilliant colors and fine outlines to improvisational renderings in pure ink. Here Zhang has extended the expressive potential of bravura ink play pioneered by Xu Wei (1521–1593) and Zhu Da (1626–1705) by adding representational details to abstract patterns of color wash to create an evocative, atmospheric image. The image is executed in what Zhang referred to as his "splashed-ink" style, which he developed in the mid-1960s. Out of the formless mist of blue and gray washes rise a fading lotus flower and tattered leaves, which shelter a lotus bud and shafts of arrowroot plants below. The lotus petals are drawn in controlled, fluctuating contours, but the blotches of ink that define the leaves can only be read as such by virtue of their positioning. Next, layers of diffuse ink and blue wash were daubed onto the paper to create a colorful abstract halo around the lotus that is totally unlike anything in traditional Chinese painting.

Zhang Daqian started experimenting with new artistic idioms in the late 1950s as his vision became increasingly impaired by diabetic retinopathy.[1] His splashed-ink-and-color style of painting reached full maturity in the late 1960s. While this style strongly suggests inspiration from Abstract Expressionism, Zhang never entirely abandoned figuration. He interpreted his formal eclecticism by invoking Laozi: "Laozi said, 'Procure the essence, and transcend the phenomena.' This state is hard to attain. Images barely emerge out of an elusive haze—that's close enough."[2] This lotus, which reveals itself through a grayish blue nebula of saturated color, embodies Zhang's ambitious integration of East and West as well as past and present.

Artist's inscription and signature
(2 columns in cursive script)

Thanks to the silk-washers who
did not pluck them,
They remain in the rain to shelter
the mandarin ducks.

For the advice and correction
of my old friend [Lin] Yutang.
Your junior, Yuan

多謝浣紗人未折,
雨中留得蓋鴛鴦。

語堂老兄教正。弟爰

Artist's seals
大千 *Daqian*
乙巳 *Yisi*
東西南北之人 *Dongxi nanbei zhi ren* ("A man of the world")

Collectors' seals
黎林 *Li Lin* (impressed twice)
[Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Notes
1 For a summary of the factors that led to Zhang Daqian's painting in splashed ink and color, see Fu 1991, pp. 71–73.
2 Ibid., pp. 88–89. Translation by Shi-yee Liu.

18

張大千
Zhang Daqian (1899–1983)

Mountains Clearing after Rain
峰晴隔雨圖
Feng qing ge yu tu

Ca. 1965–70. Hanging scroll,
ink and color on paper,
52 × 23½ in. (132.1 × 59.7 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection,
Gift of Hsiang Ju Lin in memory
of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.510.5)

This small landscape exemplifies Zhang Daqian's splashed-ink-and-color method of painting, which he developed in the mid-1960s. In such paintings, which integrate abstract areas of color and figurative motifs, Zhang first applied washes of layered ink and intense colors in a semiautomatic manner, then added images of houses, trees, and other details to transform his atmospheric coloring into a suggestive three-dimensional landscape. According to Zhang, he did not fully master the technique of applying blue and green mineral pigments in an automatic manner until 1967, after having first experimented with various techniques of "shading, layering, splashing, staining, and flowing."[1]

Zhang always claimed that his splashed-ink compositions were inspired by Tang-dynasty precedents, but it is likely that he was more directly influenced by his exposure to Western-style abstract art, particularly that of Zao Wou-ki (b. 1921), a Chinese expatriate painter working in Paris. Zhang became acquainted with Zao during his first visit to Paris in 1956, when he held exhibitions at the Musée Cernuschi and the Louvre.[2] Twenty-two years Zhang's junior, Zao had just tentatively established himself in Paris. They could have met again during Zhang's subsequent visits in 1959, 1960, and 1962. According to Fu Shen, Zhang's earliest work in the semi-abstract, splashed-ink manner was done in Paris in 1956 for Guo Youshou, a diplomat who encouraged Chinese painters to adopt abstract art for the Western market and who introduced Zhang to Zao.[3] In the early 1950s Zao often saturated his canvases with overlapping layers of color onto which he would draw houses, boats, and other figurative motifs. His integration of the abstract with the figurative and the sense of atmospheric expansiveness through nuanced use of color may have inspired Zhang Daqian's splashed painting in both concept and approach.

Artist's inscription and signature
(8 columns in running script)

"The peaks along the river separate the clearing slopes from the rain." I can no longer remember who wrote this line, but I have always loved reciting it. Painted to present to [Lin] Yutang, my senior, for his correction. Your junior, Yuan

江上數峰晴隔雨。已不記憶為何人句，予每愛誦之，寫奉語堂吾兄印正。弟爰

Artist's seal
張大千常年大吉又日利
Zhang Daqian changnian daji you rili

Notes
1 Ba Tong 1999, pp. 33–34.
2 Li Yongqiao 1987, pp. 298–300. For a detailed account of the association between Zhang and Zao, see Bao Limin 1999, pp. 241–47.
3 Fu 1998, pp. 87–88; Bao Limin 1999, pp. 241–42.

19

郭大維
Guo Dawei (1919–2003)

Wine Jar and Melon
瓜甕圖
Gua weng tu

Dated 1959. Hanging scroll,
ink and color on paper,
36¾ × 17¼ in. (93.3 × 43.7 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection,
Partial and Promised Gift of
Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller,
and Larry C. Lai in memory
of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.36)

Born into a family of artists in Beijing, Guo Dawei (known as David Kwo, David Kwok, or Da-wei Kwo in the West) began his formal painting studies at the age of fifteen, and later took a three-year apprenticeship under Qi Baishi (see cat. nos. 25–27).[1] The lifelong bond between master and pupil led Qi to sometimes add inscriptions to Guo's paintings. Since Guo painted in the same abbreviated, expressive style as his mentor, his works are often mistaken for Qi's, especially when they bear Qi's inscriptions instead of his own.

This scroll demonstrates the visual impact of Guo Dawei's vigorous brushwork and bold use of color. A top-heavy jar, depicted in simple swaths of pale ink, looks ethereal, but the rattan shoulder wrap, with its dark, crisscross patterns, brings out its monumentality. A large melon, similarly executed in a few broad, swiftly applied strokes, both anchors and animates the composition. In discussing the aesthetics of Chinese painting and calligraphy, Guo has emphasized the qualities of *zhong* 重 (weightiness) and *da* 大 (enormity).[2] This work, composed simply of two powerful elements positioned at right angles, embodies his sense of mass and architectonic structure.

In 1954 Guo Dawei came to the United States to study Western art on a scholarship from the American government. He attended Iowa State and later Columbia University. His drawings, prints, watercolors, oil paintings, and sculptures done in the next few decades reveal his mastery of Western media with little trace of his Chinese training. Yet he remained committed to maintaining the integrity of Chinese traditions. In commenting on an exhibition of Guo's work in Chinese media at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1955, curator Charles F. Kelley wrote, "I am sure he [Guo] will never succumb to the temptation of trying to combine the techniques of two hemispheres."[3] Twenty-six years later Guo Dawei reiterated his skepticism on the merits of integrating East and West in his 1981 book on Chinese brushwork, which was based on his 1977 doctoral dissertation for New York University.[4]

Despite Guo's insistence on stylistic purity, however, the abstract forms and the unnatural color of the melon in this painting suggest that he was keenly aware of trends in Western modernist art.

Artist's inscription and signature
(2 columns in running script)

For the elegant instruction of the gracious couple Fangbai [Richard Lai] and [Lin] Taiyi.

Dawei, in a winter month in the *jihai* year [1959] while we were all visiting in London

方白太乙賢伉儷雅教。

大維，己亥冬月同客倫敦

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Notes

1 Tsuen-hsuin Tsien, "An Introduction to David Kwok and His Paintings," in Guo Dawei 1955, n.p.
2 Guo Dawei 1981, pp. 93–99.
3 Charles Fabens Kelley, "Foreword," in Guo Dawei 1955, n.p.
4 Guo Dawei 1981, p. 123. His doctoral dissertation has the same title.

20

郭大維
Guo Dawei (1919–2003)

Vegetables
野菜圖
Yecai tu

Ca. 1965. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 13 × 50⅜ in. (33 × 128 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Promised Gift of Jill Lai Miller and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2006.283)

This delightful handscroll presents a variety of vegetables in vibrant colors and diverse shapes. Executed in Guo Dawei's spontaneous, abbreviated manner, the coarse lines, especially those defining the mustard greens at the far left, exhibit the raw, artless quality (*sheng* 生) that Guo also valued in calligraphy.[1] The cool hues of brown, green, and purple alternate with bright orange, red, and yellow. Guo's inclusion of the mustard greens' yellow flowers—an indication of overripeness and, therefore, rarely seen in this genre—enabled him to make the rhythmic alternation of color in the scroll end on a high note, further enhancing the sense of exuberance and joy.

Brushwork and coloration, however, was not Guo Dawei's primary concern as a painter. Rather, he considered compositional mastery the most crucial requirement of a work of art and the hardest quality to attain.[2] In this scroll the alternation between slight scattered vegetables and compact monumental ones creates a lively compositional syncopation that reaches a crescendo with the extravagantly extroverted form of the mustard greens.

Guo Dawei may have become acquainted with Lin Yutang when he was studying at Columbia University in the late 1950s. According to Lin's daughter, Xiangru, Guo Dawei painted this work for Lin Yutang and his wife before they moved to Taipei in the summer of 1966.

Artist's inscription and signature
(1 column in running script)

For the enlightened inspection of [Lin] Yutang and his wife, Dawei

語堂先生夫人道鑑, 大維

Artist's seal
郭大維 *Guo Dawei*

Notes
1 Guo Dawei 1981, p. 82.
2 Ibid., p. 69.

21

郭大維
Guo Dawei (1919–2003)

Lotus
紅荷圖
Honghe tu

Ca. 1960–65. Horizontal panel, ink and color on paper, 26½ × 53⅛ in. (67.2 × 135 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.37)

This large horizontal painting chronicles the life cycle of the lotus. At the center is a flower in full bloom, flanked by broad leaves spreading vivaciously on top of long, resilient stalks. To the right, two buds have just emerged amid a cluster of caltrop plants, while a seed pod dips down between two not yet unfurled leaves. To the left, a pale leaf, tattered and drooping, sets off bare or broken stems. Although Guo painted lotus often, compositions with a distinct temporal dimension like this one are rare.

The distinctive pink color of the lotus—*yanghong* 洋紅 or "Western red"—was first imported into China from Mexico in the early twentieth century. Guo Dawei's mentor, Qi Baishi, and many painters of the Shanghai School often used it in their art. Apart from color, what captures the eye in this work are the sinuous lotus stems that cut across the picture surface. Although rendered in subtly gradated ink for a hint at rotundity, they are calligraphic lines that create a shallow space through overlapping and contrasting tonality. This work demonstrates Guo's idea that the "space-consciousness" in Chinese painting, unlike that in western art, is "calligraphically created."[1]

Artist's inscription and signature
(1 column in running script)

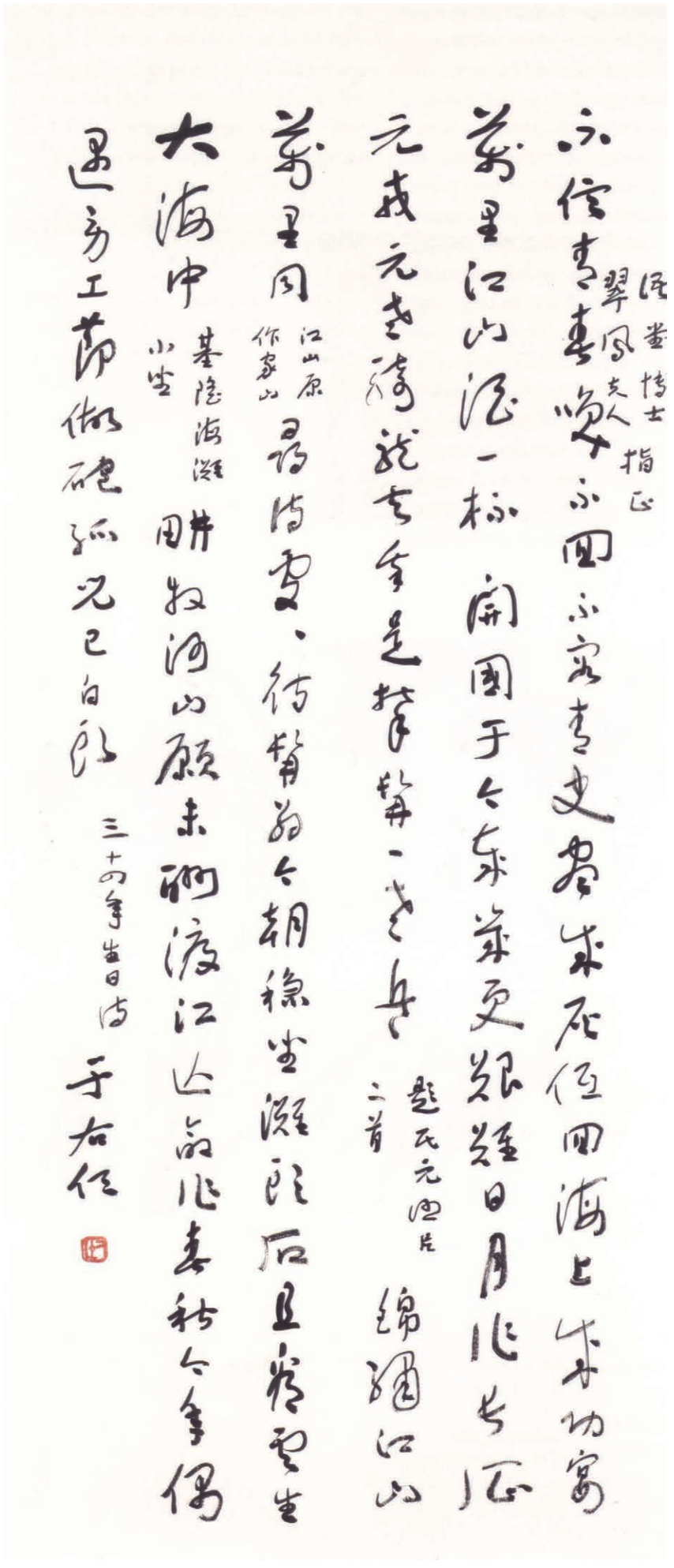
For the enlightened inspection of [Lin] Yutang and his wife, painted by Dawei

語堂先生夫人道鑑, 大維畫

Artist's seal
郭大維 *Guo Dawei*

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Note
1 Guo Dawei 1981, p. 66.



22

于右任
Yu Youren (1879–1964)

Four Poems in Cursive Script
草書四詩
Caoshu si shi

Datable to 1958. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 42⅛ × 18½ in. (107 × 47 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.6)

Artist's inscription and signature
(8 columns in running script)

To Dr. [Lin] Yutang and Madame Cuifeng for their correction:

I don't believe that youth cannot
be retrieved.
I will not allow our past glory to
turn to ashes.
Recalling the banquet in Shanghai
celebrating our victory,
I toast the ten thousand miles of
streams and mountains with a
cup of wine.

Since the founding of the Republic,
how the times have changed!
Through those difficult years we
campaigned long and hard.
The founding fathers have passed
away;

In this hanging scroll Yu Youren transcribes four of his own quatrains in seven-character meter. The first three were composed in 1957, the last in 1945.[1] Together they provide a rough sketch of Yu's political life. Yu dedicated this work to Lin Yutang and his wife, presumably when the Lins first visited Taiwan in October 1958. When Lin visited Taiwan again in 1966, Yu had passed away. But Lin had taken notice of Yu's calligraphy long before that. In *My Country and My People* (1935) he singled out Yu's work for its "beauty of momentum" achieved through precarious structural balance of individual characters and artistic use of blank space.[2]

Yu Youren composed the fourth poem on his sixty-seventh birthday in 1945 while he was living in Chongqing (Sichuan Province) during the final days of the Sino-Japanese War. In it he recalled his youth in Shaanxi Province in China's northwest, when he aspired to make China a powerful nation by serving in the Manchu government. He passed the provincial examination in 1903, but on his way to Kaifeng, Henan Province, the next spring to take the metropolitan examination he was informed that he had been listed by the authorities as someone "to be executed upon arrest," due to his harsh critique of current politics in poems that he had published in 1903.[3] Taking refuge in Shanghai under a false name, he became acquainted with several revolutionaries, and his zeal to save China took a radically different course. In 1906 he joined Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary organization, which eventually overthrew the monarchy he had originally set out to serve.

The triumph of Sun Yat-sen and his comrades was short lived. On January 1, 1912, Sun assumed his post as the first president of the newly founded Republic, but he resigned on February 13, conceding the presidency to Yuan Shikai (1859–1916), an ambitious, self-serving warlord in control of northern China, in order to achieve a peaceful unification of the nation.

The first two poems transcribed here were composed in 1957 when Yu Youren saw a photograph in which he appears at a banquet hosted by Sun Yat-sen after his resignation in 1912. Despite Sun's unexpected setback, the banquet celebrated the hard-won victory of the revolution. Yu Youren, thirty-three at the time, must have been one of the youngest of the thirty-four attendees. When he saw the old photograph in 1957, he was the only one still alive. During the intervening four decades, Yu had witnessed attempts to restore imperial rule, power struggles among militant warlords, the Sino-Japanese War, and the persistent conflicts between the Nationalists and the Communists, culminating in the Nationalist retreat to Taiwan in 1949. A key figure in the Nationalist government—Yu served as head of the Censorial Ministry from 1931 until his death—he was always a devoted patriot as these two poems indicate.

Although Yu remained loyal to the Nationalist Party, his fourth poem, composed in 1945, reveals his sympathy for certain Marxist ideas. In that year, Yu's birthday, the twentieth day of the third lunar month, happened to fall on May 1—Labor Day. Labor Day was hardly celebrated in pre-Communist China, but Yu's poem not only announces it, but also recalls his blue-collar roots as a farmhand, shepherd, and laborer in a fireworks factory.[4] Throughout his life Yu identified with the oppressed masses. It was only fitting that he was appointed director of the Ministry of Laborers and Peasants in 1924. After a visit to the Soviet Union in 1926, he proclaimed Marxism to be the antidote to the straying Nationalist Party and the way to equality of all people in the world.[5] Four months after he composed this birthday poem, Yu met with Mao Zedong (1893–1976) and Zhou Enlai (1898–1976) to explore the possibility of forming a joint government.

Yu Youren was seventy years old when he followed the Nationalist government to Taiwan. Nostalgia for his homeland and a yearning to return permeate his third poem, composed in the spring of 1957 when he was on the beach with his second daughter's family at Jilong, on the northern tip of Taiwan. Envisioning the scenery across the Taiwan Strait, Yu must also have been thinking of other family members—his wife of fifty years and his eldest daughter, both of whom stayed behind on the mainland after 1949. Instead of melancholy, the poem ends in calm anticipation of return and reunion. The future, however, turned out to be otherwise.

I am an old soldier still stroking
his beard.
—Two Poems on a Photograph
Taken in the First Year of the
Republic [1912]

Splendid streams and mountains
remain the same across ten
thousand miles.
Let this bearded old man search
everywhere for poetry.
Sitting square on a rock on the
beach at this moment,
I watch the clouds rising from
the vast ocean.
—Casually Sitting on the Beach
at Jilong [in northern Taiwan]

Unable to fulfill my wish to cultivate
and pasture the land,
I ran for my life across the [Yangzi]
River to make history.
This year [my birthday] happens
to be on Labor Day.
The orphan who used to make
fireworks has become an old man.
—A Poem Composed on My
Birthday in the Thirty-fourth
Year of the Republic [1945]
Yu Youren

語堂博士翠鳳夫人指正

不信青春喚不回，
不容青史盡成灰。
低回海上成功宴，
萬里江山酒一杯。

開國于今歲幾更，
艱難日月作長征。
元戎元老騎龍去，
我是攀髯一老兵。
題民元照片二首

錦繡江山萬里同江山原作家山，
尋詩處處待髯翁。
今朝穩坐灘頭石，
且看雲生大海中。
基隆海灘小坐

耕牧河山願未酬，
渡江亡命作春秋。
今年偶遇勞工節，
做砲孤兒已白頭。
三十四年生日詩
于右任

Artist's seal
右任 *Youren*

Notes

1 The dates for the first three poems come from Yu Youren 1984, pp. 284–86, 289–90.

2 Lin Yutang 1935, pp. 296, 304–5.

3 Yu's poetry anthology, *Banku banxiao lou shicao*, was published in his hometown Sanyuan, Shaanxi. He barely escaped being captured. For the thrilling details, see Yu Youren, "Wode qingnian shiqi" (My Early Life [1948]), in Yu Youren 1999, p. 5.

4 On Yu's childhood, see ibid., pp. 2–3.

5 See the thirty-odd poems Yu composed during his trip to the Soviet Union in the summer of 1926 in Yu Youren 1984, pp. 140–61.

23

于右任
Yu Youren (1879–1964)

Three Poems by Lu You and Du Fu in Cursive Script
草書陸游杜甫詩三首
Caoshu Lu You Du Fu shi san shou

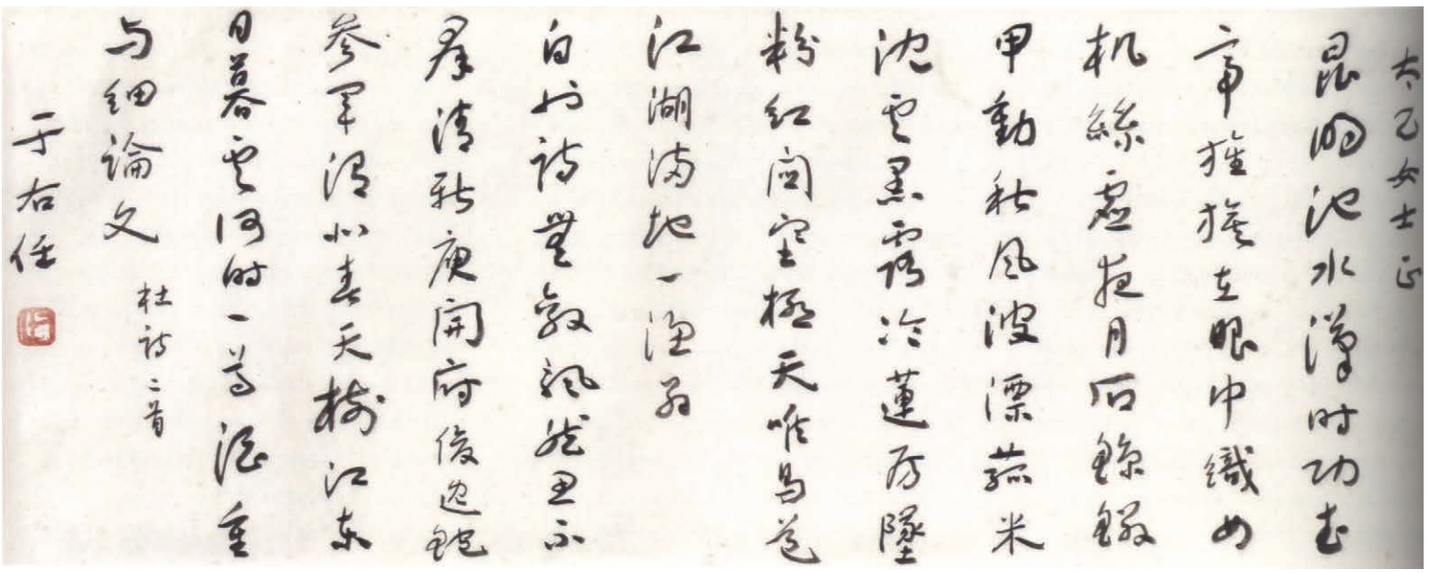
Datable to 1959. Handscroll, ink on paper. Each of the two calligraphies: 10¼ × 27 in. (26 × 68.5 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.7)

This handscroll consists of a pair of calligraphies. The first (on the right) is a transcription of a poem by Lu You (1125–1210) that is dedicated to Li Ming (Richard Lai). The second (on the left) was written for Lin Taiyi and transcribes two poems by Du Fu (712–770): the seventh poem from "Eight Poems on Autumn Moods" (Qiuxing bashou) and "Thinking of Li Bai on a Spring Day" (Chunri yi Li Bai). According to Richard Lai, these calligraphies were written for him and his wife in 1959 when they were introduced to Yu during a visit to Taipei.

Yu Youren had a distinguished political career and was a capable poet, but he is best known today as a calligrapher. He cultivated an exquisite style in the early 1930s by integrating the vigorous, angular characteristics of epigraphic calligraphy in his running-standard script. His great contribution to the field, however, was his ambitious project to standardize cursive script, as exemplified by the present work.

Yu began to examine the evolution of cursive script around 1927. At the time, cursive calligraphy, a highly personalized form of writing, had become very difficult to read or learn, nor did it lend itself to true originality. To enhance legibility so as to revive this art, Yu set forth four principles for his standardization project: easy to read, easy to write, precise, and beautiful. He and his colleagues published a textbook of a thousand most frequently used characters written in the standard cursive script (*biaozhun caoshu* 標準草書) in 1936.[1] This new script



Artist's inscription and signature
(27 columns in cursive script)

To Mr. Fangbai (Richard Lai):

I remember visiting the ponds
  and pavilions at Xiuchuan
  [in Yiwu, Zhejiang Province].
How melancholy I felt standing by
  the balustrade in the setting sun!
This old man has traveled ten
  thousand miles;
The light mist, as before, sends
  off his lone boat.
Yearning for home, I have missed
  perch stew for too long;
Spring colors have just returned
  to the isles of fragrant herbs.
I'll buy a straw cape to fish in
  the rain;
To whom should I decline in
  advance [to catch] the seagulls?[6]
—Lu Fangweng [Lu You, 1125–
  1210], "On the Xiuchuan Station"
Yu Youren

For Madame Taiyi's correction:

The waters of Kunming Pool, a
  remnant from the days of the Han,
The banners and pennons of
  Emperor Wu [r. 141–87 B.C.]
  here before my eyes.
Silk of the loom of the Weaving Girl
  vague in the moonlight,
Scales and fins of the stone whale
  stir in the autumn wind.
The waves toss a *gumi* seed,
  black in sinking cloud,
And dew chills the lotus pod,
  red of falling powder.
Barrier passes stretch to the
  heavens, a road for only the birds;
Lakes and rivers fill the earth,
  one aging fisherman.[7]

[Li] Bai's poetry has no match.
Untrammeled, he never cares
  to conform.
Fresh as Commander Yu [Yu Xin,
  513–581];
Elegant and free as Adjutant Bao
  [Bao Zhao, 412?–466].
On the north of the Wei River
  [in Shaanxi Province] grow
  spring trees;
Over the lower Yangzi hover the
  twilight clouds.
When shall we have a cup of wine
And once again discuss literature
  together?
—Two poems by Du Fu [712–770]
Yu Youren

方白先生

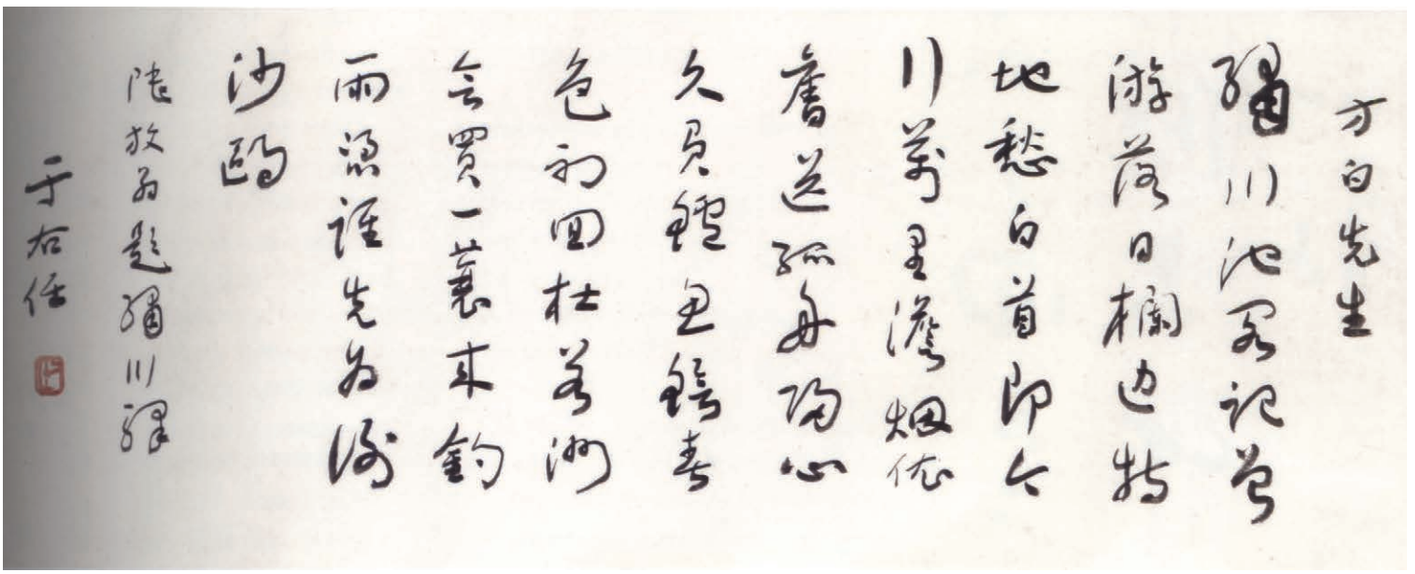
繡川池閣記曾游,
落日欄边特地愁。
白首即今行萬里,
澹烟依舊送孤舟。
歸心久負鱸魚鱠,

shuns flowing ligatures between characters, even though the dynamic momentum they create is essential to the aesthetic appeal of traditional cursive writing.[2] By insisting on the separateness of individual characters, Yu made it clear that his reform was more pragmatic than aesthetic. The eminent scholar Wu Jingheng (1865–1953) once claimed that Yu Youren's contribution to the innovation of Chinese writing was second only to Xu Shen's (ca. 58–ca. 147) classic, *Shuowen jiezi* (An Etymological Dictionary).[3]

The present work demonstrates how rigorously Yu Youren observed his new principles. The ligatures between component lines within a character never extend into the following character. The fish (魚) radical that appears in three consecutive characters in the sixth column of the first poem (鱸, 魚, 鱠), and in two characters at the end of the third column of the second poem (鯨, 鱗), is written the same way each time. This adherence to a single standard form contrasts sharply with the practice of most calligraphers, who tend to vary the form of a character when it reappears in a piece of writing.[4]

While the forms of the radicals are consistent throughout, the nonradical part of a character may vary in form when combined with different radicals. For instance, even though 寺 constitutes the right part of both 時 (sixth character, first column of second poem) and 詩 (third character, first column of third poem), it is written differently next to different radicals. It indicates that, in deciding on the standard shorthand for each character, Yu Youren conceived its structure as an organic whole rather than as a mechanical assembly of preset parts.

Like Lin Yutang's dedication to the invention of a scientific Chinese typewriter in the 1930s and 1940s, Yu Youren's calligraphic reform was triggered by a sense of national crisis in the face of aggressive foreign powers and their technical superiority. In the preface to the first edition of his *Thousand-Character Essay in Standard Cursive Writing* (1936), Yu states that the future of a nation relies very much on whether its writing system is easy to use. Invoking Darwin's theory of natural selection, he cautions that nations without an efficient means of communication will inevitably perish in the global competition.[5]



春色初回杜若洲。
會買一蓑來釣雨，
憑誰先為謝沙鷗。
　陸放翁題繡川驛
　于右任

太乙女士正

昆明池水漢時功，
武帝旌旗在眼中。
織女機絲虛夜月，
石鯨鱗甲動秋風。
波漂菰米沉雲黑，
露冷蓮房墜粉紅。
關塞極天唯鳥道，
江湖滿地一漁翁。

白也詩無敵，
飄然思不羣。
清新庾開府，
俊逸鮑參軍。
渭北春天樹，
江東日暮雲。
何時一尊酒，
重與細論文。
　杜詩二首
　于右任

Artist's seal
右任 *Youren*

Notes

1 On Yu's compilation of the "Thousand-Character Essay" (Qianziwen), a classic textbook for learning Chinese characters, see Wang Cheng 1998, pp. 9–11. For a thorough study, see Li and Cai 1999, pp. 74–82.

2 Yu derived this principle from the calligraphies in ancient draft-cursive script. See Li and Cai 1999, p. 71; Fu 1977, p. 97.

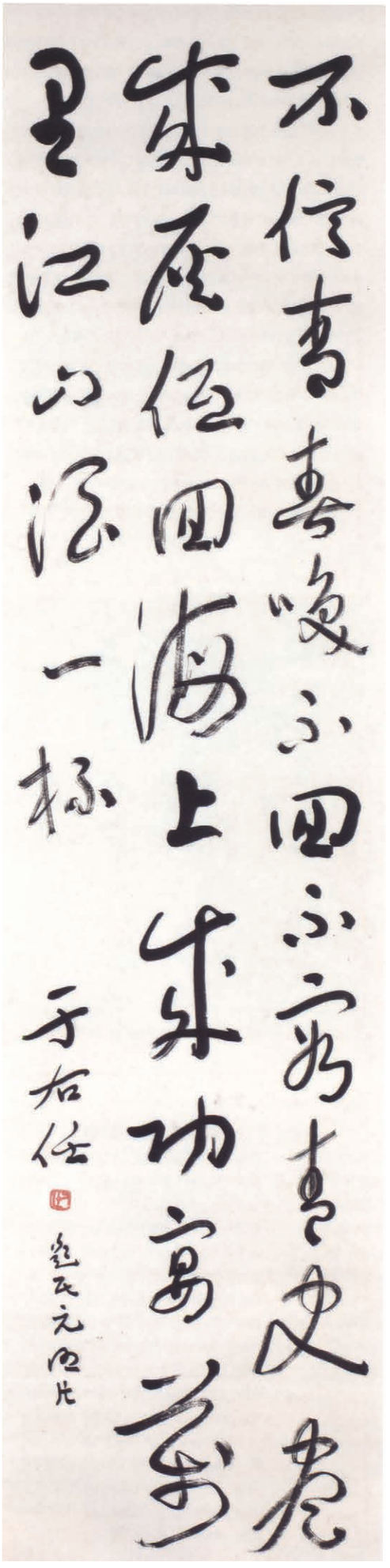
3 Li and Cai 1999, p. 73.

4 There are occasional exceptions to the rules in the calligraphy of Yu and his colleagues. See Li and Cai 1999, pp. 79–80.

5 Yu Youren, "Preface" to *Biaozhun caoshu caosheng Qianwen* (The "Thousand-Character Essay" in Standard Cursive Script Selected from Earlier Masters [1936]), in Li Yixing 1998, p. 299.

6 The line refers to a story in *Liezi*. A fisherman likes seagulls. Hundreds of seagulls follow him when he goes fishing on the sea. His father asks him to catch one for a pet. The next day the seagulls fly around him, but will not land on his boat. The story cautions against scheming for personal gain in favor of living in harmony with nature.

7 Translation after Stephen Owen, *The Great Age of Chinese Poetry: The High T'ang* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 214.



24

于右任
Yu Youren (1879–1964)

Poem in Cursive Script
草書七言絕句
Caoshu qiyan jueju

Hanging scroll, ink on paper,
53½ × 13⅜ in. (136 × 34 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection,
Partial and Promised Gift of
Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller,
and Larry C. Lai in memory
of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.8)

Here Yu Youren has written out a quatrain in seven-character meter in the "standardized" cursive script that he developed in the 1930s. Although his innovative calligraphic style was motivated primarily by pragmatic concerns, his writings are indisputably works of art. As Shen Fu has observed, it was not Yu Youren's purpose to distinguish himself in calligraphy, but his erudition, magnanimity, and diligence earned him the status of a modern giant, who elevated cursive calligraphy to a height not seen since the seventeenth century.[1]

This work embodies the principles that Yu Youren set for standard cursive writing. Where characters appear more than once—青 (third and tenth characters, first column), 不 (sixth and eighth characters, first column), and 成 (first and seventh characters, second column)—they are abbreviated in an identical manner.[2] There are no ligatures linking adjacent characters; instead, momentum is built through rhythmic variations in character size and ink tonality. The configuration of the characters exhibits a strong rectangularity. Rare among cursive calligraphers, Yu never willfully compromises columnar integrity. But whether tall or squat, characters remain responsive to one another For Yu, calligraphy, first and foremost, must show vitality. Asked by a younger colleague about the art of calligraphy, Yu replied simply: "no dead brushstrokes [*wu sibi* 無死筆]."[3]

Up to his mid-fifties Yu devoted himself to mastering the simple but vigorous style of Northern Dynasties (386–581) stele writing. Later, when he began to concentrate on cursive script, his solid discipline in the stele tradition enabled him to transform the brush methods and structural concepts of conventional cursive writing.[4] Yu's round brushwork creates smooth, relatively even-width lines that brim with inner strength and taut resilience. The center of structural gravity of individual characters tends to be lower than normal to enhance the sense of stability. The principal horizontal, vertical, or diagonal stroke in each character exudes sweeping power and weight. His cursive calligraphy, in short, is more raw than refined.[5]

Yu Youren became concerned with the growing mannerism seen in contemporary calligraphy in the stele style that stressed both ends of a brushstroke with exaggerated counter movements. To rectify this tendency, Yu composed a poem, "Song on Writing" (Xiezi ge 寫字歌), in which he advocated naturalness and efficiency:

At the beginning of each stroke, the brush should not linger.
At the closing of each stroke, the brush should not strike a pose.
Just do it naturally,
Then the writing will be swift, brisk, and beautiful in itself.[6]

Yu Youren's poetry in traditional genres ranks among the very best in the Republic era. He insisted that poetry be easily accessible and employ rhyme schemes and tonal regulations used in modern Mandarin.[7] With simple language he invested his best works with intense emotions that are deeply moving but never sentimental.

It is unusual but significant that Yu Youren's poetic models were the Southern Song loyalists Wen Tianxiang (1236–1283) and Xie Fangde (1226–1289), whose reputations rest on their patriotic zeal rather than their poetry.[8] This poem, one of his well-known compositions, was composed in 1957 upon seeing an old photograph taken in 1912 of him with other leaders of the Republican revolution that ended China's last dynasty. The photograph was taken at a historical moment of painful setbacks in China's struggle toward democracy, but an average reader can sense the poet's passion and pathos without detailed knowledge of the occasion. Boldly breaking with poetic convention, the first two lines begin with an adamant negative phrase that powerfully conveys his quixotic defiance of political adversity and old age. Instead, he invokes the Republican triumph over millennia of imperial rule, and toasts China's eternal landscape—clearly with the conviction that he will one day return.

Artist's inscription and signature
(3 columns in cursive script)

I don't believe that youth cannot be retrieved.
I will not allow our past glory to turn to ashes.
Recalling the banquet in Shanghai celebrating our victory,
I toast the ten thousand miles of streams and mountains with a cup of wine.

Yu Youren, on a photograph taken in the first year of the Republic [1912]

不信青春喚不回,
不容青史盡成灰。
低回海上成功宴,
萬里江山酒一杯。

于右任題民元照片

Artist's seal
右任 *Youren*

Recent Provenance
This scroll was acquired by Richard Lai and his wife in Hong Kong in the 1980s.

Notes

1 See Shen Fu's comment on Yu's transcription of Wang Shouren's poem, "Fanhai shi," in Li Zhiguang 2005, no. 66. n.p.

2 The first character of the poem is also 不, but written in the running-standard script.

3 See Du Zhonggao's comments on Yu's "Xiezi ge" in Li Zhiguang 2005, no. 69. n.p.

4 Yu's experiment in this regard followed the initiation of late Qing calligraphers such as Zhao Zhiqian and Shen Cengzhi, but he was the one who focused on it for decades.

5 For an illuminating summary of the characteristics of Yu's cursive writing, see Lin Quanju 1998, pp. 112–15.

6 See Du Zhonggao's comment on Yu's "Xiezi ge" in Li Zhiguang 2005, no. 69. n.p.

7 See Yu's lecture on Poets' Day of 1955 and 1958 in Yu Youren 1978, pp. 186, 210–11.

8 See Yu Youren, "Wode qingnian shiqi" (My Early Life [1948]), in Yu Youren 1999, p. 3.

25

齊白石
Qi Baishi (1864–1957)

Plum Blossoms
紅梅圖
Hongmei tu

Dated 1950. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 27 × 13¾ in. (68.5 × 35 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.1)

This painting of mauve blossoming plum is unusual in Qi Baishi's oeuvre because Qi loved the cheerfulness of bright red and usually painted plum blossoms in that color. The pendant branches intersect with one another, forming an abstract network of calligraphic lines that is barely organic.

While Qi Baishi studied Jin Nong's (1687–1763) ink plum painting earlier in his career, his red plums are primarily inspired by Wu Changshuo (1844–1927), who introduced an epigraphic aesthetic to the art of painting. In this painting the absence of spatial depth, the even width and smooth turns of the twigs, and the pronounced parallelism of the interlaced branches attest to Qi's indebtedness to Wu as well as his solid discipline in seal-carving and epigraphy.

Qi Baishi's paintings are first of all reflections of things and feelings that he had personally experienced in life; the ideas conventionally associated with the imagery are only secondary.[1] In the case of plum blossoms, Qi's fondness of this subject is, in great measure, due to nostalgia for his hometown in Hunan, where his dwelling, named "Studio of Hundred Plums," was surrounded by a plum grove.[2]

This painting, dated 1950, was done when Qi Baishi was eighty-seven (eighty-eight *sui*), but he recorded his age as ninety *sui*. This is because a fortune-teller told him his seventy-fifth year would be disastrous, so when he turned seventy-five *sui* he began adding two years to his age to avoid the unlucky time.[3] Born in Hunan, a region rich in myths and legends since antiquity, and brought up in a peasant family, Qi revealed his strong belief in the supernatural in this eccentric way of recording his age.[4]

Artist's inscription and signature
(1 column in regular script)

Old man Baishi, in the *gengyin* year [1950] at ninety *sui*

白石老人庚寅九十歲

Artist's seal
白石 *Baishi*

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Recent Provenance
The painting was acquired by Richard Lai in London from Chen Yuan 陳源, the UNESCO delegate from China in 1954–55. Chen, in turn, was selling the painting on behalf of Guo Youshou 郭有守, the former UNESCO delegate. Guo's wife was a neighbor of Qi Baishi and acquired the work directly from him.

Notes
1 Lang Shaojun 1997, p. 175.
2 Ibid., pp. 175–76.
3 Li Jinxi et al. 1999, p. 236.
4 Lang Shaojun 1997, p. 28.

26

齊白石
Qi Baishi (1864–1957)

Five Crabs
五蟹圖
Wu xie tu

Dated 1950. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 40⅛ × 13⅜ in. (102 × 34 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection
Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.2)

Qi Baishi often said that he never painted things that he had never seen.[1] He doubtless knew the free-form crab paintings of Shen Zhou (1427–1509) and Xu Wei (1521–1593) early on, but crabs did not become an important subject until he moved into a new studio, Jiping Tang, in 1913: "Behind my Jiping Tang there is a well next to a rock. The ground around the well is covered with patches of verdant moss, across which fat crabs sometimes tread sidewise. I have observed them carefully. When a crab moves, its legs rise and fall in strict order despite their great number. This is something crab painters in the world do not know."[2] Here Qi painted the freshwater crabs that he knew so well. Compared with salt-water crabs, the body of a freshwater crab, as faithfully portrayed here, is flatter and more rectangular, with a thicker shell.[3] Qi spent decades perfecting his depiction of a crab's shell. In his fifties he rendered it as a blotch of ink. Later, it turned into two brushstrokes. He started using three strokes with little variation in ink tonality in his sixties. It was not until his seventies that Qi fully captured the form and texture of a crab's shell in his painting.[4]

This work is representative of his mature style, when naturalism and abstraction found a new balance. The bodies of the crabs are brushed in three or four very wet strokes with a distinct crease down the center. The subtle gradation of the ink suggests the undulation of the shell's surface. The eyes have become two short slanting lines. The legs are done swiftly in three distinct but linked strokes, which would be difficult for a painter with a weaker hand.[5] The claws, as circular splotches of ink with two simple converging lines, are reduced to geometric abstraction. Set against a blank ground, the five crabs confront or collide with one another. Though hardly overlapping, they create a sense of spatial recession through their diminishing scale.

During the last forty years of his life Qi lived in Beijing, but he always managed to stay clear of political and cultural factionalism.[6] He befriended people of radically different persuasions. His passive tolerance of things of which he might not approve is betrayed in the sarcastic tone of his inscription to this painting. The Chinese term for the sideways movement of crabs, *hengxing* 橫行, is also a metaphor for impudent behavior. Qi often humorously compared crabs to presumptuous people. Here he states that he will simply stand aside and let these creatures have their way.

Artist's inscription and signature
(1 column in standard script)

I just fold my arms and watch you gentlemen go.

In the *gengyin* year [1950] at ninety *sui*, Baishi

袖手看君行。

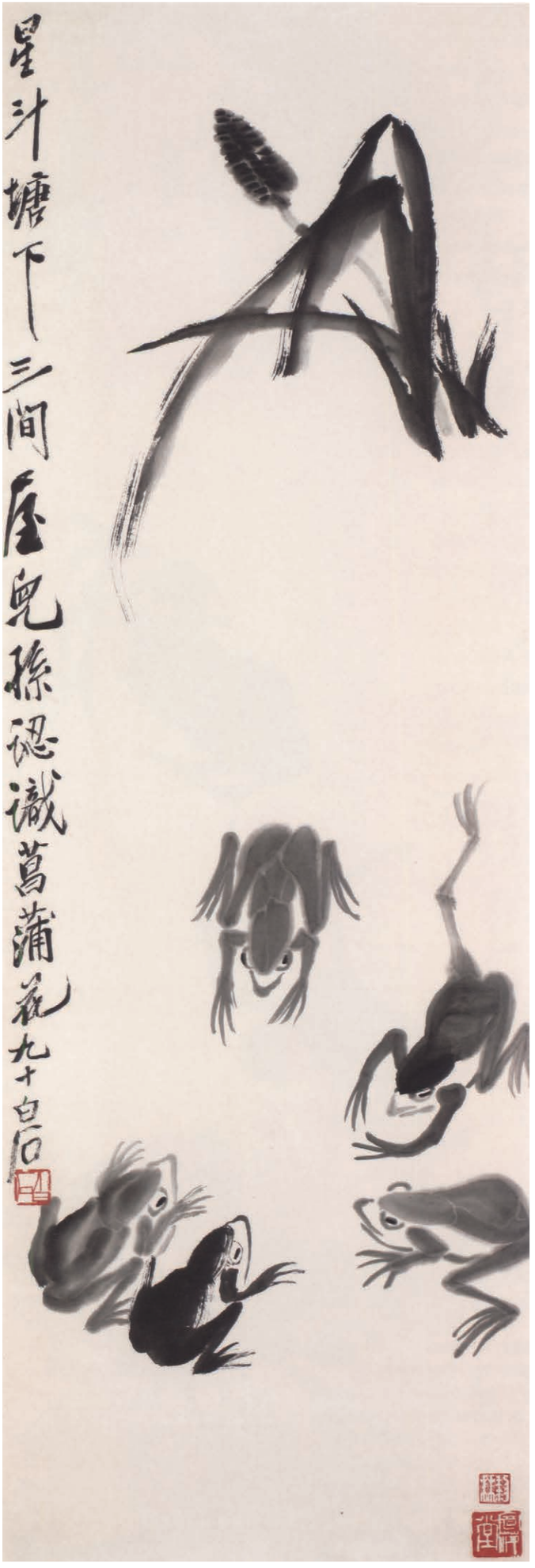
庚寅九十歲白石

Artist's seals
白石 *Baishi*
寄萍堂 *Jiping Tang*

Collector's seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Recent Provenance
The painting was acquired by Richard Lai in London from Chen Yuan 陳源, the UNESCO delegate from China in 1954–55. Chen, in turn, was selling the painting on behalf of Guo Youshou 郭有守, the former UNESCO delegate. Guo's wife was a neighbor of Qi Baishi and acquired the work directly from him.

Notes
1 Hu and Hu 1963, p. 109.
2 Ibid., p. 64.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid., p. 65.
5 Ibid.
6 Lang Shaojun 1997, pp. 9–12.



27

齊白石
Qi Baishi (1864–1957)

Flowering Calamus and Frogs
菖蒲群蛙圖
Changpu qunwa tu

Datable to 1950. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 40⅛ × 13⅝ in. (102 × 34.5 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.3)

Qi Baishi often painted fish, crabs, and shrimp in the early years of his Beijing period (ca. 1920–1957), when his art reached maturity, but he seldom painted frogs. As a professional artist, however, he had to cater to the popular demand for sets of four hanging scrolls, so frogs became his fourth aquatic animal.[1] The frogs in this painting, rendered in a few deft brushstrokes, face one another as if engaged in conversation. The graded ink washes model the musculature of the frogs' heads, torsos, and legs with remarkable precision. The calamus plant, indicative of the frogs' watery habitat, sways in the wind. Qi combines ink wash and dots to capture the velvety texture of its flower, while using a brush with separated bristles to render the frayed ends of its wavy leaves.

After he moved to Beijing in his mid-fifties, Qi often drew inspiration from memories of his hometown environment in Hunan. The Starry Pond mentioned in this inscription refers to Qi's birthplace.[2]

Another important source of inspiration was the art of the Ming loyalist Bada Shanren (Zhu Da, 1626–1705), which Qi began to study intensively in the 1900s.[3] In this painting the simple, expressive brushwork, strong compositional design, and the frogs' animated expressions are clearly inspired by Bada's psychologically evocative imagery. But Qi infused these traits with his own personality. While Bada's iconic birds and fish look aloof, angry, or even aggressive, Qi Baishi's frogs appear quite convivial. Bada's complex psyche as a loyalist to the vanquished Ming dynasty was a world away from Qi's jovial temperament and fond memories of country life. There is also a practical reason why Qi Baishi tempered Bada Shanren's edgy style with warmth and humor. Qi's Bada-inspired paintings were not well received in Beijing so, at the advice of Chen Hengke (1876–1923), Qi replaced his austere style with an exuberant, cheerful manner derived from the popular works of Wu Changshuo (1844–1927).[4]

Artist's inscription and signature
(1 column in running script)

By the Starry Pond [Xingdou Tang]
were three houses,
Where sons and grandsons knew
the calamus flowers.

At ninety, Baishi

星斗塘下三間屋,
兒孫認識菖蒲花。

九十白石

Artist's seals
白石 *Baishi*
寄萍堂 *Jiping Tang*

Collector's seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Recent Provenance
The painting was acquired by Richard Lai in London from Chen Yuan 陳源, the UNESCO delegate from China in 1954–55. Chen, in turn, was selling the painting on behalf of Guo Youshou 郭有守, the former UNESCO delegate. Guo's wife was a neighbor of Qi Baishi and acquired the work directly from him.

Notes
1 Hu and Hu 1963, p. 68.
2 Qi Baishi 1962, p. 2.
3 Hu and Hu 1963, pp. 20–22; Lang Shaojun 1997, pp. 96–99.
4 Hu and Hu 1963, pp. 24–26; Lang Shaojun 1997, p. 129.

28

仿齊白石
After Qi Baishi (1864–1957)

Frogs under Banana Tree
蕉下鳴蛙圖
Jiaoxia mingwa tu

After 1957. Woodblock print mounted as a hanging scroll, ink on paper, 96¼ × 28 in. (244.5 × 71 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.4)

This virtuoso woodblock reproduction of a painting by Qi Baishi was made by the Rong Bao Zhai studio in Beijing.[1] To reproduce Qi's powerful composition—a lush banana tree towering over playful frogs—the printers used multiple woodblocks and carefully controlled their inking to capture the full range of wet to dry brushwork and the subtle shifts in ink tonality found in the original.

Artist's inscription and signature
(2 columns in running script)

Qi Huang, Baishi

Baishi inscribed this again at ninety-seven *sui* [in 1957]

齊璜白石

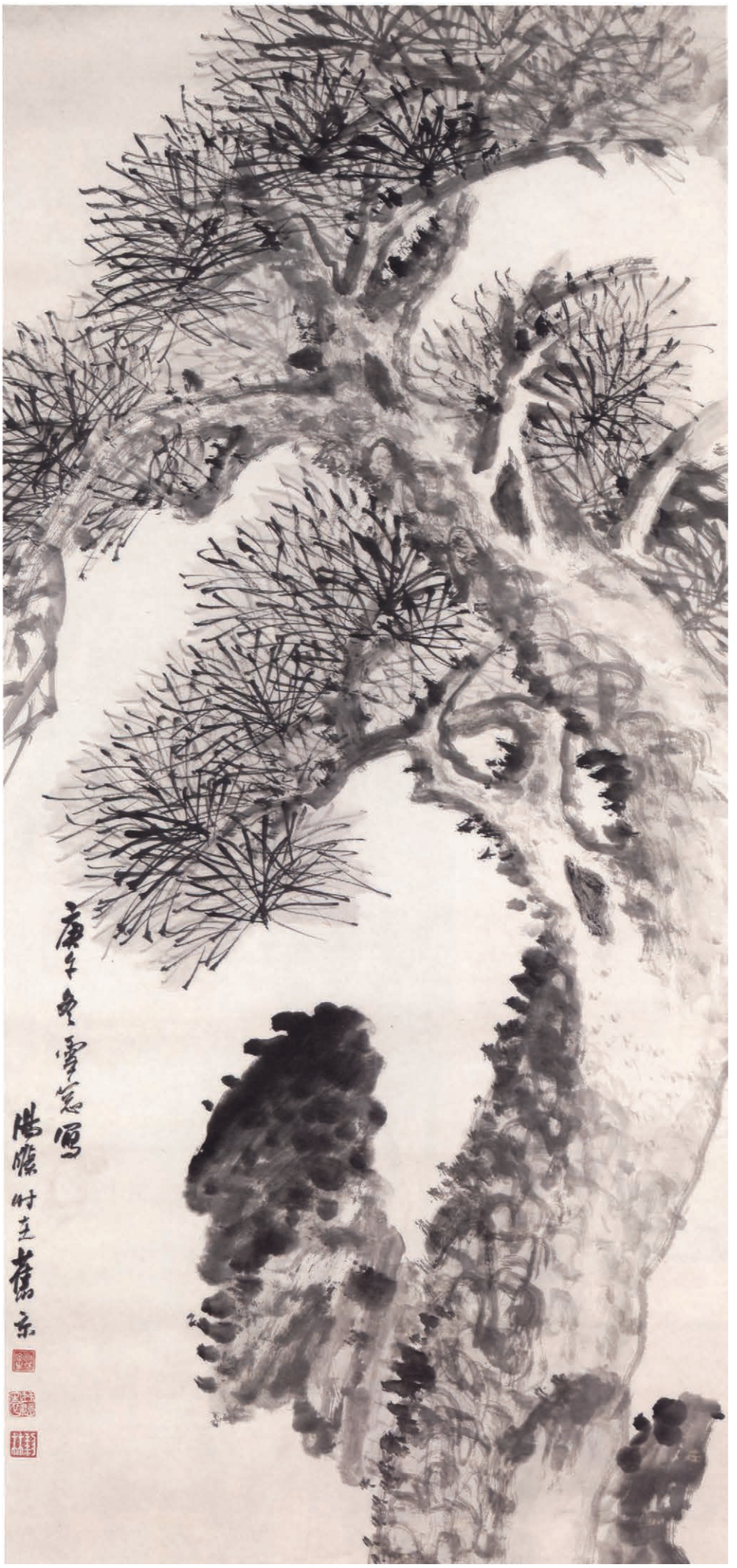
九十七歲白石又題

Artist's seals
齊大 *Qi da*
借山翁 *Jieshanweng*
流俗之所輕也 *Liusu zhi suo qing ye*
("Slighted by the uncultured")

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Recent Provenance
This print was acquired by Richard Lai and Lin Taiyi in Hong Kong around 1981.

Note
1 A copy of this print is listed in *Rong Bao Zhai's Collection of Painting & Calligraphy* (Hong Kong: Chung Hwa Book Co., 1981), p. 19.



29

湯滌
Tang Di (1878–1948)

Pine Tree and Rock
松石圖
Song shi tu

Dated 1930. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 44 × 21⅝ in. (111.8 × 55 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.5)

A powerfully posturing pine tree fills this composition. The strong contrast of light and shadow brings forth the rotundity of its massive trunk. A heavy overlay of moss dots along the dark contours accentuates its curving profile. Dense sprays of needles radiate from stubby branches like fireworks animating the night sky. A moss-covered rock, leaning to the left, offers a counterthrust to the rightward-leaning tree. In Chinese culture the pine is revered as the gentleman of trees, with a comparable character and demeanor.[1] It remains green regardless of climatic variations. Constant and lofty, it differs from all other beings around it yet lives in harmony with them.

Tang Di, a native of Wujin, Jiangsu Province, was the great-grandson of the renowned scholar-painter Tang Yifen (1778–1853). Though accomplished in painting, calligraphy, and poetry, he prided himself most on his knowledge of physiognomy. In Beijing, where he lived for many years, he was active as a teacher as well as an artist. This work dates to that period of his life.

Artist's inscription and signature
(2 columns in running script)

Painted by my snowy window in the winter of the *gengwu* year [1930].

Tang Di while in the old capital [Beijing]

庚午冬雪窓寫。

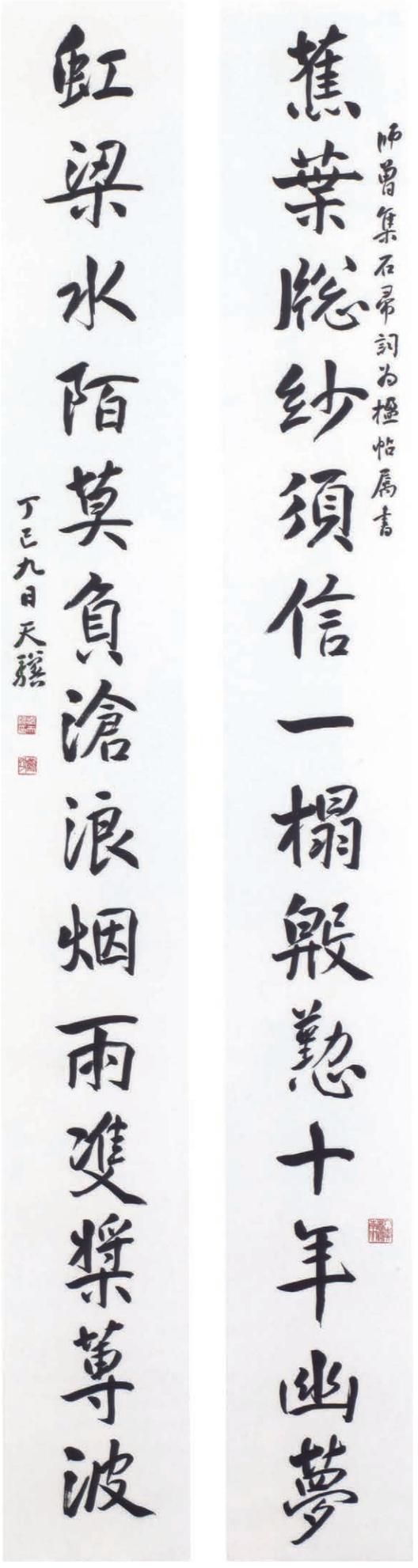
湯滌時在舊京

Artist's seals
湯氏定之 *Tang shi Dingzhi*
琴隱園 *Qinyin Yuan*

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Recent Provenance
The painting was presented to Taiyi Lin Lai by the artist's son, Tang Xiang 湯象, in the 1980s, when he worked under Lai as one of the editors of the Chinese edition of *Reader's Digest*.

Note
1 See "Ode to an Ancient Pine" in Jing Hao's "Bifa ji," in Yu Jianhua, ed., *Zhongguo hualun leibian* (Beijing: Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 1986), vol. 1, p. 608. For an English translation of Jing Hao's text see Kiyohiko Munakata, *Ching Hao's "Pi-fa-chi": A Note on the Art of Brush* (Ascona, Switz.: Artibus Asiae, 1974), p. 16.



30

楊天驥
Yang Tianji (1882–1958)

Couplet Composed from Jiang Kui's Verses
楷書蕉葉虹梁對聯
Kaishu jiaoye hongliang duilian

Dated 1917. Pair of hanging scrolls, ink on paper, each: 66½ × 8⅛ in. (169 × 20.5 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.9a, b)

This work is a collaboration of two friends. Yang Tianji, an accomplished calligrapher and seal-carver from Jiangsu Province, transcribes a couplet composed by another versatile artist Chen Hengke (1876–1923). Yang began studying calligraphy in childhood. By his prime he had familiarized himself with the styles and techniques of all the major masters and ancient script types. This piece exemplifies his standard script, for which he is best known. The sturdy rectilinear framework of the characters is animated by lively, delicate brushwork, which creates the charm and gracefulness characteristic of his style. On the other hand, the angular corners and barely modulated lines of certain characters reflect his command of clerical and seal scripts.

Chen Hengke composed this poetic couplet with phrases assembled from several *ci* poems by Jiang Kui (1155?–1221?), a renowned poet of the Southern Song period (1127–1279). This practice of combining poetic phrases or lines from different sources into a new composition allegedly began with the scholar-official Wang Anshi (1021–1086). A way of showing off one's erudition and of mastering the past to serve the present, this kind of literary tour de force was popular among early-twentieth-century traditionalists, who were critically reexamining the past. Yu Youren (cat. nos. 22–24) and Feng Kanghou (cat. nos. 34–37) were also exponents of this difficult practice.

Yang Tianji was highly responsive to Western and reformist ideas. As early as 1904 he broke with pedagogical convention to teach his students in Shanghai Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* (1893).[1] Actively involved in the three Shanghai newspapers founded by Yu Youren that played a key role in the Republican Revolution of 1911, he was also Yu's close colleague through the 1930s in the latter's endeavor to reform the Chinese writing system by standardizing cursive writing (see cat. nos. 23, 24).

Artist's inscription and signature
(2 columns in large standard script and 2 columns in small running script)

Banana leaves, window gauze,
It is true that a night's intimacy leads to ten years of melancholy dreams.
Rainbow bridge, paths by water,
Don't forget the time when, in the misty rain on the lake, the pair of oars rippled the duckweeds.

Shizeng [Chen Hengke, 1876–1923] composed a couplet with phrases collected from several *ci* poems by Shizhou [Jiang Kui, 1155?–1221?] and asked me to write it down.

On the Double Ninth of the *dingsi* year [October 24, 1917], Tianji

蕉葉牕紗,
須信一榻殷勤,
十年幽夢。
虹梁水陌,
莫負滄浪烟雨,
雙槳蓴波。

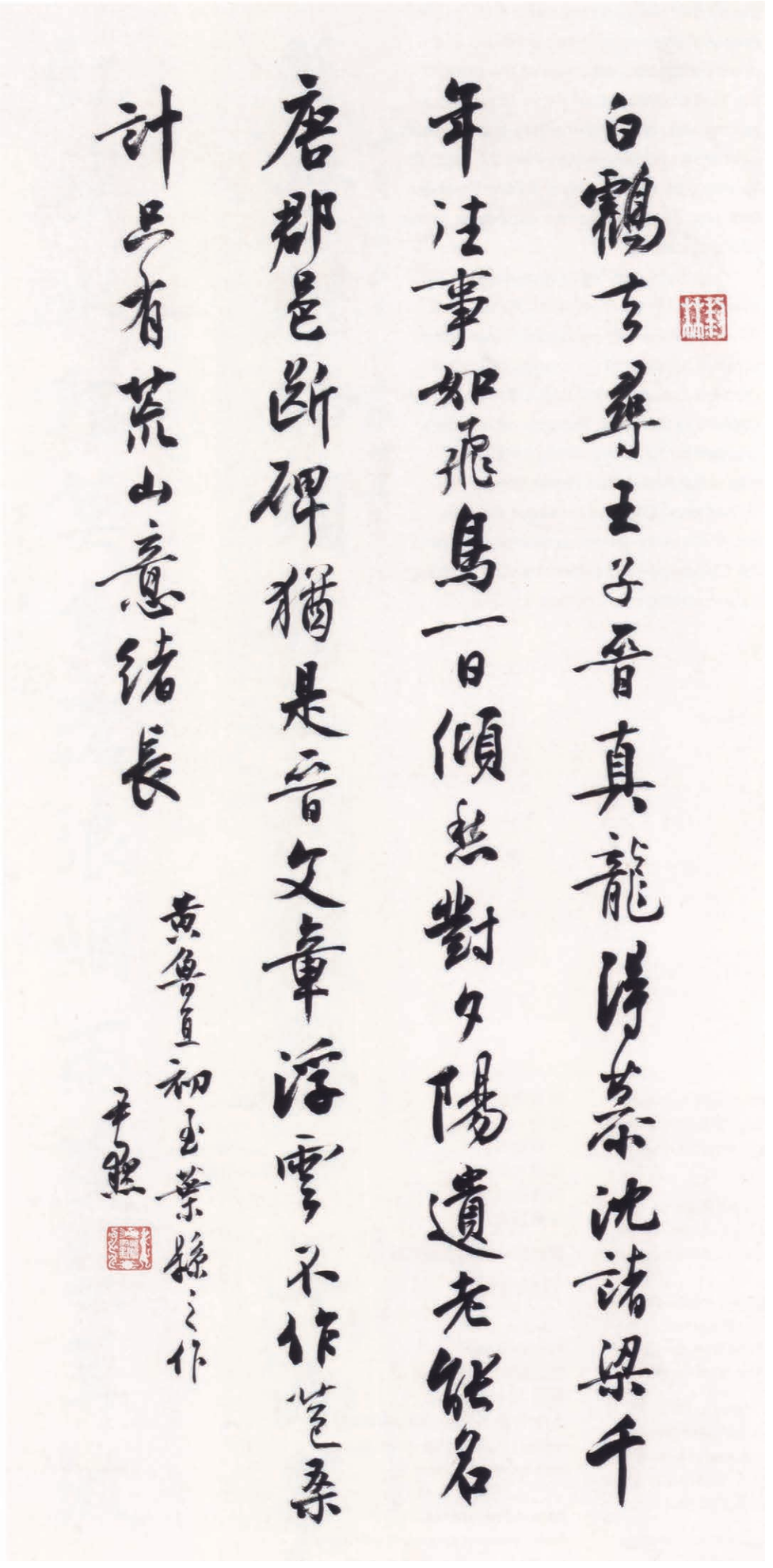
師曾集石帚詞為楹帖屬書

丁巳九日天驥

Artist's seals
楊天驥印 *Yang Tianji yin*
蔪道人 *Jian Daoren*
人生失意無南北 *Rensheng shiyi wu nanbei* ("Life can be disappointing for anyone anywhere")

Recent Provenance
This piece was acquired by Richard Lai in Hong Kong around 1980.

Note
1 Fang Jixiao 2005, p. 56. The book was translated into Chinese by Yan Fu in 1898.



31

沈尹默
Shen Yinmo (1883–1971)

Poem by Huang Tingjian
行書黃庭堅詩
Xingshu Huang Tingjian shi

Undated. Hanging scroll,
ink on paper, 26⅜ × 13 in.
(67 × 33 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection,
Partial and Promised Gift of
Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller,
and Larry C. Lai in memory
of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.10)

Shen Yinmo was one of the most influential calligraphers in twentieth-century China. As early as the 1930s he had challenged the dominant stele tradition of calligraphy by advocating a revival of the manuscript tradition and its aesthetic standards. Shen's approach prevailed on the mainland after Yu Youren, the last master rooted in the stele tradition (see cat. nos. 22–24), moved to Taiwan with the defeated Nationalist Party in 1949.[1]

Here Shen Yinmo transcribes an eight-line poem in seven-character meter by the eminent scholar-official, poet, and calligrapher Huang Tingjian (1045–1105). Huang composed the poem after he arrived in Ye County (in present-day Henan Province) in 1068 to assume the post of District Defender. The poem, inspired by two well–known local legends that originated in the Spring and Autumn Period (770–481 B.C.), is a meditation on the vicissitudes of human history.[2] The calligraphy may be dated on the basis of its style to the 1960s.

Shen Yinmo first became known as a poet; only later did he achieve renown as a calligrapher. By 1914 he was teaching classical Chinese literature at Peking University, and was among the earliest poets to write in the vernacular language (*baihuawen* 白話文), promoting the "New Culture" even before the May Fourth Movement of 1919. His progressive outlook in literature echoes his Marxist perspective on social issues. This reformist mindset manifested itself in a paradoxical way in his approach to calligraphy.

Shen began his calligraphic training by studying the masters of the so-called manuscript (*tie* 帖) tradition. At twenty-five he was criticized by Chen Duxiu (1879–1942), his friend and a founding member of the Chinese Communist Party, for calligraphy that was infected with vulgar prettiness (*su* 俗). Awakened to the flaws of his superficially charming style, Shen immersed himself for two decades in the study of Northern Dynasties (386–581) stele writing, which was widely admired at the time for its vigor and rawness. His effort to rectify his art paid off. In 1930 he claimed to feel power issuing from his hand.[3]

Shen's next step, however, deviated from the prevalent trend and made him a pivotal figure in art history. Instead of seeking further growth within the stele tradition, which was already betraying signs of decline, Shen began relearning calligraphy around 1930 by following the time-honored manuscript tradition that originated with the Two Wangs—Wang Xizhi (303–361) and Wang Xianzhi (344–386)—and that became the orthodox canon from the Tang dynasty (618–907) onward. He studied one of the early Tang masters, Chu Suiliang (596–658), with particular devotion.[4] The present piece is an excellent example of Shen's mature style, reflecting Chu Suiliang's elegant finesse in the tall, slightly tilted configuration of the characters and in the sensuous fluctuation of the brushstrokes within graceful structures. Shen typically wrote with his wrist suspended and with the tip of his brush at the center of individual strokes, which enabled the brush to move dexterously to create full and solid lines without losing any expressiveness. Compared with Chu Suiliang, Shen's writing is weightier and more energetic, a creative transformation accomplished through mastering the stele style. The pronounced waviness of Shen's long, horizontal strokes is a salient feature of Huang Tingjian's calligraphy that Shen quite naturally incorporated in transcribing Huang's poem.[5]

By reasserting the authority of the manuscript tradition, Shen Yinmo offered an important corrective to the popular practice of the unpolished stele style, which had led to the neglect of basic techniques and produced exaggerated mannerisms. As Chen Zhenlian has observed, Shen's art was genuinely "new" in the current context, but, as a reversion to the most hallowed tradition of calligraphy, it stood in direct opposition to the antitraditional ethos of the New Culture Movement, in which he played a major role. His defiance, though, was true to the revolutionary spirit of the May Fourth Movement and fundamentally reoriented the course of calligraphic development for decades to come.[6]

Artist's inscription and signature
(1 column in running script)

The white crane left in search of Wang Zijin;[7]
The true dragon yearned for Shen Zhuliang.[8]
Events in the remote past are gone like birds flying away;
Now I pour out my sorrow, facing the setting sun.
Old folks from former times can still name the counties of the Tang dynasty;
On broken steles remain the writings of the Jin period.
The drifting clouds make no plan to settle down;
Only the desolate mountains linger in lasting thoughts.

Huang Luzhi [Huang Tingjian] composed this poem when he first arrived in Ye County [in Henan], Yinmo

白鶴去尋王子晉,
真龍得慕沈諸梁。
千年往事如飛鳥,
一日傾愁對夕陽。
遺老能名唐郡邑,
斷碑猶是晉文章。
浮雲不作苞桑計,
只有荒山意緒長。

黃魯直初至葉縣之作, 尹默

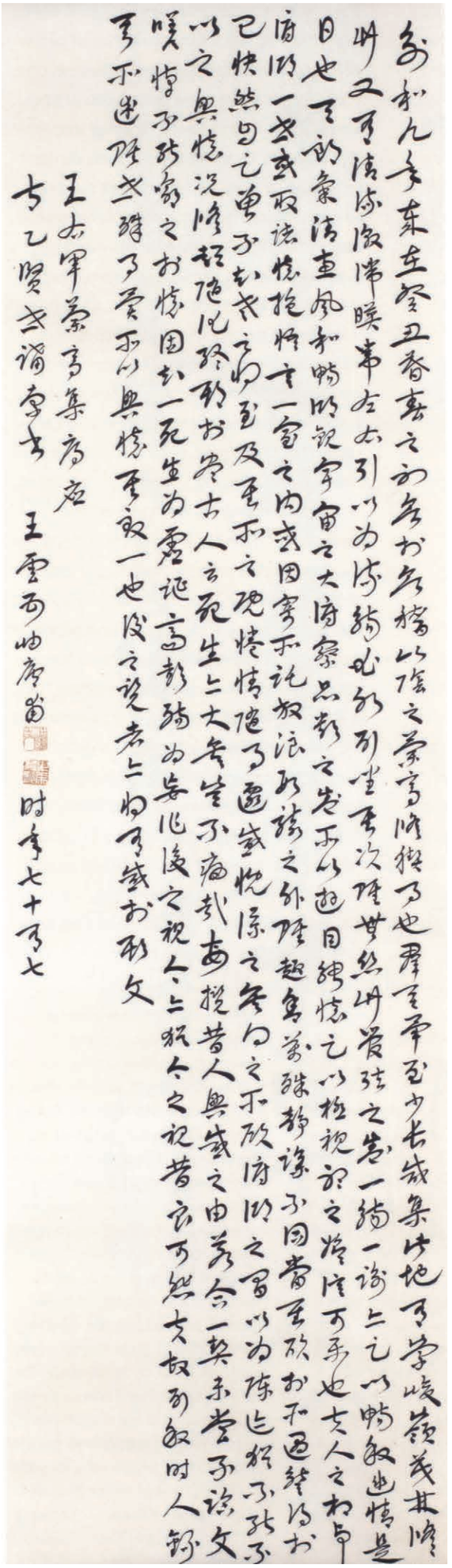
Artist's seal
沈尹默 *Shen Yinmo*

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Recent Provenance
Richard Lai purchased this scroll from a gallery in Hong Kong around 1980.

Notes

1 On Shen's significance in twentieth-century China, see Chen Zhenlian 1996, pp. 148–62, 243–60.
2 See notes 7 and 8 below for the legends.
3 See Shen's "Zixi de huiyi," quoted in Zhu Renfu 1996, pp. 304–5.
4 Zhu Renfu 1996, pp. 306–8.
5 Shen was not interested in Huang Tingjian's style (Chen Zhenlian 1996, p. 153). More often he adapted Su Shi's calligraphic style in transcribing Su's poems.
6 Chen Zhenlian 1996, pp. 150–53.
7 Wang Zijin (fl. 6th century B.C.), also known as Wang Ziqiao or Wang Qiao, was a son of King Ling of the Eastern Zhou dynasty. It is said that he sought immortality through Daoist practices on Mount Song in Henan Province for twenty years. In the end, he flew away on a white crane, playing his favorite instrument, the Chinese mouth organ. His story is recorded in *Liexian zhuan* and *Hou Han shu*.
8 Shen Zhuliang (fl. late 6th century B.C.), a native of Chu in the Spring and Autumn Period, assumed the title of Duke of Ye after he became the magistrate of Ye County. He was known for his love of dragons. He painted and carved dragons and decorated his house with dragon motifs. A dragon in the heavens heard of it and descended to his house. It peeped into the window and thrashed its tail in the hall. Frightened, the Duke of Ye ran away. The truth is that he loved creatures with the semblance of the dragon but not the real thing. The story later became a metaphor of people who love the vainglory of things rather than their substance. See the entry "Ye Gong hao long" in *Ci hai* (Taipei: Taiwan Zhonghua Shuju, 1985), p. 3791.



32

王雲五
Wang Yunwu (1888–1979)

Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Gathering
草書蘭亭序
Caoshu Lanting xu

Dated 1964. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 59 × 16⅞ in. (150 × 43 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collectic Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.11)

Artist's inscription and signature
(10 columns in running script)

In the ninth year of the Yungho [A.D. 353] in the beginning of late spring we met at the Orchid Pavilion in Shanyin of Kweich'i [Guiji] for the Water Festival, to wash away the evil spirits.

Here are gathered all the illustrious persons and assembled both the old and the young. Here are tall mountains and majestic peaks, trees with thick foliage and tall bamboos. Here are also clear streams and gurgling rapids, catching one's eye from the right and left. We group ourselves in order, sitting by the waterside, and drink in succession from a cup floating down the curving stream; and although there is no music from string and woodwind instruments, yet with alternate singing and drinking, we are well disposed to thoroughly enjoy a quiet intimate conversation.

Today the sky is clear, the air is fresh and the kind breeze is mild. Truly enjoyable it is to watch the immense universe above and the myriad things below, traveling over the entire landscape with our eyes and allowing our sentiments to roam about at will, thus exhausting the pleasures of the eye and the ear.

Now when people gather together to surmise life itself, some sit and talk and unburden their thoughts in the intimacy of a room, and some, overcome by a sentiment, soar forth into a world beyond bodily realities. Although we select our pleasures according to our inclinations—some noisy and rowdy, and others quiet and sedate—yet when we have found that which pleases us, we are all happy and contented, to the extent of forgetting that we are growing old. And then, when satiety follows satisfaction, and with the change of circumstances, chang[ing] also our

Wang Yunwu, who made major contributions to the continuation of Chinese culture in the twentieth century, left a legacy in various fields such as publishing, library science, education reform, and management of the National Palace Museum. Though not an artist, this work shows him to be a capable calligrapher. It presents his transcription of the "Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Gathering" by Wang Xizhi (303–361). Revered by calligraphers as the greatest work in running script, this legendary text was composed by Wang on the third day of the third lunar month in 353, when forty-one eminent men of letters gathered at the Orchid Pavilion, a scenic site near Wang's hometown of Shanyin in northern Zhejiang, to perform the customary purification ritual held on that day. During the celebration all the participants composed poems, and Wang brushed his famous preface. Half inebriated, he created a calligraphic masterpiece so extraordinary that even he could never equal it.[1]

Wang Yunwu's transcription of this text is written in a form of cursive script that is stylistically unrelated to that of Wang Xizhi. Rather, the calligraphy shows the characteristics of draft-cursive script that was widely practiced in the Eastern Han period (25–220) and enjoyed a revival in the early twentieth century.[2] Wang's characters are executed in taut yet resilient brushwork. Their abbreviated forms tend to tilt toward the upper right. Ligatures between adjacent characters are rare. On the other hand, the squat configuration and the deemphasized flaring of the brush strokes suggest the influence of Yu Youren's "standard cursive script" (see cat. nos. 23–24).

Wang Xizhi's "Preface" has also been widely admired for its literary finesse and depth of feeling. Lin Yutang translated the entire text in his *The Importance of Living*, praising it for embodying a very Chinese response to the "evanescence of life."[3] Because Wang Yunwu's transcription makes no allusion to Wang Xizhi's style, he presumably shared Lin's appreciation of the philosophic import of the "Preface."

Both men also shared an unusual educational background and an interest in linguistics. Wang received a traditional Chinese education in Shanghai until the age of fourteen. He then studied English intermittently at school while reading English publications in the private library of a British educator. By the age of eighteen he was teaching at a college preparatory school. He read the entire *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and took science courses from an American correspondence school.[4] Seizing every opportunity for self-education, he eventually became a university professor as well as the most important publisher in twentieth-century China. While heading the government-sponsored Commercial Press from 1922 to 1946, he compiled several encyclopedic series in a variety of Chinese and Western disciplines, some of which contain thousands of volumes. His projects helped found many modest libraries across the nation. In 1964, the year in which he wrote this piece for Lin Taiyi, he resumed leadership of the Commercial Press in Taiwan, and quickly restored the declining publishing house to its former vitality.[5]

Between 1924 and 1928 Wang Yunwu also invented a new indexing system for Chinese characters known as the "four-corner number" method (*sijiao haoma* 四角號碼). It was the most widely used one among dozens of such attempts made in the 1920s, including Lin Yutang's. Still seen in many reference books today, it helped in the design of the "three-corner number" input program for Chinese computers.[6]

whims and desires, there then arises a feeling of poignant regret. In the twinkling of an eye, the objects of our former pleasures have become things of the past, still compelling in us moods of regretful memory. Furthermore, although our lives may be long or short, eventually we all end in nothingness. "Great indeed are life and death" said the ancients. Ah! What sadness!

I often study the joys and regrets of the ancient people, and as I lean over their writings and see that they were moved exactly as ourselves, I am often overcome by a feeling of sadness and compassion, and would like to make those things clear to myself. Well I know it is a lie to say that life and death are the same thing, and that longevity and early death make no difference! Alas! As we of the present look upon those of the past, so will posterity look upon our present selves. Therefore, have I put down a sketch of these contemporaries and their sayings at this feast, and although time and circumstances may change, the way they will evoke our moods of happiness and regret will remain the same. What will future readers feel when they cast their eyes upon this writing![7]

I transcribed Wang of the Right Army's [Wang Xizhi's] *Preface to Collected Poems from the Orchid Pavilion* at the request of [Lin] Taiyi, the bright child of my old friend, Wang Yunwu, Xiulu, at the age of seventy-seven.

永和九年, 歲在癸丑, 暮春之初, 會於會稽山陰之蘭亭, 修禊事也。群賢畢至, 少長咸集。此地有崇峻嶺, 茂林修竹, 又有清流激湍, 映帶左右, 引以為流觴曲水。列坐其次, 雖無絲竹管弦之盛, 一觴一詠, 亦足以暢敘幽情。是日也, 天朗氣清, 惠風和暢, 仰觀宇宙之大, 俯察品類之盛, 所以遊目騁懷, 足以極視聽之娛, 信可樂也。夫人之相與, 俯仰一世, 或取諸懷抱, 晤言一室之內; 或因寄所託, 放浪形骸之外。雖趣舍萬殊, 靜躁不同, 當其欣於所遇, 暫得於己, 快然自足, 曾不知老之將至。及其所之既倦, 情隨事遷, 感慨係之矣。向之所欣, 俯仰之間以為陳迹, 猶不能不以之興懷; 況修短隨化, 終期於盡。古人云死生亦大矣, 豈不痛哉! 每覽昔人興感之由, 若合一契, 未嘗不臨文嗟悼, 不能喻之於懷, 固知一死生為虛誕, 齊彭殤為妄作。後之視今, 亦猶今之視昔, 良可悲夫! 故列敘時人, 錄其所述, 雖世殊事異, 所以興懷, 其致一也。後之覽者, 亦將有感於斯文。[8]

王右軍蘭亭集序, 應太乙賢世講索書。王雲五岫廬甫, 時年七十有七。

Artist's seals
岫廬老人 *Xiulu laoren*
牛馬駱駝 *Niuma luotuo* ("Buffalo, horse, camel")

Notes
1 For a brief introduction to this text, see Chang and Miller 1990, pp. 282–83.
2 On the draft-cursive script, see Fu 1977, pp. 81, 97.
3 Lin Yutang 1937, p. 156.
4 On Wang's informal education, see his autobiography, *Wode shenghuo pianduan* (Taipei: Huaguo Chubanshe, 1952), pp. 1–57.
5 See Xu Youshou 1987.
6 Wang Zhenhu 1987, pp. 52–54. See also Lin Taiyi 1990, pp. 78–79.
7 Wang Xizhi, "*Lantingji* xu," translated in Lin Yutang 1937, pp. 156–58.
8 There are a few characters mistranscribed by Wang Yunwu.

33

溥儒
Pu Ru (1896–1963)

Wandering in a Cloud-Filled Valley
松溪策杖圖
Songxi cezhang tu

Undated. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 26⅜ × 16¾ in. (67 × 42.5 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.20)

Pu Ru, a Manchu prince who lived through the fall of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), was a classical scholar, poet, calligrapher, and painter who specialized in landscape painting in the manner of the Song dynasty (960–1279). Although he disliked being referred to as an artist, his fame ironically rests on his painting and calligraphy.[1]

In this work, probably painted in the late 1940s or early 1950s, Pu Ru combines descriptive representation with atmospheric effects in a style associated with the Southern Song Academy.[2] But the painting's compressed space, with almost equal proportions of solid and void, and the cruder texturing of the rock surfaces reveal Pu's indebtedness to later interpretations of the Song manner by such Ming-dynasty artists as Tang Yin (1470–1523).[3]

The powerful pines are characteristic of Pu's work and may have had a very specific association for him. In 1911, after the Manchu dynasty was overthrown, he moved out of his princely mansion in Beijing to the nearby Western Hills, where he led a reclusive life until 1924.[4] In his writings Pu Ru left a vivid description of the pines around the monastery where he resided: ". . . In the Western Hills is the Jietai Monastery. . . . Around it are more than a dozen thousand-year-old pines. They twist skywards with branches spreading in all directions like ascending dragons and dancing phoenixes. After the revolution in the *xinhai* year [1911], I waited on my mother in the Monastery for fifteen years, while studying. I lived with pines every day. I painted these few from memory when my mind was wandering in the Western Hills."[5] The Western Hills became the locus of nostalgia later in his life, repeatedly referred to in paintings and writings. This work, with its ancient pines and an inscription that describes an outsider's coming into the mountains to leave the world behind, could be one of those.

A versatile calligrapher, Pu Ru was adept in all script types, but his elegant running script in the style of Mi Fu (1051–1107), seen here, is considered his best.[6] Pu has further embellished his inscription with an oval seal reading "a piece of red cloud," which is impressed on portions of its first two characters, *baiyun* (white clouds). Although Pu Ru often placed his poetic seals at the beginning of inscriptions, this one, due to its color and location, literally looks like a red cloud floating above the pines, graphically blurring the boundary between text and image.

Artist's inscription and signature
(5 columns in cursive script)

White clouds fill my hut by the cliff;
The sound of a stream fills the empty valley.
Whence came this person into the mountains?
Forgetting the schemes of the world he befriends the deer.

Xinyu painted and inscribed

白雲滿廬壁,
溪聲滿空谷。
何來山中人,
忘機友麋鹿。

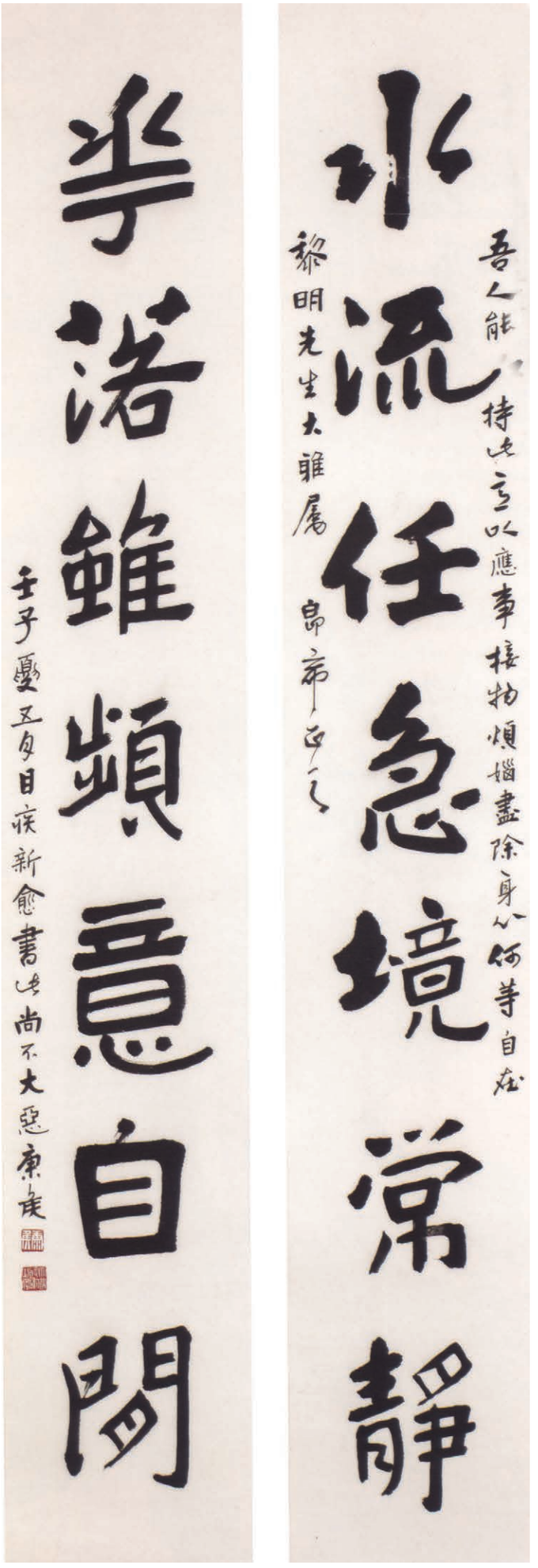
心畬畫并題

Artist's seals
溥儒 *Pu Ru*
舊王孫 *Jiu wangsun* ("A former prince")
一朵紅雲 *Yiduo hongyun* ("A piece of red cloud")
江天水墨秋光晚 *Jiangtian shuimo qiuguang wan* ("Ink-toned river and sky in autumnal twilight")

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Recent Provenance
Richard Lai purchased this painting around 1970 when he and his wife were living in Hong Kong.

Notes
1 Ho Hao-tien 1978.
2 This painting may be compared with *Scholar under Pine* (1947) and *Pine and Rock* (1952), both in the Zhang Shijie collection, Taipei, and a leaf in the album *Depicting the Feeling of Tang Poetry* (1952) in the National Palace Museum, Taipei.
3 On Pu's stylistic sources, see Ju 1994, pp. 260–71, 281–87.
4 The truthfulness of Pu Ru's statement that he went to study in Berlin and received two doctorate degrees in biology and astronomy during this period has been a subject of controversy since 1970. See Wang Jiacheng 2002, pp. 62–68.
5 See Pu Xinyu 1993, pp. 283, 386, no. 41.
6 Wang Yaoting 1996, p. 11.



34

馮康侯
Feng Kanghou (1901–1983)

Couplet on Water and Flowers
雜體書水流花落對聯
Zatishu shuiliu hualuo duilian

Dated 1972. Pair of hanging scrolls, ink on paper, each: 52½ × 8⅝ in. (133.4 × 22 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.26a, b)

Feng Kanghou (known as Fung Hong-hou in English publications) here transcribes a couplet from *Thoughts on Vegetable Roots* (*Caigen tan* 菜根譚), written at the end of the sixteenth century by Hong Yingming (also named Hong Zicheng, fl. 1596).[1] There is virtually nothing known about Hong other than what is revealed in this book.[2] The beauty of Hong's poetic language accounts for much of the book's popularity, especially in Japan, where it has been appreciated since its first printing in 1822 for verses that recall the native traditions of *haiku* and Zen.[3] In addition to the couplet, Feng has transcribed Hong's short commentary on the ideas expressed in his verse.

This couplet represents Hong's writing at its pithiest. Water and flowers are personified as sentient, thinking beings. Their inner self remains serene even though they are constantly busy flowing or shedding. They embody an attitude that transcends the bustle of daily activities by fulfilling their respective roles in life without psychological resistance. In his authorial comment, Hong advocated adopting this attitude as key to peace of mind while living in a clamorous society.

Feng Kanghou's own appended note indicates that he was quite proud of this writing. A prolific calligrapher, Feng usually wrote in the same script throughout a piece. But this pair of scrolls represents a creative disavowal of stylistic purity. Although the characters overwhelmingly tilt to the upper right in the manner of standard script, individual characters are written in different scripts, and even the brushstrokes in a single character might reflect different scriptural mannerisms. In the character *luo* 落 (the second character in the left scroll), for example, the top and lower right components are in standard script, while the radical at the lower left is in running script. Furthermore, the rightward diagonal stroke is nearly horizontal and ends with a flare—features peculiar to clerical script. In the character *zi* 自 (second from the bottom in the left scroll) the uniform width of the line and rounded corners are typical of seal script, while the inward slanting of the two verticals observes the structural principle of standard script. This surprisingly free mix of script types demands a patient perusal of each character, thereby slowing down the reading of the text so that the viewer may fully savor the wisdom embedded in its mundane imagery and unadorned language.

Artist's inscription and signature
(5 columns in mixed scripts)

However rapidly water flows,
it is always tranquil in itself.
Though their petals fall from
time to time, flowers remain
restful at heart.

If we could deal with daily affairs and people with this attitude, there would be no inner disturbances. How carefree our bodies and minds would be!

Written at the request of the gracious Mr. Li Ming [Richard Lai] for his correction.

In the summer, the fifth month of the *renzi* year [1972], having newly recovered from an eye illness, I wrote this, which was not too bad. Kanghou

水流任急境常靜,
花落雖頻意自閒。

吾人能持此意以應事接物, 煩惱盡除, 身心何等自在。

黎明先生大雅屬, 即希正之。

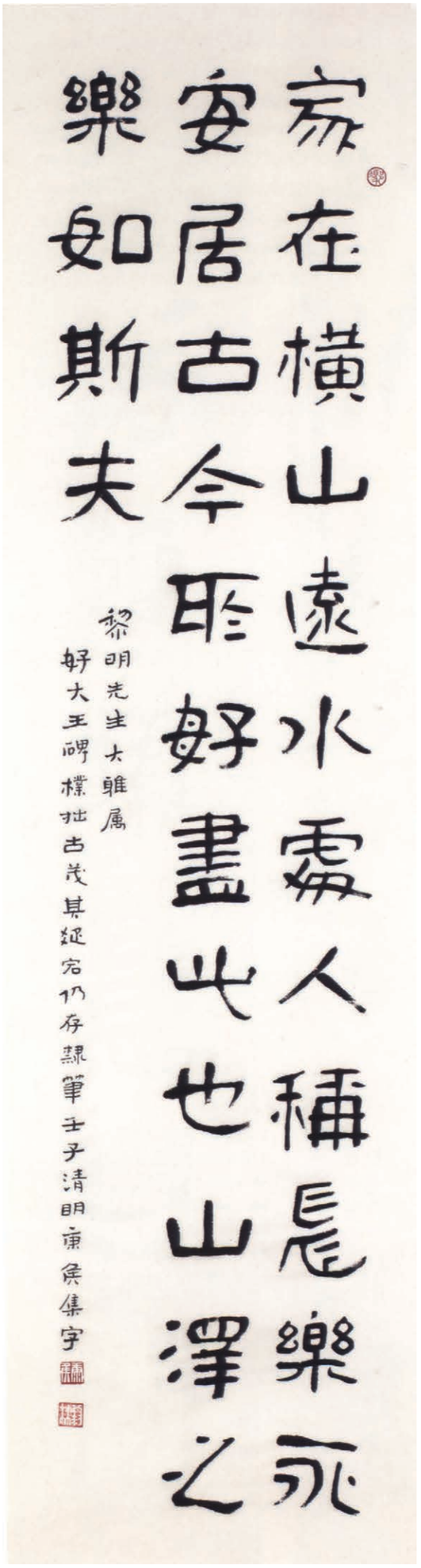
壬子夏五月, 目疾新愈, 書寫尚不大惡。康侯

Artist's seals
康侯 *Kanghou*
大樹將軍之後 *Dashu Jiangjun zhi hou*

Notes
1 Feng's transcription is part of verse no. 288 in the book. The authorial comment he transcribed varies in a few places from the original. The book, which points out the wisdom embedded in the mundane, may have derived its title from a remark by Wang Xinmin (fl. 12th–13th century), who said, "If one is able to relish the vegetable greens and roots, he is capable of doing everything." See Wilson 1985, p. 9. The majority of the verses present Hong's philosophy of life based on keen observation of natural phenomena.

2 Wilson 1985, p. 14.

3 A selection of verses from *Caigen tan* were translated by R.H. Blyth and included in his *Haiku*, vol. 1, *Eastern Culture* (Tokyo: Kamakura Bunko, 1949). See Wilson 1985, pp. 8, 16–18.



35

馮康侯
Feng Kanghou (1901–1983)

Poem Written in the Style of the Haotaiwang Stele
做好太王碑詩
Fang Haotaiwang Bei shi

Dated 1972. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 50¾ × 13⅜ in. (129 × 34 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.27)

Feng Kanghou, a native of Guangdong Province, received his artistic training at home and from private tutors. An outstanding seal-carver and calligrapher, Feng specialized in archaic scripts. In this and the following works he composed a quatrain and a couplet (cat. no. 36) with characters collected from an ancient stele commemorating Kwanggaet'o-daewang (r. 391–412)—Haotaiwang in Chinese—the nineteenth king of the Koguryŏ state, which occupied the northern portion of the Korean peninsula and parts of Manchuria from 37 B.C. to A.D. 668. This funerary monument was planned by Haotaiwang and erected by his son in 414 in the suburb of Kungnaesŏng, the Koguryŏ capital from A.D. 3 to 427, in what is now Ji'an in Jilin Province. After this area fell under Chinese rule in 668, the stele sank into oblivion. Its accidental rediscovery in 1877 marked a major find in the avid search for ancient steles in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century China.[1] About 1,590 characters of the original 1,775 are well preserved, which makes the Haotaiwang Stele a precious calligraphic specimen of China's peripheral cultures created by non-Chinese in the early fifth century. Feng Kanghou proclaimed it "the foremost ancient stele of Manchuria."[2] Following convention, he transcribed his two compositions by faithfully duplicating the forms of the carved characters.

After its rediscovery, numerous rubbings of varying qualities were made of the stele. Feng Kanghou, having seen many poor rubbings on the market, was excited to receive a photocopy of an original rubbing from a friend in 1971.[3] In several inscriptions to his calligraphies modeled after the Haotaiwang Stele done in the 1970s, he sums up the stele's contents, discovery, physical appearance, and former scholarship, indicating how assiduously he had been studying it.[4] These two works, executed in 1972 and 1974, are products of that enthusiasm.

In both works Feng Kanghou closely followed his model. As Feng states in his inscription to the quatrain, the calligraphy is essentially in clerical script. The characters, varying slightly in size, occupy an invisible grid. Their distinct rectangular shapes are more often squat than tall. The strictly parallel strokes and perpendicular intersections create a sense of stability appropriate for writings expected to last forever. As befits a work from a transitional period, the stele's calligraphy also incorporates attributes of seal script and standard script.[5] Most noticeably, the emphatic flaring at the end of horizontal or diagonal strokes, which is typical of clerical script writings, is missing. Instead, the width of individual strokes is rather even throughout, the corners are often rounded, and straight lines sometimes turn into smooth curves (e.g., 長, 永, 此, and 也 in the quatrain)—all stylistic characteristics of seal script—while the occasional modulation of individual strokes is a defining feature of standard script (e.g., 故 and 連 in the couplet).

Feng's transcription of these characters shows its own idiosyncratic features. Some lines appear crooked or uneven, as in the character 山 (in the first column of each work), which lacks the symmetry crucial to its structure, while the central vertical stroke of 遠 (fifth character of the quatrain) stops abruptly halfway. It seems that Feng sought to evoke the archaic flair of his model by intentionally simulating the damage or wear to the stele as well as the crude craftsmanship of its carver.

Artist's inscription and signature
(5 columns in clerical script)

My home in a stretch of hills by the distant water,
Is said to be the place of eternal joy and peace.
What people have loved from ancient times to the present is all here.
Mountains and lakes are such delights.

Written at the request of the gracious Mr. Li Ming [Richard Lai].

The calligraphy of the Haodawang [Haotaiwang] Stele, while simple and unpolished, emanates antique exuberance. However bold and free, it retains the discipline of clerical script. Kanghou assembled these characters [from the stele] on the Qingming festival of the *renzi* year [April 5, 1972]

家在橫山遠水處,
人稱長樂永安居。
古今所好盡此也,
山澤之樂如斯夫。

黎明先生大雅屬。

好大王碑樸拙古茂, 其從宕仍存隸筆。壬子清明康侯集字

Artist's seals
邑馮 *Yi Feng*
康侯 *Kanghou*

Collector's seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Notes

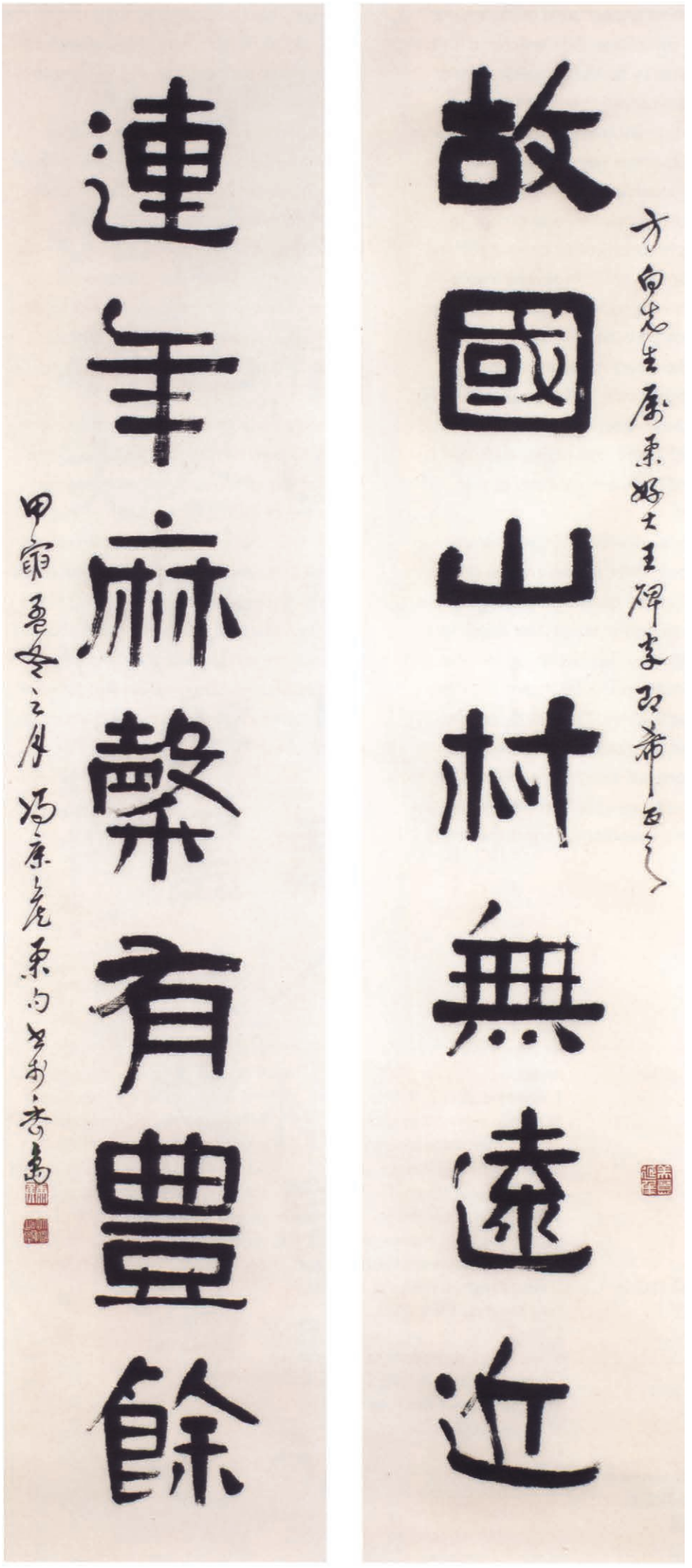
1 The Haotaiwang Stele is illustrated in *Haotaiwang* 1990, n.p. For a detailed account of its discovery and significance, see Geng Tiehua 2003, pp. 15–28.

2 See, for instance, Feng's inscriptions to his *Poem in the Style of the Haotaiwang Bei* (1971) in Feng Kanghou 1980, no. 46, and Feng Kanghou 1984, p. 20.

3 Ibid.

4 See Feng's inscriptions to his calligraphic pieces in Feng Kanghou 1980, nos. 46, 47, and Feng Kanghou 1984, pp. 3, 20, 21, 34.

5 As Qin Weiguo points out, the calligraphy of the Haotaiwang Stele embodies the complexity of a transitional period, during which writings in the clerical script absorb the brushwork of the seal and the regular scripts. His comments are summarized in Geng Tiehua 2003, pp. 262–63.



36

馮康侯
Feng Kanghou (1901–1983)

Couplet in the Style of the Haotaiwang Stele
做好太王碑對聯
Fang Haotaiwang Bei duilian

Dated 1974. Pair of hanging scrolls, ink on paper, each: 51⅝ × 10⅞ in. (131 × 27.7 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.28a, b)

Artist's inscription and signature
(2 columns in large clerical script and 2 columns in small cursive script)

The mountain villages in my
homeland spread near and far;
Year after year fragrant hemp is
harvested in abundance.

Mr. Fangbai [Richard Lai] asked me to compose something with characters from the Haodawang [Haotaiwang] Stele. Here it is for his correction.

I, Feng Kanghou, assembled these characters into a couplet and wrote this in Hong Kong in the first month of winter in the *jiayin* year [1974]

故國山村無遠近,
連年麻馨有豐餘。

方白先生屬集好大王碑字即希正之。

甲寅孟冬之月馮康侯集句書于香島

Artist's seals
康侯 *Kanghou*
大樹將軍之後 *Dashu Jiangjun zhi hou*

Unidentified seal
美意延年 *Meiyi yannian* ("Acts of kindness last forever")

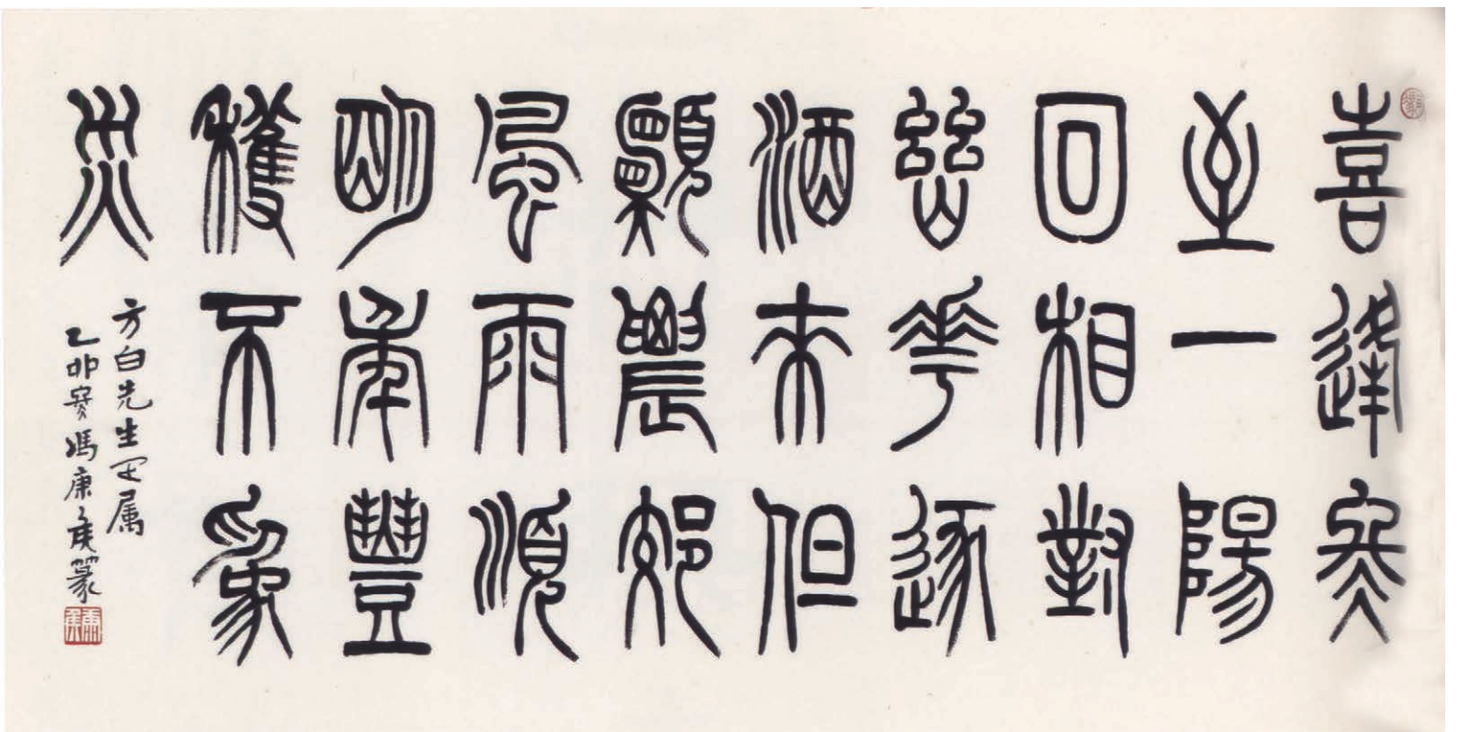
37

馮康侯
Feng Kanghou (1901–1983)

Poem Written in Seal Script
篆書喜逢冬至七絕
Zhuanshu xi feng dongzhi qijue

Dated 1975. Album leaf,
ink on paper, 14⅝ × 29 in.
(37 × 73.5 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection,
Partial and Promised Gift of
Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller,
and Larry C. Lai in memory
of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.29)



Feng Kanghou settled in Hong Kong after the Communist takeover of mainland China in 1949 and became its foremost seal carver. He maintained that only those who practiced seal script calligraphy could master the art of seal carving.[1] This transcription of a poetic quatrain in seven-character meter demonstrates his own mastery of this script type. Emulating the balanced, symmetrical forms incised with a stylus on ancient bronzes and stones, characters are composed of lines of uniform width and rounded ends. In Feng's tall, rectilinear characters, vertical and horizontal lines are often subtly bowed and their intersections form curves rather than sharp angles. As in seal carvings, the negative spaces between the inked lines are meticulously proportioned. To create characters of such monumentality and elegance with a supple-tipped brush requires great mental concentration, a steady hand, and years of rigorous discipline.

Feng wrote this piece at the request of Richard Lai in the winter of 1975. The poem he transcribes conveys the wistful state of mind of an agricultural society at the time of the winter solstice.

Artist's inscription and signature
(10 columns in large seal script)

Feeling elated at the return of
the *yang* energy on the winter
solstice,
In the company of solitary flowers,
I enjoy wine.
I hope the rain will be timely on
the cultivated fields,
So next year we will have an
abundant harvest and no drought.

At the request of Mr. Fangbai
[Richard Lai], Feng Kanghou wrote
this in seal script in the winter of the
yimao year [1975]

喜逢冬至一陽回,
相對幽花逐酒來。
但願農郊風雨順,
明年農穫不為災。

方白先生正屬, 乙卯冬馮康侯篆

Artist's seals
邑馮 *Yi Feng*
康侯 *Kanghou*

Note
1 Chang Zonghao, "Kanghou xiansheng bailing mingshou shuhua zhuanke zhanlan xu," in Feng Kanghou 2000, p. 8.

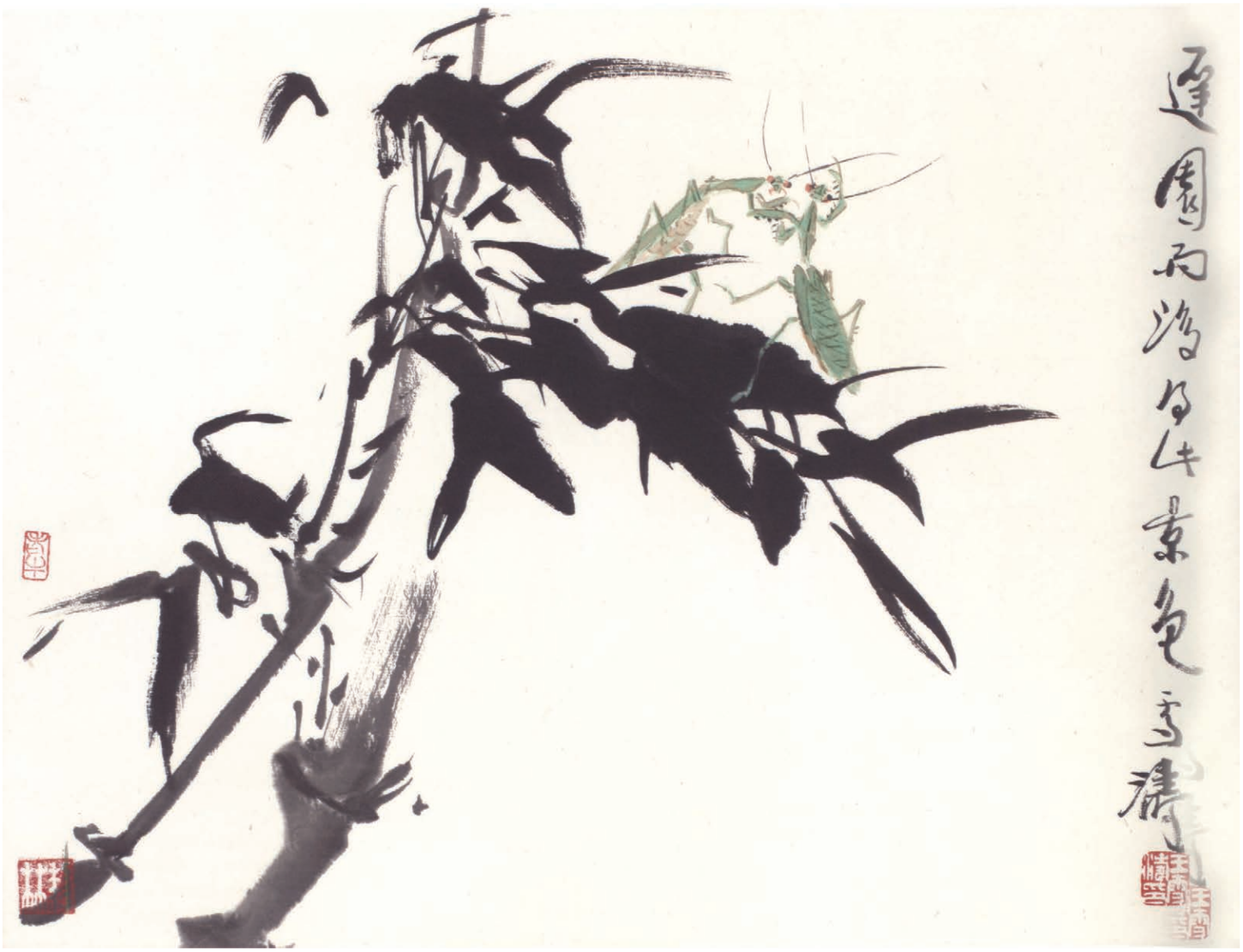
38

王雪濤
Wang Xuetao (1903–1984)

Mantises Fighting on Bamboo
螳螂墨竹圖
Tanglang mozhu tu

Album leaf, ink and color
on paper, 13⅜ × 17⅝ in.
(34 × 44.8 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection,
Partial and Promised Gift of
Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller,
and Larry C. Lai in memory
of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.30)



From 1922 to 1926 Wang Xuetao was enrolled in the National Art Academy of Beijing, where he studied bird and insect painting with two of the most distinguished masters of this genre, Qi Baishi (1864–1957) and Wang Yun (1887–1934). While he maintained a long friendship with Qi, and even collaborated with him on several works during the 1950s, Wang felt that Wang Yun's emphasis on gathering visual memories had a more profound impact on his art than sketching from life. No matter how fast one can draw, Wang Xuetao observed, the subject as captured on paper only records a single moment, which cannot compare with the complete, moving images kept in one's memory. The cultivation of one's visual memory, in turn, enhances one's ability to sketch from life.[1]

In this painting of two mantises sparring on a sprig of bamboo, the precise anatomy of the insects demonstrates what Wang Xuetao was able to accomplish through keen observation and painstaking practice. The lively poses of the mantises, the complexity of their forms, and the vivid suggestion of movement could never have been captured through sketching alone. Instead, the painting reflects the artist's recreation from memory of a dramatic confrontation that he observed in his garden. Additionally, the mantis is the only common species of insect that can stand upright on its two hind legs, bend its waist forward and backward, and turn its head 180 degrees. Such anthropomorphic traits, which further enhance the expressiveness of the image, are essential to Wang's representation of insects.[2] This scene readily brings to mind a fistfight.

In 1964 Wang made an album of thoroughly realistic drawings of twelve species of insects, including the mantis, with about a dozen images of each.[3] In this particular work, however, he painted green mantises with red eyes, confounding realism. This subjective use of color spices the otherwise cool palette of the picture and creates a visual resonance between the central image and the seals on either side.

In sharp contrast to the crisply defined green mantises, the bamboo is executed in swift, abbreviated brushstrokes of dark wet ink. Such a bold juxtaposition of technical and stylistic opposites compares closely with another image of a mantis on bamboo from 1979, and suggests that this work was also executed in the last years of Wang's life.[4]

Artist's inscription and signature
(1 column in cursive script)

I captured this view after rain in [my] Chi Garden, Xuetao

遲園雨後得此景色。雪濤

Artist's seals
王雪濤印 *Wang Xuetao yin*
老牛 *Laoniu* ("Old buffalo")

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Recent Provenance
This piece was acquired by Richard Lai from a Hong Kong art gallery around 1980.

Notes
1 Wang Xuetao, "Xue hua hua-niaohua de jidian tihui—dai zixu" (Some Ideas from My Experience in Learning to Paint Flowers and Birds—In Place of a Self-preface), in Wang Xuetao 1983, n.p.
2 Ibid.
3 See Wang Xuetao 1997, pp. 125–36.
4 The painting is published in Wang Xuetao 2003, p. 132.

39

趙少昂
Zhao Shao'ang (1905–1998)

Bamboo and Cicada
蟬竹圖
Chan zhu tu

Dated 1966. Hanging scroll,
ink and color on paper,
32½ × 14⅛ in. (82.5 × 36 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection,
Partial and Promised Gift of
Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller,
and Larry C. Lai in memory
of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.32)

Zhao Shao'ang (known as Chao Shao-an in most English publications) was born in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, but resided in Hong Kong after 1948. His frequent exhibitions and decades-long teaching career made him the most influential artist in the second generation of the so-called Lingnan School of Guangdong painters, who are known for Western-inspired realism in their work.[1] Few of Zhao's contemporaries traveled as much as he. His seal in the lower left corner of this painting reads, "Setting foot in Great Britain, the United States, France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Japan, India, and the Philippines." The venues of his solo exhibitions actually exceed those mentioned, and the reviews they received from Western critics are impressive.[2] Thanks to Zhao's activities and reputation abroad, the founders of the Lingnan School, including his mentor, Gao Qifeng (1889–1933), have become better recognized in the West. Indeed, his own art may have had a greater impact in the West than in China.[3]

This daring composition, which frames a vertical section of a single stalk of bamboo without showing its root or tip, reveals Zhao Shao'ang's originality as well as his indebtedness to the first generation of Lingnan masters.[4] The bamboo is executed in a single, powerful brushstroke punctuated by pauses and subtle realignments that exemplifies Zhao's signature "one stroke" (*yibi guo* 一筆過) method.[5] His depiction of the cicada also demonstrates a new found realism that goes beyond traditional painting. It fully captures the insect's glistening black shell, delicate transparent wings, and ribbed, reddish abdomen, which are hard to represent on untreated rice paper.[6] Most importantly, while the profile of the cicada is sharply defined with angular legs and wispy antennae, the details on the surface of its body are deliberately blurred. The result is an organic realism that best approximates the imperfect perception of the object by the human eye.[7] Typical of Zhao's cicada painting, the composition exhibits a subtle balance of motion and stillness. While the insect appears frozen in a pose charged with tension, the torn leaves and twigs rendered in sketchy brushwork seem to vibrate in an otherwise invisible breeze.

The cicada was a favorite subject of Zhao Shao'ang, who even named his studio "Chanyan," or "lovely cicadas." He may have felt a personal affinity with this insect because of its ancient associations with the Confucian virtues of loftiness and purity inspired by the cicada's habit of perching high on trees and the false belief that it lived entirely on dew.[8] Zhao often referred to this rich symbolism in his poetry and inscriptions on paintings.

Artist's inscription and signature
(2 columns in cursive script)

As jade-green leaves wither
in autumn,
Cicadas begin their melancholy
songs in the chill.
Unwilling to chase worldly glory,
They drink dew to preserve
their purity.

For the appreciation of Madame [Lin] Taiyi. Shao'ang in the *bingwu* year [1966]

翠葉已秋零,
寒蟬起幽咽。
不肯逐金貂,
飲露聊自潔。

太乙女士清賞。丙午少昂

Artist's seals
趙 *Zhao*
少昂 *Shaoang*
足跡英美法意瑞德日印菲諸國
Zuji Ying Mei Fa Yi Rui De Ri Yin Fei zhuguo

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Recent Provenance
The painting was made for Lin Taiyi in 1966 when she and her husband were living in Hong Kong.

Notes
1 The term "Lingnan School of Painting" was coined in the 1930s. For a review of the varying definitions of the term, see Huang Hongyi 2003, pp. 3–11.
2 For examples of the reviews, see Till 1988, "Introduction," n.p.
3 Zhou Xifu 1987, pp. 114–16.
4 Compare *Passing Bee* by Chen Shuren (1883–1948), another founder of the school, in Wang Lipu, comp., *Lingnan huapai* (Taipei: Yishu Tushu Gongsi, 1983), p. 81, no. 94.
5 Zhao thought the "one stroke" method best embodied the expressive power of the Chinese brush. See his remarks quoted in Ho Fung-lin 2005, pp. 267, 288.
6 Ibid., pp. 277, 297.
7 Zhou Xifu 1987, pp. 116–17.
8 Li Jian'er, *Zhao Shao'ang* (1941), quoted in Ho Fung-lin 2005, pp. 277, 297.

40

趙少昂
Zhao Shao'ang (1905–1998)

Chirping Bird
鳴雀圖
Mingque tu

Dated 1978. Album leaf,
ink and color on paper,
11¼ × 15¾ in. (28.5 × 40 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection,
Partial and Promised Gift of
Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and
Larry C. Lai in memory of
Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.33)

In a letter to the noted scholar Hu Shi (1891–1962), the artist Xu Beihong (1895–1953) praised Zhao Shao'ang as the best flower-and-bird painter in modern China.[1] Zhao's depiction of a white peacock, painted at the age of twenty-five, won the International Art Gold Medal at the Belgium Independence Centenary World Fair of 1930.[2] Following this success, he was invited to participate in several exhibitions organized by the Chinese government in major European cities, an opportunity that significantly enhanced his international recognition.[3] Decades later his paintings were featured in *Bird Artists of the World* (1965) and *Animal Artists of the World* (1967), two exhibitions sponsored by the Tryon Gallery in London. Upon seeing Zhao's work the East Asian art historian Werner Speiser proclaimed him to be China's greatest living painter.[4]

By blending descriptive realism and impressionistic brushwork, Zhao demonstrates in this painting his firm grasp of both avian anatomy and the nature of human perception.[5] The joints and claws of the bird's bony legs stand out distinctly against the blank ground, while the dashing brushstrokes and blurred colors of its plumage vividly recreate the sight of its fluttering motion. Its gaping month and well-defined tongue evoke an equally strong sensation of the bird's shrill chirping.

Zhao Shao'ang's representations of birds excel not only in their "jewel-like sensuous glitter"[6] but also in their animated postures. Here Zhao has captured the bird in a fleeting moment just after landing, when it stands low on its legs, wings aflutter, tail raised high. Zhao's spontaneous brushwork mimics the swiftness of the bird's movement. In sharp contrast to the naturalistic treatment of the bird, the backdrop is abstract and subdued. Two clusters of green dots suggest foreground moss, while a few rough brush strokes in pale ink—blades of grass—introduce an atmospheric lyricism probably due to Japanese inspiration.[7]

Structurally, the grass blades divide the picture surface and frame a space for Zhao's powerful calligraphy, which echoes the energetic brushwork of the painting and serves to balance the otherwise asymmetrical composition.

Artist's inscription and signature
(3 columns in cursive script)

Fluttering about are many lovely birds.
Singing melodiously, they enjoy this beautiful moment.

In the fifth month of the *wuwu* year [1978], Shao'ang [painted this] for the appreciation of Madame [Lin] Taiyi

翻飛多好鳥,
宛轉弄芳辰。

戊午五月, 太乙女士清賞。少昂

Artist's seal
趙 *Zhao*

Collector's seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Recent Provenance
The painting was presented to Lin Taiyi by the artist when she and her husband were living in Hong Kong.

Notes

1 Zhao Shao'ang, "Zhao Shao'ang jiaoshou zishu" (Self-preface of Professor Zhao Shao'ang), quoted in Wang Jian 2005, p. 238.

2 Huang Hongyi 2003, p. 176. See also "Biographical Notes of Chao Shao-an," in Wang Jian et al. 2005, p. 312.

3 Kao Maychíng 1997, pp. 12–13.

4 Till 1988, "Introduction," n.p.

5 Zhao made numerous sketches of birds. See, for instance, Wang Jian et al. 2005, pp. 230, 235.

6 See the critic Pierre Rouve's review in *Art News and Review* was partially quoted in Till 1988, "Introduction," n.p.

7 This lyricism suggests the influence of Japanese romanticism, which was essential to the aesthetics of the Lingnan School. For a thoughtful study on this subject, see Croizier 1988, pp. 24–61.

41

仿趙少昂
After Zhao Shao'ang (1905–1998)

Flower and Bee
蜂戲牡丹圖
Feng xi mudan tu

After 1946. Woodblock print mounted as an album leaf, ink and color on paper, 13⅛ × 17⅛ in. (33.5 × 43.6 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.31)

This reproduction of a Zhao Shao'ang painting represents the high artistry of traditional woodblock printing. To a non-specialist, this print could easily be mistaken for a painting. The printers have carefully controlled the amount and density of ink and pigment applied to the blocks to capture the varying shades of color in Zhao's original. Particularly notable is the layering of the peony's petals and its twisting leaves. The sense of tension between the heavy flower and the drooping branch—accentuated by the arrival of a honeybee—is vividly conveyed.

Artist's inscription and signature
(2 columns in cursive script)

In June in the summer of the thirty-fifth year of the Republic [1946], Shao'ang at Pearl Pond [in Guangdong]

卅五年夏六月。少昂於珠海

Artist's seal
少昂 *Shao'ang*

Collectors' seals
黎林 *Li Lin* (impressed twice)
[Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Recent Provenance
The print was presented to Lin Taiyi by the artist when she and her husband were living in Hong Kong.

42

郭味蕖
Guo Weiqu (1908–1971)

Camellia and Butterflies
山茶蛺蝶圖
Shancha jiadie tu

Undated. Hanging scroll,
ink and color on paper,
57⅝ × 15⅜ in. (146.4 × 39 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection,
Partial and Promised Gift of
Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller,
and Larry C. Lai in memory
of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.34)

A descendant of a distinguished scholar-official family in Weixian, Shandong Province, Guo Weiqu first learned about traditional Chinese art from his family's collection, but as a result of his growing skepticism about the intrinsic worth of his native culture in the wake of the 1919 May Fourth Movement, at the age of eighteen he enrolled in the Shanghai Art Academy to study Western art. Approaching thirty *sui*, however, he again took up traditional painting and found employment making copies of masterworks in the collection of the Palace Museum. Although he held several solo exhibits of Western paintings in the 1930s, his later work in Chinese media barely reveals any Western influence. His training in Western art, nonetheless, was crucial in liberating him from the restraints of traditional art practice, and contributed to his innovative approach of blending different genres and contrasting styles as a way to reinvigorate Chinese painting.[1] Reaching artistic maturity in the late 1950s, Guo's upbeat mix of fine line delineation with sketchy brushstrokes, and free-flowing ink washes with thick mineral colors, conveys the optimistic, progressive ethos of the New China under Communist leadership.[2]

Guo considered composition the key to a successful work, and the most important compositional concern in flower-and-bird painting, in his opinion, was to build momentum.[3] Here a blossoming camellia has bent back on itself to show off the lush leaves and flowers clustered at its tip. A succession of crisscrossing monochrome branches and twigs energize the painting and set off the colorful floral cluster at their intersection. Two delicate butterflies follow the same diagonal trajectory as the branches, but offer a lighthearted counterpoint to the brusque brushwork of the tree. Despite such finer details, the sense of abandon that prevails in the overall execution of this work suggests that it was done around 1970, close to the end of his life. Characteristically, Guo shunned calligraphic brushstrokes in favor of series of short, rhythmic lines to shape forms Far from precise or concrete, the contours of his subjects tend to blur, evoking motion and change.

According to his son, Guo Weiqu was among the artists of his generation that most self-consciously sought to serve the national cause through their art.[4] Even after the persecution that he suffered during the Cultural Revolution severely crippled his health, he remained true to Communist ideology, as evident in his works celebrating political leaders. The frequent reference to the morning sun in the titles or inscriptions of his paintings, such as this one, therefore, may carry a political meaning, since it was a common symbol of Communist China and Chairman Mao.

Artist's inscription and signature
(1 column in cursive script)

The morning sun enters my window, rising among trees fresh and moist.

Weiqu painted this at the spur of the moment

旭日臨窗升樹清潤。

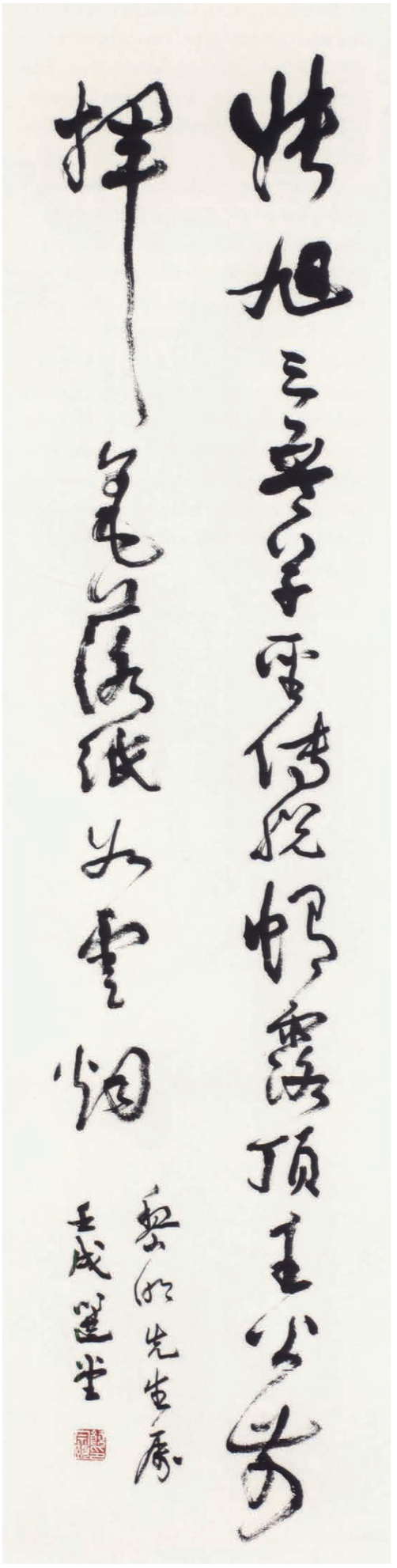
味蕖乘興寫識

Artist's seals
郭味蕖印 *Guo Weiqu yin*
取諸懷抱 *Qu zhu huaibao* ("From the depth of the mind")

Collectors' seal
黎林 *Li Lin* [Li Ming 黎明 (Richard Lai, b. 1920) and Lin Taiyi 林太乙 (Taiyi Lin Lai, 1926–2003)]

Recent Provenance
This piece was acquired by Richard Lai from a Hong Kong art gallery around 1980.

Notes
1 Guo Yizong, "Qu zhu huaibao, daixu" (From the Depth of the Mind, in Place of a Preface), in Guo Weiqu 1998, p. 2.
2 Ibid., p. 6.
3 Guo and Shao 1993, p. 19.
4 Guo Yizong, in Guo Weiqu 1998, p. 6.



43

饒宗頤
Rao Zongyi (b. 1917)

On Zhang Xu
草書杜詩張旭句
Caoshu Du shi Zhang Xu ju

Dated 1982. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 53⅛ × 13¼ in. (134.8 × 33.8 cm)

The Lin Yutang Family Collection, Partial and Promised Gift of Richard M. Lai, Jill Lai Miller, and Larry C. Lai in memory of Taiyi Lin Lai (2005.509.35)

Benefiting from his family's extensive library in Chaozhou, Guangdong Province, Rao Zongyi eventually distinguished himself in fields as diverse as epigraphy, philology, Dunhuang studies, ancient Near Eastern culture, art history, religion, and poetry as well as becoming an accomplished painter and calligrapher. In addition to six modern foreign languages, he is proficient in ancient Sanskrit and Babylonian. The remarkable scope of his learning has allowed him to build interdisciplinary connections that lie beyond the reach of most scholars. His profound scholarship is invisible in his art except for his calligraphy written in ancient scripts, in which his thorough knowledge of epigraphy ensures the formal correctness of individual characters.[1]

This handsome work, a transcription of three lines from Du Fu's (712–770) "Eight Immortals of the Wine Cup" (Yin zhong baxian ge 飲中八仙歌), is typical of Rao's cursive calligraphy. The poem celebrates eight free-spirited, heavy-drinking poets and artists. Rao transcribes only that portion of the poem concerning Zhang Xu (act. mid-8th century), the revered "sage of cursive calligraphy," whose wild, gestural writing echoed his eccentric behavior. In keeping with the spirit of his subject, Rao wrote this piece in highly expressive cursive script, but he did not follow Zhang Xu's style. Instead, he was inspired by the calligraphy of Wang Duo (1592–1652), an influential master of the late Ming period. Rao's dense clusters of squeezed characters are reminiscent of those of several late Ming calligraphers, but the tendency of characters in a single column to lean left or right, creating an impression of randomness, specifically recalls the work of Wang Duo.[2] Moreover, Rao's vigorous brushwork exhibits the same idiosyncrasies as Wang's. Wang Duo writes with great speed, but consciously avoids the appearance of graceful fluidity. He often pauses and presses down the brush as he begins a stroke or changes its direction. He even repeats this practice in making a long sweeping motion. As a result, his writing is full of angular turns and emphatic pauses that create a tension between spontaneity and deliberateness.[3] Rao Zongyi adopts these same traits, although he executes them with more restraint.

The aesthetic of Wang Duo's peculiarities in cursive calligraphy are summed up in Rao Zongyi's "Ten Essentials of Calligraphy" (1965), where he emphasizes the importance of pauses and twists in the brush's movement in order to achieve a sense of rawness and counter any charming slickness. An accomplished Chinese zither (*qin* 琴) player, Rao has compared the art of calligraphy to that of *qin*-playing. The pressure, speed, and direction of the brush, like the musician's fingers, changes constantly to enhance the power or depth of expression. Just as a musician repeatedly rubs and presses a certain point on the string to sustain the flow of a prolonged note, so too does Rao press and lift his brush in quick succession to make his strokes vibrate with energy.

Artist's inscription and signature
(3 columns in cursive script)

After three cups [of wine] Zhang Xu demonstrates his repute as the sage of cursive calligraphy.
Taking off his hat and exposing his pate in front of the grandees,
He sweeps his brush across the paper until [words emerge] like clouds and mist.

At the request of Mr. Li Ming [Richard Lai], in the *renxu* year [1982], Xuantang [Rao Zongyi]

張旭三杯草聖傳,
脫帽露頂王公前,
揮毫落紙如雲煙。

黎明先生屬, 壬戌選堂

Artist's seal
饒宗頤印 *Rao Zongyi yin*

Notes

1 Watt 2001.

2 In his "Ten Essentials of Calligraphy" (1965), Rao praises the powerful and eccentric styles of late Ming calligraphers. See Rao Zongyi 1996, p. 306. In two works done in the same year as this one, Rao identified the late Ming calligraphers Fu Shan (1607–1684) and Ni Yuanlu (1593–1644) as his models. See Rao Zongyi 1989, pp. 20, 21, nos. 22, 24.

3 These observations are based on the discussion in Bai 2003, pp. 32–33.

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